

Sheep, Beef, Deer & Dog Newsletter



Summer Stock Health: Planning Ahead for Peak Performance.



As we close out 2025 and head into the New Year, spring proved to be characteristically variable across our region. Some areas experienced prolonged dry spells, while others saw useful rainfall, and Labour Weekend snow again affected a number of later lambing properties. Despite this, stock condition has generally held up well moving into summer, with recent intermittent rain helping maintain pasture growth in many areas.

Over the past few weeks we've seen some rising faecal egg counts (FECs), particularly in young stock. As we move through January, continuing to monitor pasture covers, checking FECs where indicated, and identifying worm "hot spots" will help keep susceptible animals growing well through weaning and into late summer.

The New Year is also a good opportunity to start planning ahead for

key events later in 2026, including the next sheep mating period, deer weaning, and beef cattle weaning. Feed budgeting and body condition scoring over summer and early autumn will help ensure breeding stock stay on track to meet mating targets, while early planning around animal health requirements can further support productivity and reproductive performance.

Feeder calves will have been weaned now and will benefit from careful integration into grazing systems to support steady, healthy growth. Taking the time early in the year to plan their animal health programme and performance targets with your vet is a proactive step that can pay dividends later in the season.

As we look ahead in 2026, a bit of forward planning now can help set up a more resilient and productive year for your farming system.

Summer 2026

In this issue:

- **Summer Stock Health: Planning Ahead for Peak Performance**
- **Summer Calf Care**
- **Pre-Tup Preparation: Maximising Lambing**
- **The Impact of BVD in Beef Breeding Herds: Managing the Risk from Bought-In Cattle**
- **Yersiniosis in Young Deer**
- **Supporting Hospice South Canterbury**
- **Meet Glenda Kellahan**

Summer Calf Care

Feeder calves, or dairy beef calves, will have been weaned, and the focus now is on achieving desired growth rates and preventing disease. Stress is still a big risk for weaned calves and this can be caused by many things including sudden changes in feed, lack of shelter as well as mustering, yarding and transporting. The calves' health status helps them tolerate stress so ensuring vaccinations and trace element status are covered is important.

A myriad of disease is possible to affect calves after weaning and with appropriate planning much of this ill-health and loss can be prevented. How you integrate these young animals into your farm system will have a major bearing not only on this year's success but the long-term sustainability of the system.

Pre-Tup Preparation: Maximising Lambing Performance

Preventing reproductive problems and improving flock performance. That is the purpose behind treating rams and ewes pre-tup with vaccinations and trace elements.

Commonly reported diseases such as toxo and campy can cause obvious abortions, but they also cause high dry rates due to embryonic loss and lower lamb survival through birth of weak or stillborn lambs.

Both diseases can be prevented with vaccination before the mating period. In New Zealand flocks where disease has been present, average increases in lambing rates are reported to be of 9% and 3% from vaccinating for campy and toxo respectively.

Trace elements supplemented pre-tup are frequently necessary to prevent deficiency in our area but also to optimise performance even when levels are adequate. Of great importance is ovulation, sperm production, embryo implantation and foetal development. Trace elements including iodine, selenium, zinc and manganese influence these processes.

Long-acting iodine injections (e.g. Flexidine) given 4 weeks pre-tup ensures adequate levels are present right through mating and pregnancy.

Knowing your flock's selenium status is essential for flock well-being and performance. We can test this while we are on farm doing ram soundness examinations and then plan whether long-acting supplementation is required or whether a short-acting boost to manage the high demand during mating is required.

Multimin CF (copper free) for sheep is specifically designed as a pre-tup supplement; the combination of selenium, zinc and manganese being involved with ovulation and implantation. Australian work has demonstrated lifts in scanning performance of 9%, and reduction in dry rates by 3%.

