Sheep, Beef Cattle & Deer Programme

Wednesday 22 May

8.30am: Welcome Branch Presidents
8.45am: Genetics 101 - be part of the conversation - Sharl Liebergreen
9.15am: Velvet 101 - what you need to know - Edmund Noonan
10.30am: Beef cattle breeding programs - Dave Robertson
11am: Selecting better ewe lamb replacements - Sharl Liebergreen
11.30am: CARLA on DEERSelect – the first immunological deer breeding value - Jamie Ward

This presentation describes the journey and processes which have enabled a measure of immune response to become the first animal health breeding value for deer. The presentation will outline the research trials and breeder education that made it possible to have this measure incorporated into DEERSelect, allowing the New Zealand deer industry to begin using it for genetic improvement.

12pm: Tools to help: the deer hub genetics app - Sharon McIntyre
1.30pm: Workshop: Genetics 201 - bull, stag and ram buying - Sharl Liebergreen & Sharon McIntyre
3pm: Deer milking: the new frontier - Sharon McIntyre
4pm: Ovine abortion – a holistic view, not just a silver bullet - Rebecca Smith

A presentation of three case studies which have challenged the way I approach ovine abortion. This is a discussion on management strategies: how we manage ovine abortion cases, how we manage farmer expectations and how we can assist our farming clients to integrate management strategies into their farming systems to reduce the incidence of ovine abortions in their flocks.

4.20pm: BVD: a truly pesky virus - Amy Watts

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea is a common disease of beef herds within New Zealand – 60% of all cattle have been exposed. Blood testing, abortions, vaccinations, bull certificates and biosecurity options for moving herds are routine involvement for vets dealing with BVD cases. Persistently Infected animals are not uncommon occurrence however they are normally a very small percentage of all cattle tested for BVD. How about 90% of calves in a mob of cows being positive for BVD Antigen!!!!

4.40pm: On-farm biosecurity: risk practices and behaviours - Ben Phiri

On-farm biosecurity refers to management practices required to prevent the entry of diseases onto a farm or minimise their impact. Responsibility for implementing these practices primarily rests with the farmer. Anecdotal evidence shows that in certain instances well-intended actions by the farmer can compromise on-farm biosecurity. For example, milking an off-season calving cow from another farm and returning it afterwards. Farm veterinarians may not necessarily be aware of such biosecurity compromising practices and behaviours.

5pm: Deer Branch AGM
5.30pm: Happy hour

Thursday 23 May

6.30am: Industry Branch 5km NZVA fun run/walk

All proceeds go to the Elizabeth Veterinary Benevolent Fund - established in 1954 to provide financial assistance to NZVA members and their families during difficult times. Today it also provides other support services for NZVA members, such as the Veterinary Wellness Programme and the Mentor Scheme.

8am: A search for predictive biomarkers of ovine pre-partum vaginal prolapse - Stuart Brown

Rates of ovine pre-partum vaginal prolapse vary between seasons and farms but little is known about the etiology of this condition. 2D differential in-gel electrophoresis was used to compare differences in the abundance of plasma proteins between pre-prolapse and control samples. Several proteins were found to be affected, including the acute phase protein haptoglobin. Cortisol was also found to be increased prior to prolapse and was the result with the greatest statistical significance.

8.30am: Synchrony programmes in deer - what does success look like - Andrew Scurr & Richard Cook
9am: Exploring impacts of the Zero Carbon bill on a rural veterinary practice - Solis Norton

This presentation examines impacts on a typical rural veterinary practice resulting from the Zero Carbon Bill’s transition to lower emissions. It applies Energy Return On Investment methodology to quantify these impacts and put them in context with related changes to our farm systems and wider primary production systems.

9.30am: Biosecurity: not just for agriculture - what are other industries doing? - Simon Cook
10.30am: Workshop: Understanding farm finances presentations - Matt Hood

Everyone will have goals, aspirations and objectives for themselves, their families and their business(es). We know there are several measurable for planning and monitoring progress against these aspirations - of which financial is a key aspect. For Farm Business Owners, understanding how their farm business is performing is key to identifying areas of opportunity and making decisions on what changes to make. To really add value to our clients we MUST understand their goals and objectives, their capability, their "mental models" and their financial position. As one Albert Einstein said, Genius is to "take the complex, make it simple". As trusted advisors, our challenge, opportunity and privilege is to help our clients understand the drivers of their financial success and be clear about the areas we can help them influence. This session will help you "making the simple compelling".

