



**Animal WOFs Newsletter
– December 2013 –**



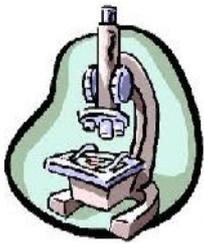
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Animal Health Diary – things to watch out for at this time of year

Update on Facial Eczema

Animal Health Diary December

The 5 F's of summer animal husbandry...



FECs

As the internal parasite season continues, keep monitoring stock, especially young stock, for diarrhoea, weight loss, anaemia and illthrift that could indicate high worm burdens. Especially the Barber's Pole worm can cause severe disease in young stock at this time of year.

Consider Faecal Egg Counts to check if animals need to be wormed. Contact us to get these done.



Flystrike

At this time of year, flies will boom in numbers and the danger of getting flystruck animals is high. Protect your sheep and cattle by using flystrike preventatives. We have a range of flystrike treatments and preventatives in the clinic. For more information on flystrike, see our newsletter from November 2011.

Feeding goats garden waste

We have recently seen some cases of Rhododendron toxicities in goats, which can cause vomiting and severe gut upsets, and would like to remind goat owners to be careful when feeding garden waste and to ensure no toxic plants are accessible to goats. As they are browsers, goats prefer weeds, bushes and trees over regular pasture and are thus more prone to eating toxic plants.

Feed shortages

Ensure plenty of supplementary feed is on hand for summer as we often see feed shortages especially with a drought. This could be hay, silage, baleage, sheep nuts (in limited quantities so animals won't get rumen acidosis) and similar feeds.



Facial eczema

The spore counting service has started for this year and has already shown toxic levels in Te Horo. This is likely to reflect high levels along coastal areas running from Waikanae to Himatangi also, so full precautions should be taken in these areas.

Spore counts in Levin have been low still, however even low counts of around 5,000 spores ingested over an extended period of time, can cause severe liver damage in livestock. Please see the following article for an update on facial eczema cause, prevention and treatment.



Facial Eczema (FE) update

What causes FE?

Facial Eczema (or FE for short) is a disease caused by a toxin called Sporidesmin, produced by a fungus in ryegrass pastures. It thrives in moist, warm and humid conditions and is often a problem in summer and autumn. The Horowhenua is a hotspot for FE.

When ingested the toxin damages the liver, causing a build up of other toxins like chlorophyll in the body. Chlorophyll reacts with UV light in the skin and causes the sunburn like signs often seen in affected animals.

Grazing ruminants like sheep and cattle are mainly affected as are Alpacas as they often graze ryegrass pastures. Goats are rarely affected as they are browsers and don't ingest the same amount of grass as sheep do. Pigs also are not grazers, so are not affected by FE.

What signs do animals with FE show:

In cattle clinical disease presents as shade-seeking, kicking at the flanks, head shaking because the ears are burning and irritated, redness and peeling of unpigmented skin like the udder and can cause death in severe cases.

Affected sheep and alpacas are also seeking shade and have droopy, red and swollen ears, redness and skin peeling, kicking at the flanks, loss of appetite and in severe cases death.



Cow with facial eczema - note the peeling skin

It is an extremely painful condition and affected animals need to be seen by the vet, to provide appropriate treatment and pain relief. The liver damage is often irreversible, but supportive treatment can be given. Providing shade and moving animals to a non-toxic pasture is essential to stop progression of the disease.

A zinc cream is available for use as a sunscreen on affected body parts and an oral nutritional supplement called Manderson's Mix, containing a combination of oils that can help the body in times of stress, can be given in addition to drugs prescribed by your vet.

It is still worth giving zinc capsules once clinical signs are apparent as this will stop further liver damage occurring.



Sheep with facial eczema - note the droopy ears and red skin



Spore counts are on the rise...

Protect your livestock now!

Have you thought about Facial Eczema prevention for your livestock yet?

Here are three reasons why you should:

- 1. Fungal spores cause severe liver disease.**
- 2. Severe liver disease predisposes to painful skin burns and peeling of all white or hairless areas.**
- 3. Irreversible liver disease can cause illthrift, sleepy sickness or death this season or in years to come.**

What can I do to prevent Facial Eczema in my stock?

Prevention starts with monitoring of pasture spore counts to indicate when FE season is starting. This information is available at the vet clinic in the form of weekly emails or faxes.

To sign up for these just flick me an email to animalwof@lhvc.co.nz and I will get you signed up.



Did you know that 100 days at a spore count of 5,000 can be just as damaging as one day at 500,000? As the damage is cumulative, chronic exposure to low spore levels can be dangerous too!

Zinc rumen boluses (Time Capsules/ Faceguard)

For cattle and sheep the best protection is provided by Time capsules and Faceguard boluses. They are long-acting intra-ruminal zinc boluses for cattle and sheep that are given by mouth into the rumen, where they are absorbed slowly to provide several weeks of protection for Facial Eczema (FE).