For meat breed flocks where conditions are right, Ovastim (a fecundity vaccine) can be used to increase twinning rate and therefore lambing percentages. Excellent stock and feed management is needed to ensure ewe body condition is maintained and feed demand is met. A lift in scanning of 20% or more should be planned for. During dry seasons, careful use of Ovastim to 'flush' ewes can be effective. Two-tooth scanning rates can also be lifted to be in line with MA ewes by using Ovastim. If this is something you are interested in, please contact us at the clinic to talk it through with your vet.

“Vaccinate and supplement pre-tup to lift lambing rates, reduce losses, and boost flock performance.”

Pivotal to successful mating is of course the ram team. We recommend having your vet examine your rams annually about two months ahead of mating to ensure they are healthy and are sound reproductively. We will check body condition and scrotal contents, test for presence of brucella ovis, test trace element status, treat foot issues and prepare teasers. One of our team will contact you to fit you in with a local 'ram run' but please go ahead and call us if you haven't heard from us.

All of the pre-tup vaccines, trace element supplements, and treatments discussed above can now be ordered easily online through our website. This allows you to plan ahead, secure product early, and streamline the lead-up to mating. If you're unsure what's right for your flock, or would like to review your programme as part of an annual RVM appointment, please get in touch with the clinic - we're happy to help tailor a plan that fits your system.

PRE TUP 2026 SET YOUR FLOCK UP FOR SUCCESS

ORDER
ONLINE



AORANGI
VETERINARY
SERVICES

aorangivet.co.nz

The Impact of BVD in Beef Breeding Herds: Managing the Risk from Bought-In Cattle

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) remains one of the most economically damaging diseases affecting beef breeding herds. An estimated 35% of dairy herds and 65% of beef herds are currently or recently infected with BVD virus in New Zealand. BVD has been estimated to cost the average farmer \$54 per cow per year. While clinical signs are not always obvious, the hidden impact on fertility, calf health and long-term herd performance can be severe. One of the biggest ongoing risks for beef farms is the introduction of BVD through bought-in cattle, particularly dairy bred calves.

BVD is caused by a virus that spreads through direct contact between animals, as well as via contaminated equipment, clothing and vehicles. The most significant source of infection is persistently infected (PI) animals. These animals were infected in the womb and shed large amounts of virus throughout their life, often without appearing sick. A single PI animal can infect an entire group in a short period of time.

In beef breeding herds, the greatest losses occur through poor reproductive performance. If cows are infected during early pregnancy, BVD can cause early embryonic death, abortions, empty cows and high numbers of "late calvers". Infection later in pregnancy may result in the birth of PI calves, allowing the virus to remain in the herd for years if undetected. The outcome is fewer calves on the ground, uneven mobs at weaning and reduced kilograms of beef sold.

Calves born into BVD-affected herds are also more vulnerable to other diseases. BVD suppresses the immune system, increasing the incidence and severity of scours, pneumonia and ill thrift.

Bought-in cattle are one of the biggest risk factors for BVD introduction. This is especially relevant in New Zealand, with beef farms commonly purchasing dairy-bred calves for rearing or finishing. These calves may come from multiple sources, and even well-managed dairy farms can unknowingly produce PI calves. Mixing bought-in calves with breeding stock, grazing them on neighbouring paddocks or allowing nose-to-nose contact across fences can all allow BVD to spread.

Prevention is far more effective and economical than dealing with the aftermath of an outbreak. Key control measures include:

- Testing: Know your herd's BVD status and test all bought-in animals before mixing.
- Biosecurity: Isolate incoming stock for a minimum of three weeks.
- Vaccination: Maintain a robust vaccination programme to protect breeding animals.
- PI removal: Identify and promptly remove any PI animals from the herd.

With a robust vaccination and testing program BVD can be eliminated from an infected herd in two years. Your vet can help design a BVD control plan tailored to your farm system.



Yersiniosis in Young Deer: Prevention is Key

Yersiniosis, a bacterial infection affecting the gut, is one of the main causes of death in 4 to 8 month-old deer. Losses can be up to 30% in unvaccinated herds with outbreaks triggered by stress, particularly around the time of weaning.

