

MOB

RULES!

March / April 2019

WELCOME TO OUR NEW E-NEWS

Fair to say we are all hanging out for the rain. From what I have seen around the district (adult) stock are hanging in there pretty well with body condition, and people have been making good decisions about quitting sale classes early and then rationing the standing hay out to capital stock.

With the cooler mornings we are all thinking ahead to what winter and spring could look like too. Delaying mating, early application of drench capsules in selective animals and strategic N applications are some of the tools up our sleeve for providing a bit of a buffer for a potentially tough winter.

One of the things we need to watch out for is what happens when the rain comes....(and I am not going to lock in when that will be!). The prevailing hot and dry has been crap for grass growth. It has also paused worm development, slowed down the fly and prevented high FE challenges in all but irrigated pastures. We have low feed levels and plenty of burnt off dry matter so if the rain does come and temperatures are still moderate we will potentially have a mass challenge of worms and Facial eczema. Most intermediate stages of worms will be in a holding pattern right now, bring on a bit of moisture and they will complete their development out on pasture very quickly - you can be sure they will beat the grass growth. A larval tsunami is a real possibility this autumn.

Get ready to jump in and treat at risk stock 1-2 weeks after we get substantial rain. Remember lighter body condition score animals (adults) will be at greater risk. Of course younger growing animals (sheep and cattle) should be on a regular preventative drenching program anyway, and while I think we are getting a bit cool overnight to really see bit barbers pole challenges, things can change so keep on the look out.

What's coming up for this season

We hopefully will get a good Autumn flush when the rain eventually comes. Some things to watch out for are:

- Facial Eczema
- Worms
- Flystrike
- Clostridial Disease (pulpy kidney etc). Fresh feed and sudden change of feed type will increase risk of PK especially. Remember 5 in 1 needs boosting for young growing stock every 3 months for PK cover!

Other things on the radar over the next few months:

- Iodine supplementation in ewes
- Trace element monitoring for cattle into winter
- Preg testing cows (6 weeks post bull removal)
- Weaning drench for beef cattle (combination oral or combo pour on)

Facial Eczema Monitoring

As we have discussed earlier, this year spore counts have been very low owing to the low moisture levels on all but irrigated pasture. That could change if we get good rain in the next couple of weeks. Keeping an eye on our monitor farms spore counts is a good start, however variations occur from paddock to paddock let alone between different properties. If you have a history or are concerned/interested get stuck in and do some of your own spore counts.

It can be hard to know what impact FE is actually having on our stock at the subclinical levels. Blood testing 20 ewes at the start or end of mating is a great way to establish whether or not the girls have been tickled up by a bit of FE. We have a look for elevated liver enzymes and can then compare that to trials where they have tracked it through compared to scanning performance. In the past when I have done these we have identified properties where either no outward or very minor outward signs in the ewe flock have actually had significant impact on their mating performance – good to know when weighing up the value of treating or not treating, spraying etc.

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