Time capsules should be given every 6 weeks in sheep and 5 weeks in cattle and Faceguard for cattle every 6 weeks, throughout FE season, with no more than 3 applications per year.

These capsules come in different sizes so knowing the weight of an animal is important to avoid under or overdosing.

How do I get these boluses into my animals?



We can come out and do it for you, all you need to do is have the animals in the yards ready for the vet. We can use weighbands on cattle and estimate sheeps weight also to ensure accurate dosing. At the same time we can drench or vaccinate your animals if needed.

You can administer these boluses yourself if you have done it before, and we can hire you an appropriate applicator, however incorrect application of these boluses can result in damage to the throat, toxicity or if underdosed, no protection for FE. So get our experienced vets to insert capsules for you!

If we have several people in the same area to visit on that day, reduced mileage charges will apply.

Zinc sulphate through the water trough



This is only suitable for cattle as sheep will not drink enough water during the day to ensure adequate zinc levels for FE protection (they get most of their daily moisture requirements from pasture).

Direct addition of zinc sulphate to the water trough

without using a dispenser is not recommended but in-line dispensers, adding zinc to the tank supplying the water reticulation system, and floating in-trough dispensers are all effective means of water treatment.

Water treatment is only suitable for long term dosing NOT crisis dosing during danger periods.



You need to ensure that ALL stock on the property are included in your calculations, and that all stock are getting access to sufficient daily water intakes for this method to be effective.

Zinc water treatments should have started already or will need to start now, to provide adequate protection once spore counts rise.

Water treatment is not suitable where stock have access to alternative water sources such as streams or drains. Introduce zinc sulphate slowly over several weeks to allow stock to get used to the taste. The use of flavourants, especially apple or caramel flavoured products, can enhance the intake of water and zinc during the summer.

For dose rates and more information, please contact us at the clinic on 368 2891 or email animalwof@lhvc.co.nz.

Daily oral drenching with zinc oxide

Daily or every second day dosing is possible in dairy cows or animals that are too small and young for intra-ruminal boluses. However as zinc can interfere with calcium absorption, less frequent dosing using higher rates can result in reduced production and milk fever. Young stock and dry cattle can be dosed at weekly intervals, but this only gives 60-70% protection.

Long-acting boluses like Time capsules and Faceguard are much more effective and less time-intensive.

Zinc feed additives

There are several different feed additives available. These can be used in Alpacas but no studies have been done on dosage and efficacy in this species.

Zinmol is a molasses based liquid feed containing zinc oxide. It comes in 2 different concentrations for Friesian and for Jersey cows (different adult weights), so each cow should be fed 1kg of Zinmol daily. Care needs to be taken to avoid overdosing as this can be toxic.

Zinc oxide can also be added to feed, fresh or in premixed pellets at a dose rate of 2.3 - 3g/100kg of liveweight/day. Take care with dose rates as overdosing can be toxic and underdosing won't give adequate protection.

Fungicide spraying of pasture

Spraying can be effective to produce protected areas if applied before spore counts rise too much for grazing over the danger period. Otherwise you can feed out supplements during hot spore periods. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully, and monitor spore counts on your farm to check if the spray has worked and if it's still effective.

If you are not receiving our emailed or faxed spore counts, please let us know so we can add you to the list.



We also have spore counting kits available for purchase at the clinic so you can get your own pastures checked. These include a courier bag and instructions on how to sample pasture, get sent to the lab and will return accurate spore counts to you. The cost for these is \$29.95 incl. per test.

Pasture management

Feeding longer pasture avoids animals grazing the dead matter at the bottom, where the spores are hidden.

Avoid topping pastures during or immediately before the FE risk period as spores build up in dead matter.

Spore counts can vary between different paddocks on the same farm as the Facial Eczema fungus thrives in warm shady moist areas.

Don't overstock as this will cause animals to graze down to ground level also.

Feed hay or other safe supplements in addition to pasture. Use improved ryegrass cultivars or other species of grass such as clovers that don't carry the fungus.

What about my goats?

FE is less of a problem in goats as they are browsers and don't ingest the same quantities of affected ryegrass as sheep do. Make sure they are going onto long grass though, to decrease risk and supplement with willow or poplar trimmings that can be hung from the fence.

Do not feed goats garden waste or clippings as many garden plants are toxic, especially oleander, yew, rhododendron, azalea, tomato and potato vines, stone fruits, delphiniums, lilies and avocados.

To save you time and effort, we are happy to come out to your property and administer the zinc boluses for you. This can be combined with vaccination or other procedures for your convenience.

Please call the clinic on 368 2891 to arrange this.



So, Merry Christmas to all our WOFers and may the year 2014 be a successful and prosperous one.

Looking forward to see you at the clinic or at your place,

Step of the team
@ LHVC.

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