

FERNLEAF Newsletter March 2015

Greetings from Fernleaf.

We wanted to make contact now the rams have to make their contribution to your flock's future genetic gain, and not just to get this year's ewes pregnant. Too many farmers get this wrong! Things are looking better for the sheep (meat) industry – so long may it last.

We believe, there's never been a time when genetics have been more important, with ewe numbers still falling and sheep being banished to the hard hill country due to the overhyped dairy industry.

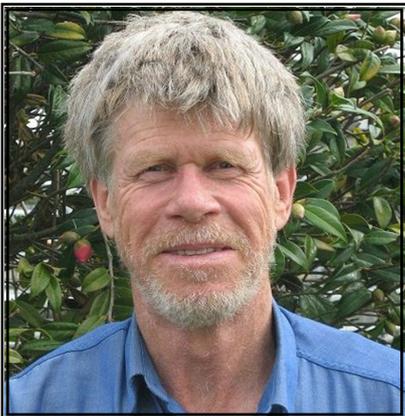
Genetics have always been a cheap input, as gains are not lost when the environment gets tough, and returns fluctuate wildly. Genetic gains remain to be built on each year, and most importantly - become a serious part of the capital value of the farm.

These basic facts are swamped by massive promotion and advertising by international companies on worm drench. Why do they need to give hams or fishing gear away to sell drench at Christmas?

Open Day

To deal with the many issues facing hill country farmers, and especially how to deal with approaching tsunami of drench resistance, we had an Open Day on the farm last October. It was a great success, with ram clients, and others from local support industries, all keen to get up to date on what we are doing.

Our key speaker was production animal consultant and veterinarian Trevor Cook from Totally Vets Feilding. Trevor is also the driving force behind 'Wormwise' – the national strategy to deal with internal parasites in sheep and beef cattle.



Trevor's key points:

1. Worms reduce production even when a fully effective drench is used.
2. Setting up grazing systems to minimise the level of worm challenge will enhance production.
3. Using a fully effective drench is essential to also minimise the impact of worms.
4. On most farms worm drenches are failing. On the majority of farms more than one drench family is not fully effective.
5. On the vast majority of farms triple combination drenches are working.
6. Using a fully effective drench is being smart, because it is most cost effective, it allows maximum gain to result from drenching and it creates options for future drench choices.

Trevor also gave advice on actions needed to reduce the selection pressure for worms to become resistant to drenches. We have put these points on our newly-developed website www.fernleaframs.co.nz along with other Fernleaf information.

Also on our website, are the key points John McCarthy and Dave McGaviston of MIE made at our Open Day. There's no doubt that John and Dave are very sincere in their mission to encourage some change in the industry, and we are keen to support them by allowing them access to our mailing list.

NOTE: But if you **do not** want your name passed on to MIE, then let us know immediately.

How well are drenches working on farms?

Here are some results from a VetEnt survey published in their November 2014 Newsletter. They come from a survey done across VetEnt clinics last summer. The really bad news was that on no farm were all drench families fully effective.

Number of farms where drench family failed

- White (BZ). 15 out of 15. (100% fail)
- Clear (Levamisole). 11 out of 16. (70% fail)
- Double combination. 7 out of 17. (41% fail)
- Ivermectin. 7 out of 10. (70% fail)
- Moxidectin. 7 out of 13. (54% fail)
- Abermectin. 7 out of 13. (54% fail)
- Abermectin. 5 out of 6. (83% fail)
- Triple combination. 1 out of 7. (14% fail)



2014 ram lambs selected for worm resistance and reduced dags.
When tested at 10 months of age, 43% had Zero FEC.
Never drenched

FERNLEAF thoughts about the survey

1. What's very clear to us as ram breeders is that the future of drenching sheep with the current chemicals is on fast track to total disaster.
2. Even the apparent 'good news' of the triple combinations still working well is in fact 'bad news', with 14% failure already.
3. This can only accelerate and there are cases now of farms where the triples are failing. There's also evidence that the two new drench families have failed on goats – and sheep are not far away.
4. The triple failure is surely a clear signal to really get in and exploit genetics with a fast-track breeding programme – without delay. It's not a slow process if you have the right breeding goals and can apply some good selection pressure using Faecal Egg Counts (FEC) and Faecal Consistency Score (FCS) or use a less accurate Dag Score.
5. There's no higher priority for commercial sheep farmers to start a positive genetic selection programme with this season's Fernleaf rams.
6. Imagine having to sell a farm with total drench resistance? Does the vendor tell it as it is, and provide a recent FECRT accepting a reduced price, or just keep quiet and 'buyer beware'? Could the vendor be sued after the sale? The future of the farm could be cattle, or manuka and bees.

