

AN INITIATIVE OF

Making More From Sheep



Sheep Health is Your Wealth

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It's ewe time!



Asked to Present on

- Content
- Costs of sheep health issues
- Good health is a building block of a profitable sheep enterprise
- Worms including Barber's Pole
- Lice & flies (balance as per local issue priority & focus on prevention)
- Johnes Disease
- Health issues when hand feeding
- Genetic selection for welfare traits & WEC
- Reproductive diseases inc. Brucellosis and Campylobacter
- Anthrax
- Effective vaccination programs
- Biosecurity Plans
- Completing NVDs and health declarations correctly – importance of withholding periods

Will Present On

- Parasitism and worm control.
- Campylobacter and brucellosis.
- General vaccination strategy.
- Supplementary feeding and winter cereals.

2 Cardinal Rules of Treatments and Interventions

1. Sackett's rule of animal health interventions:
“Just because there is a treatment available doesn't mean you have to use it.”
Have evidence of a condition and the cost-benefit of intervention.

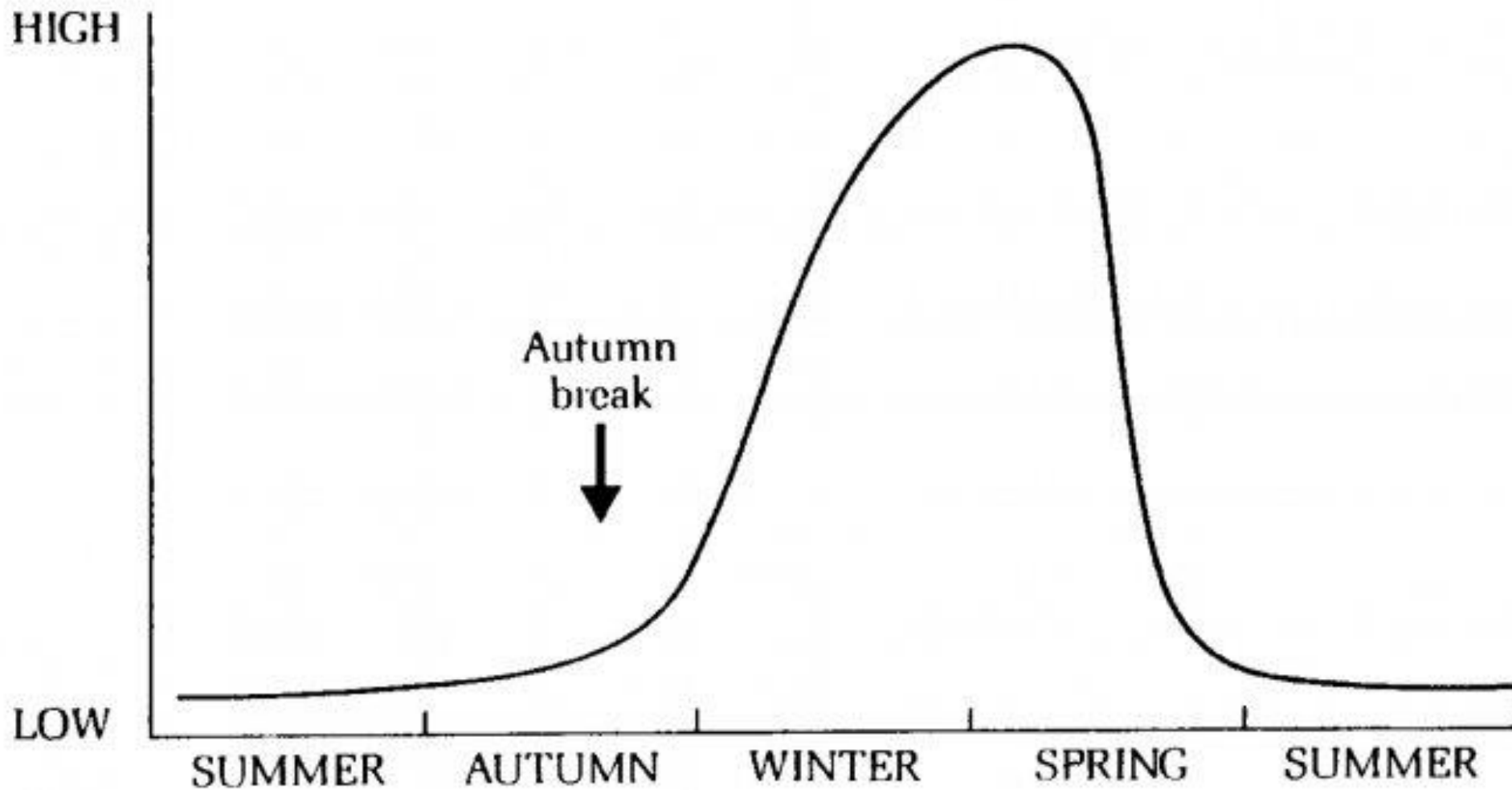
2. Nilon's rule of animal health interventions:
“If you use a product make sure it is going to work”:
Know your drench resistance status. Use direct methods rather than indirect.

