

STAFF COMMENT

The days are getting longer, and spirits are high. Wintering for most is flying past with only a few minor glitches.

On the staff front we have a small predicament. We would like to introduce Vet Katie Williams who is with us for the 2nd half of the year, hailing from the UK. She has slotted in well and has glowing reports from clients already! We have also secured another Vet, Kate Dugher who will join us mid August and has a strong interest in repro work, particularly equine. Neither are to be confused for Kate (Taylor) who you all know is on extended maternity leave but still works weekends for us. If you add also Kayla and Mikaela to the mix if you forget which vet you were dealing with, if you guess the 'lass with a K' then you will be right more than half of the time! It is great to also welcome back Vet Nigel Dougherty after many years of intrepid vetting afar. He will be splitting his time between the Te Anau and Riversdale clinics. So along with the regulars, including those behind the desks and telephone, we have an awesome team ready for Spring. See you out there!

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

NEW PRODUCT IMPROVES LAMB SURVIVAL

Dairy farmers will be well aware of the benefits of using Multimin, but new research has highlighted some exciting benefits for sheep farmers. Injecting ewes pre-lamb with Multimin resulted in improved survival, increased lamb weaning weights and increased ewe weaning weights. The original research was from Australia but this has been repeated on sheep farms near Gisborne and in North Canterbury.

In the North Canterbury study, the net benefit was an extra 5.8kg of lamb weaned for every ewe injected. This was on farms that already had adequate mineral levels – you don't need low levels to get these benefits. I am in the process of planning some trial work in Northern Southland for this spring, but if anyone wants to try this in their own flocks this season get in touch with the team.

Andrew Cochrane BVSc BApplSci Ag

Cattle Reminders

- Magnesium supplementation
- Consider drenching yearlings
- Vitamin A, D, E to milk fever prone cows
- Booster dose BVD vaccine to heifers
- Monitor conditions post calving

CAT BITE ABSCESES

Here's What You Need to Know

We've seen quite a few cats coming in with abscesses lately, so we wanted to share some information to help you recognise the signs early and know when your cat might need a vet check. Cats are naturally territorial and will often get into fights to defend their space, expand their territory, or find mates. Unfortunately, these fights often involve teeth, and a cat's mouth is full of bacteria. When a cat bites another cat, it creates a small puncture wound that seals over quickly, trapping bacteria under the skin. The body responds by sending in white blood cells (pus), leading to swelling, pain, and infection. If left untreated, these infections can quickly make your cat very unwell.

What does a cat bite abscess (CBA) look like?

Abscesses often appear as a swollen, sore lump, you may also notice:

- Your cat is quieter than usual or hiding
- A reduced appetite
- A limp or signs of pain
- A visible wound or scab
- A fever

These abscesses can become very painful, and cats often need treatment to get on top of the infection. The best way to reduce the risk of cat bite abscesses is to keep your cat indoors, especially at night, when most fights occur. Neutering male cats also helps, as it reduces their desire to roam and get into fights.

If you notice a lump, swelling, limping, or your cat seems quiet and off their food, it's best to get them checked as soon as possible. Early treatment can prevent the abscess from worsening and get your cat back to feeling comfortable again.

Kayla Burton BVSc



Sheep Reminders

- Order lambing requirements (complete our pre-lamb vaccine order form).
- Blood test ewes metabolic profile.
- FEC ewes and consider pre-lamb drench.
- Vaccinate ewes clostridial vaccine.
- Reassess ewe feed levels.
- Vitamin E/Selenium to brassica fed hoggets.
- Assess spring feed budget.
- Drench ewes iodine.
- Ensure PAR/RVM authorisation is current.

TIME TO PLAN FOR DISBUDDING

Calves will soon be hitting the ground so it's time to start planning for Disbudding! Calves can be safely disbudded between 2-6 weeks of age, making it essential to prepare in advance.

It's important to remember there are minimum legal requirements when disbudding. Since 1 October 2019, it has been mandatory under MPI Animal Welfare regulations to use local anaesthetic when disbudding calves in New Zealand. This ensures that calves do not feel pain during this procedure.

The New Zealand Veterinary Association recommends going a step further for the best pain management and welfare outcomes. This gold standard includes a combination of:

- Sedation
- Local anesthetic
- Systemic pain relief (NSAIDs)

This combination provides the best management for pain and stress effectively, allowing your calves to recover faster and thrive after disbudding.

Why use systemic pain relief?

While local anesthetic lasts for 2-3 hours, research shows that calves exhibit pain associated behaviours for at least 24 hours after disbudding. Using systemic pain relief helps reduce this ongoing pain, supporting calf comfort and welfare. Research also shows that systemic pain relief alone (without sedation) is not enough to reduce visible pain indicators, highlighting the value of a combined approach.

Why use sedation?