Too many good rams wasted

The old genetic principle still applies, that if you consistently buy rams from a stud making genetic gain (which can be seen by a genetic trend graph), you will follow that genetic trend at the same rate, but two sheep generations (6 years) behind. This applies to ALL the rams on the SIL Selection List, and not just the top and most expensive ones, as breeders have done all their culling before deciding which ram lambs to keep, and before sending their data to SIL.

So the rams lower down the SIL list will still be improvers in most commercial flocks, and should be used extensively as a team to provide rapid improvement in the flock average performance – and especially to reduce worm resistance and dags.

Sire Id	Dam Id	DamNLB	DamNLW	B/R	Animal	Index	Rank	NLBbv	WWTbv	Rank	LW10bv	FW12bv
424/11	84/07	.2222	.1211	2/1	222/13	610	109	0.110	0.56	134	2.10	0.28
163/09	672/07	.2122	.2121	2/1	223/13	725	86	0.066	0.70	124	3.22	0.42
M607/10	586/08	.1222	.1121	2/1	226/13	1077	36	0.039	-0.28	163	0.48	-0.42
397/08	688/11	.2	.2	2/2	231/13	27	163	0.059	1.77	39	5.04	-0.03
163/09	82/09	.112	.112	2/2	234/13	1674	7	0.086	2.65	8	8.12	0.18
163/09	567/07	..2222	..2112	2/2	236/13	739	83	0.104	0.93	111	2.81	0.23
697/11	567/07	..2222	..2112	2/2	237/13	967	49	0.104	0.93	111	2.81	0.23
424/11	218/07	..1221	..2112	2/2	238/13	533	118	0.011	1.58	50	3.77	0.30
163/09	454/10	.12	..1221	2/2	242/13	1257	20	0.092	0.39	144	2.53	0.35
163/09	475/07	..1222	.12	2/2	244/13	1110	29	0.085	1.95	29	4.78	0.43
276/11	20/08	..2222	..1222	2/2	250/13	846	65	0.011	2.00	24	4.71	0.36
163/09	676/11	.2	.2	2/2	251/13	1015	41	0.070	2.40	16	4.42	-0.18
163/09	603/07	..2122	.2	2/2	256/13	998	43	-0.001	1.52	56	5.35	0.31
163/09	603/07	..2122	..2121	2/2	257/13	985	45	-0.001	2.01	23	5.24	0.24
163/09	121/06	..2222	..2121	2/2	260/13	977	47	-0.001	2.00	23	5.24	0.24
424/11	565/08	..1122	..2222	2/2	262/13	388	137	-0.011	1.51	24	5.21	0.24
424/11	305/07	..2222	..1122	2/2	264/13	963	50	0.110	0.71	57	3.55	0.37
163/09	313/10	.12	..1222	2/2	268/13	940	55	0.070	1.88	123	2.31	0.22
163/09	447/07	.12	.12	2/2	269/13	645	103	0.070	1.28	35	2.60	0.43
163/09	147/08	..2222	..1122	2/2	275/13	645	103	0.070	1.28	35	2.60	0.43
697/11	147/08	..2222	..2222	2/2	278/13	1091	31	0.043	0.85	79	4.09	0.33
397/08	304/07	..2222	..2222	2/2	279/13	710	91	0.049	2.00	117	2.64	0.19
163/09	680/09	.122	..2121	2/2	283/13	600	111	0.049	1.38	24	4.53	0.52
163/09	172/08	.1012	.1012	2/2	284/13	813	70	0.079	1.09	67	3.15	0.32
163/09	112/08	..2222	..1012	2/2	286/13	878	60	0.126	0.59	99	3.32	0.32
171/11	122/07	..2222	..2222	2/2								29.0

Central District's Field Days

We have decided to attend this event for the first time, and are really looking forward to meeting sheep farmers to learn about their breeding issues. So please call in for a chat at Site O 2c.



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