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Worms in Ewes

Larval availability Scour Worms: Black scour/Brown stomach/Nematodirus



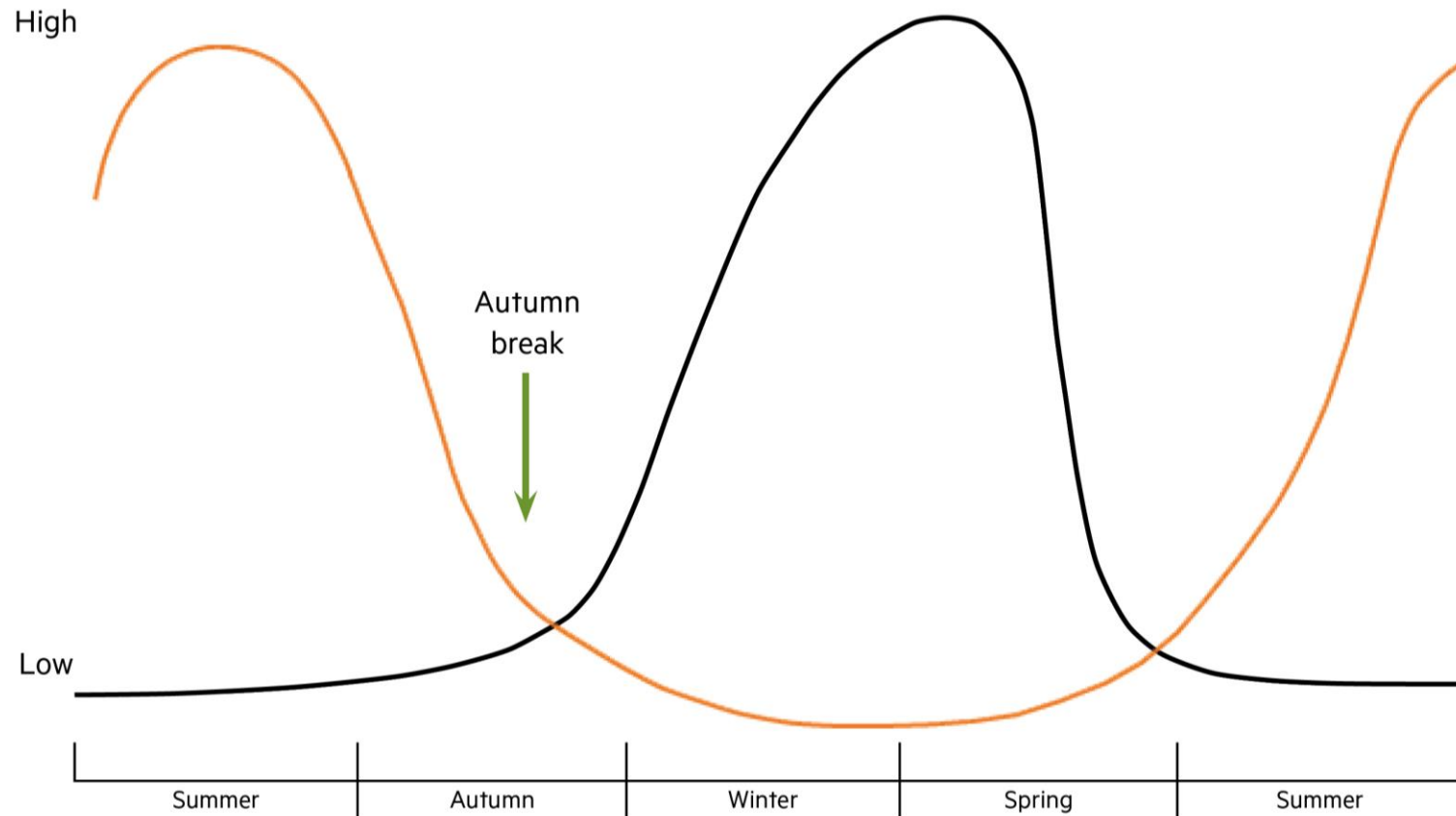
A Few Thoughts on Worm Control: Merinos

- **Always drench merino ewes prelambing.**
- **Drench with a short-acting (multi-active, unless you have current resistance status) if:** Lambing onto likely contaminated paddocks, ewes struggling a bit or feed is marginal.
- **Drench with a prolonged action drench if:**
 - evidence of gross contamination (parasitic deaths before lambing);
 - if the ewes are light (CS<2.5) and/or have inadequate pasture;
 - and/or prodigiously wet year.

A Few Thoughts on Worm Control: XBs

- Drench with a short-acting (multi-active, unless you have current resistance status) unless you have current drench resistance status.
- **Drench with a prolonged action drench if:**
 - evidence of gross contamination (parasitic deaths before lambing);
 - if the ewes are light (CS<2.5) and/or have inadequate pasture;
 - and/or prodigiously wet year.
 - ***Should rarely be necessary***
- **Consider not drenching if:**
 - ***No evidence of barbers pole***
 - Ewes CS3 or better and have adequate pasture. No evidence of gross contamination, i.e. not grazed by weaners dying of worms.
 - Fall back position is to drench at lamb marking.