Affected deer are usually dull or separate from their mates, have diarrhoea staining their hocks and tail and then, without treatment, they become dehydrated, go down and die. It is important to have a vet out to diagnose the cause of disease if you see these symptoms as there are other diseases which can appear similar.

To help prevent disease, the best approach is to minimize stress at weaning as well as vaccinating with Yersiniavax.

Skillful mustering and efficient, calm handling in yards are important. Keeping the number of activities to the essentials can help avoid long periods of yarding.

"Vaccinate and minimize stress at weaning to protect your deer from deadly Yersiniosis."

At weaning, animal health requirements might include vaccinations, worm drench, and trace element supplementation. Yersiniavax requires two injections 3-4 weeks apart and can reduce losses to 3% or fewer.

You can use our online ordering form for your weaning animal health requirements. If you need an updated annual script one of our vets can give you a call and make sure the right plan is in place.

Farmers who are part of the National Velvet Standards Body (NVSB) will have completed their annual Supervisory Visits by December 15 which are a legal requirement and an opportunity to demonstrate the industry's commitment to quality assurance. March 31 is the date at the end of the season by which Velvet Books and unused medications need to be returned to the vet for auditing.

Supporting Hospice South Canterbury's Raise a Calf Programme

At Aorangi Veterinary Services, we're proud to support the incredible work of Hospice South Canterbury and their annual Raise a Calf for Hospice programme. This initiative helps fund compassionate end-of-life care for local families, and it's powered by the generosity of farmers across our region. This year, we're lending a hand by providing animal health products to support the calves being raised. It's one small way we can contribute to a service that means a great deal to our community.

How You Can Get Involved:

- Grazing or finishing opportunities are still available for this season.
- You can also raise or donate a calf next year if you'd like to be part of the programme in 2026.
- Simply sharing the programme within your farming networks helps raise awareness and keeps this important initiative thriving.

To learn more or get involved, visit Hospice South Canterbury's website and explore the Raise a Calf programme hospicesc.org.nz/raise-a-calf-for-hospice-programme/



Meet Glenda Kellahan - Director and Veterinarian



Glenda grew up on a sheep and beef farm in Moa Flat, developing a deep connection to rural life and an early understanding of the realities of farming. Today, she continues that connection through her work with Aorangi Vets, helping farmers across Canterbury make practical, informed decisions that support both animal health and farm productivity.

Glenda brings experience across multiple livestock sectors, with a particular focus on farm annual health planning to streamline on-farm practices. She is passionate about making animal health management simpler and more efficient, giving farmers clear guidance and confidence in their day-to-day decisions.

"It's about working alongside farmers to make health planning straightforward, effective, and focused on what really matters."

Much of Glenda's work revolves around reviewing animal health strategies with farmers, tailoring plans to match current farm needs, and ensuring the right products are in place and approved. "These conversations aren't just paperwork," she explains. "They save time during peak seasons, prevent costly mistakes, and make a real difference to outcomes on farm."

Glenda's approach is proactive, and partnership driven. She believes strong, trustworthy relationships are the key to achieving practical results. "It's about working alongside farmers to make health planning straightforward, effective, and focused on what really matters," she says.

Whether she's reviewing a herd's health plan or advising on immediate challenges, Glenda brings clarity, reliability, and a hands-on understanding that farmers value.

TIMARU

265 Otipua Rd, Timaru Ph.
03 687 9378 (24 hours)

HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.30am - 6.00pm
Sat 10.00am - 11.30am

GERALDINE

27 Wilson Street, Geraldine
Ph. 03 693 1163 (24 hours)

HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.00am - 5.00pm
Sat 9.00am - 12.00pm

FAIRLIE

72 Main Street, Fairlie Ph.
03 685 8407 (24 hours)

HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.00am - 5.00pm

**AORANGI VETERINARY
SERVICES**

Online Ordering

**Fast-track your
product orders!**

Order your summer supplies
online and have them
prepared for collection

AVS AORANGI
VETERINARY
SERVICES **Deer Services**