1.30pm: Workshop: A feed budget in your head - simple feed budget technique - Ginny Dodunski

4pm: What's in a specification? - Victoria Chapman

2.30pm: A case of ovine Johne's disease - Neil Murray

4.20pm: Colostrum intake by lambs on four commercial farms in the Wairarapa - Sara Sutherland

A total of 60 lambs were blood tested at approximately 24 hours old on four hill-country farms in the Wairarapa. Blood samples were tested for GGT and total protein to determine the sufficiency of colostral transfer. Of the lambs that had mothers, 87% had received adequate colostrum, compared with half of lambs which were mismothered or orphaned. There were differences in the proportion of lambs which had received adequate colostrum on different farms. This suggests that farm management factors could be modified to improve colostral transfer, and thus potentially improve lamb survival.

4.40pm: Injectable vitamin A, D and E reduces the incidence of vaginal prolapse in sheep - Ben Allot

In the Autumn of 2018 approx. 2000 ewes were enrolled in a treatment-control study to explore the impact of Vitamin A, D &E supplementation on the incidence of vaginal prolapse in pregnant sheep. The serum concentration of VitD3 and VitD2 declined significantly in untreated ewes between May and July while treatment with injectable Vit ADE was shown to be an effective long-acting VitD3 supplement. A statistically significant reduction in the risk of vaginal prolapse was observed in ewes that received Vit ADE supplementation with the relative risk of vaginal prolapse in a treated ewe being 0.3 as compared to untreated control ewes.

5.10pm: Sheep & Beef Cattle Branch AGM

7pm: SBC & Deer Branch Dinner, FoxGlove

Friday 24 May

8am: Advance parties: the good the bad and the ugly - Richard Cook

8.15am: Advance parties: the good the bad and the ugly - Peter Kalb

This presentation focuses on the positive aspects of Advance Parties from the deer farmer participant's perspective, and that of the facilitator. The opportunities for the deer farmers include networking, peer review of their farming operations and a framework to focus on projects specific to their own situation to improve farm profitability. Making the change from wearing the veterinary hat, (where advice is given to clients), to a facilitation role is challenging but rewarding. This needed a whole new skill set but being involved in the group has provided a more holistic understanding of the nature of deer farming. The relationship with the farmer changes and it is gratifying to see the adoption of new ideas learnt from other farmers through the AP group.

8.30am: Workshop: Advisory relationships - the art and the science - Lab Wilson

Nearly 400 rural professionals were asked "Who has NOT experienced a customer asking for advice and then they: 1) didn't act on it?, 2) started, then gave up, 3) adopted another strategy without consulting you? in a show-of-hands poll. Not one raised hand! A room full of nodding heads and knowing grins. Why is this? This workshop will explore advisory relationships, and creating value through the effective sharing of knowledge. If you are open to alternative views and new ideas combined with well-tested and timeless wisdom then come along.

1.30pm: Johne's disease monitoring as an entry point to veterinary facilitated health planning - Solis Norton

This presentation collates and reviews veterinary and deer farmer opinion on the Deer Health Review industry template for deer health planning. Last year saw a remarkable spike in the evidence of Johne's disease in processed deer recorded for DeerPRO by AsureQuality meat inspectors. DeerPRO used this review process as a basis for bringing veterinarians and farmers together to investigate deer health on the farms driving the spike.

2pm: Udder defects in ewes - Kate Griffiths

One of the reasons for premature culling of ewes from commercial flocks is failure to rear a lamb, having previously been identified as pregnant (wet-dry ewes). Poor udder health may be contributing to these ewes being wet-dry; however this is not accurately known. Survey results indicate approximately 80% of farmer's currently examine ewes' udders as a means of identifying ewes to cull; however, there is currently no standardised scoring method that New Zealand farmers are able to utilise. This study aims to identify udder traits related to the ability of a ewe to successfully rear a lamb, which farmers can then use to identify which ewes are most appropriate to keep and cull.

2.30pm: A case of ovine Johne's disease - Neil Murray

Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) is common in the national sheep flock, though usually at low levels of clinical incidence. However, as clinical incidence increases, significant economic losses can occur. I will be presenting a case of OJD I witnessed while on final year clinical placement. This will be followed by a brief review of our understanding of OJD disease aetiology. I will then conclude with current research into the economic benefit of vaccination against OJD.
2.50pm: The challenges of an unusual abortion outbreak in ewes - Sarah Williams
An abortion outbreak on a Canterbury Sheep and Beef property in the spring of 2018 caused a significant production loss for this business. Approximately 340 out of 2898 MA ewes (12%) aborted in the last month of pregnancy. Despite having plenty of foetuses available to sample, confirming a diagnosis proved to be a challenge. Chlamydophilia pecorum was eventually identified, along with some Hairy Shaker Disease.

3.10pm: Seroconversion to toxoplasmosis vaccination - David Hawkins

4pm: Abortion study - Ginny Dodunski

4.20pm: NVSB updates - Andrew Scurr