Barbers Pole: An Emerging Issue



Barbers Pole

- Mostly a problem on irrigated grass but has the potential to be an issue on mixed perennial pastures. Legumes more robust.
- Suspect barbers pole if you have high egg counts (say > 1000), little or no scouring +- bottle jaw. In reality may have a mixed infection.
- If the BP susceptible paddocks will be grazed by lambing ewes:
 - Winter spelling.
 - Graze with cattle
 - Graze under protection of an LA (including closantel).
- Always give a pre-lambing drench.

Hypocalcaemia

- Occurs in the last month of pregnancy as a result of sudden changes of food, or stressors such as prolonged cold off-shears. Critical event is insufficient circulating calcium to maintain neuromuscular function. Determinants include:
 - Chronic grass syndrome. grass < cereals < winter wheat.
 - Change from dry to lush pasture in late pregnancy.
 - Yarding, handling, transport.
 - Chronic grain feeding without Ca supplement. Chronic exposure to irrigated green grass or winter cereals.
- Sheep go down suddenly, appear relatively bright and alert, at least in early stages. A proportion have a characteristic frog-leg position. 10's to hundreds.
- Diagnosis on response to treatment with Calcigol/Flopaks.

Hypocalcaemia cont

- **Treatment:** Treat with 150ml Calcigol/Flopak. Will get 60%+ up within an hour.
- **Prevention:**
 - Deft, rapid handling of sheep at prelambling treatments.
 - Sheep on dry tucker mid pregnancy should not receive Ca supps unless they are getting grain. Mixed perennial pastures: no Ca supps.
 - Sheep on irrigated grass pastures, inc. winter cereals need a Ca supp.
 - Grain supps should be spiked with limestone (2%) or dolomite (4%).
- Iodine an emerging issue on the same pastures as we get hypocalcaemia



Vaccination: Campy, JD and Clostridials

- Clostridials: prevalence of clostridial disease in Tasmania apparently very low but:
 - Underreported.
 - Animal welfare standards.
 - Passive immunity for lambs.
 - Cheesy gland.
 - Standard rec would be a 6 in 1 prelambing.
- Place of 8 in 1?
- ***JD is ubiquitous. Keep vaccinating all keepers (inc wether lambs likely to be slaughtered at >1yr) with Gudair. Role of cattle.***

Campylobacter Abortion

- Two strains: *C. fetus fetus*, *C jejuni*. Latter more common in the sheep flock.
- Abortion storms (up to 40%) rare but spectacular. Low level background losses probably more common. NZ experience. Some Aus trial work.
- Vaccinate if:
 - Diagnosed with campy abortion.
 - Difference between scanning and marking results. Particularly did not lamb ewes. Role of serology.
 - Supplementary feeding/controlled grazing/droughtlots.
- Re-emergence of Brucellosis

Nutrition of Winter Ewes

- Big difference between merino and prime-lamb ewes: need to run PL's at lighter body condition. Suggest lambing at 3 to 3.25. Heavy ewes have problems with:
 - Casting
 - Preg tox
 - Prolapse
 - Dystocia (particularly in singles)
 - Foot abscess
- Importantly, if your ewes are consistently > CS 3.5 you are probably understocked.
- Irony is: we run merinos in 2-3, and PL ewes > 3.5. Big dividends to run heavier merinos.

Nutritional Requirements.

Class and Type	MJ ME/day	Pasture Requirement
Pregnant: 1-130d. Merino/XB; Twins and singles	8-12 MJ	700kg
Merino Single Lactation Day 20	16mj	1000 -1100kg
Merino Twin Lactation Day 20	22MJ	1400 kg
XB Single lactation day 20	22MJ	1300kg
XB Twin lactation Day 20	30MJ	1600kg



Supplementation.

- If you need to *supplement* to maintain or improve BCS, *grain is the only option* (unless you have silage >10MJ).
- You should test all feeds, but particularly long feeds.
- Hay is a good supplement if you do not need to supplement.
- Legume hay is a good option for protein supplementation during lactation. Most legume hays fall disappointingly short in energy density.
- A trickle of grain (100g/hd/day) is a good way to ward off preg tox in fat twin bearing ewes.



Key Points

- Parasitism:
 - Prelambing drench almost universal.
 - Limit use of LA's to keep mectins (particularly LA's) working.
 - Watch for emergence of barbers pole.
- Pasture targets:
 - Most merinos need increase BCS. Many XBs need fining down.
 - If pasture is inadequate you need high energy supps (grain).
 - Watch Ca nutrition on winter cereals and with grain supps.
- Vaccination:
 - 6 in 1 probably and JD definitely.
 - Campy if indications are there