Sedation not only positively affects welfare but also provides benefits to calf growth rates. Studies show that sedated calves have lower pain sensitivity for up to 24 hours post-disbudding and exhibit 53% fewer visible pain behaviours compared to calves disbudded without sedation. Additionally, sedated calves gained 0.1 kg/day more in the first week and 0.05 kg/day more over 28 days compared to non-sedated calves, supporting healthier growth rates.

What other procedures can be done during disbudding?

While calves are sedated, it's an ideal time to complete other procedures to reduce stress and minimise handling, these can be:

- Administering vaccinations
- Checking for and removing extra teats
- Castration
- Ear tag marking
- DNA and BVD testing



Kayla Burton BVSc

NSVETS TOTAL VET CARE
CALENDAR COMPETITION

BEST PHOTO TAKES HOME \$500 CASH

WANTED:
photos of farming,
pets or vets & local
landscapes

There is no age restriction, the competition is open to all (children, students and adults). Artwork needs to be of sufficient quality for our website or 2026 calendar. The contributing artists will be recognised.

Conditions of entry: All art remains the property of NSVets and is able to be used for publicity purposes. It must be of A4 size in the landscape setting. All entries must be delivered to our Riversdale Clinic no later than 5pm 7th October 2025.

By entering the entrant agrees to these terms and conditions.
Email: sona@nsvets.co.nz
101 Berwick Street
Riversdale (03) 302 5630

Pet Reminders

- Check teeth and clip nails
- Check warmth of bedding
- Book Arthritis or senior wellness Check

Horse Reminders

- Hoof care reminder
- Check for lice
- Boost pregnant mares diet

HOW WELL ARE YOUR COWS RECOVERING POST-CALVING? WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Post-calving recovery is critical to maintaining cow health, productivity, and reproductive success. To assess whether your cows are recovering well, focus on key indicators such as **Body Condition Score (BCS)**, **appetite**, **rumination**, and **liver function** (via blood tests).

Key Indicators of Post-Calving Recovery

1. Appetite and Feed Intake

A well-recovered cow will show a strong appetite and increase her feed intake soon after calving. A prompt return to rumination is also a good sign. **Rumination minutes** should return to **400+ minutes** per day by **Day 4–5** post-calving. If rumination drops below 300 minutes during this time, it may signal issues related to transition nutrition, calcium levels, or inflammation.

2. Rumination and Activity Levels

Rumination and activity levels should both increase after calving. Mismatched trends—such as low rumination despite high activity or vice versa—could point to an imbalance in the cow's diet or an energy deficit.

Nutritional Stress and Body Condition

Nutritional stress can affect cows of any BCS at calving, particularly if they haven't been transitioned properly. However, cows that are **losing weight** in the weeks before calving or are **overly fat** are especially vulnerable. When fat is mobilized for energy, it can create **inflammation** and increase the risk of conditions like **ketosis** and other metabolic diseases.

To reduce stress and support recovery, ensure **colostrum cows** receive the same quality feed they were given during the transition period. Providing **ad libitum fiber**, such as hay, can help stimulate rumen function and reduce feed refusal. Furthermore, **avoid** changing feed timing or content post-calving as this can disrupt the cow's recovery process.

Indicators of Nutritional Stress:

- **Elevated blood levels of BHOB (Beta-Hydroxybutyrate) and NEFA (Non-Esterified Fatty Acids)** are common in cows under nutritional stress.
- **Liver stress, inflammation, and reduced reproductive performance** often accompany these elevated blood markers.

The Role of Liver Function in Recovery

The **liver** plays a central role in post-calving recovery. Cows with **higher liver activity** after calving generally experience better appetite, higher milk yields, and fewer metabolic

issues. Poor liver function, however, increases the risk of diseases like **ketosis**, **mastitis**, and **hypocalcemia**.

One of the key factors influencing liver function is **antioxidant capacity**, which supports immune function and overall health. Cows with low antioxidant levels are more susceptible to postpartum infections and conditions such as **retained membranes**.

Enhancing Antioxidant Capacity: The Role of Selenium

Supplementing with **selenium** can help improve antioxidant capacity, which in turn supports the immune system, reduces the risk of postpartum diseases, and aids in liver recovery. This leads to improved feed intake and milk production.

The Importance of Blood Tests

Blood tests are invaluable for assessing liver function, metabolic status, and overall health post-calving. Regular testing—whether during the **transition period**, **close-up**, **colostrum**, or **milking groups**—should be a part of your health management plan. These tests can guide nutrition decisions and help prevent potential health issues.

Conclusion

Monitoring your cows' recovery after calving involves paying attention to key signs such as BCS, appetite, rumination, and liver function. By focusing on proper nutrition, reducing stress, and addressing any metabolic issues early, you can support a smooth and successful recovery for your cows, ensuring better milk yield, reproductive health, and long-term productivity.

Acknowledgement to AgVance minerals for information in this article.



Deer Reminders

- Copper as required
- TB test
- Supplementary feed stags
- Weaners—check parasite levels
- Sort stags into velveting mobs

