



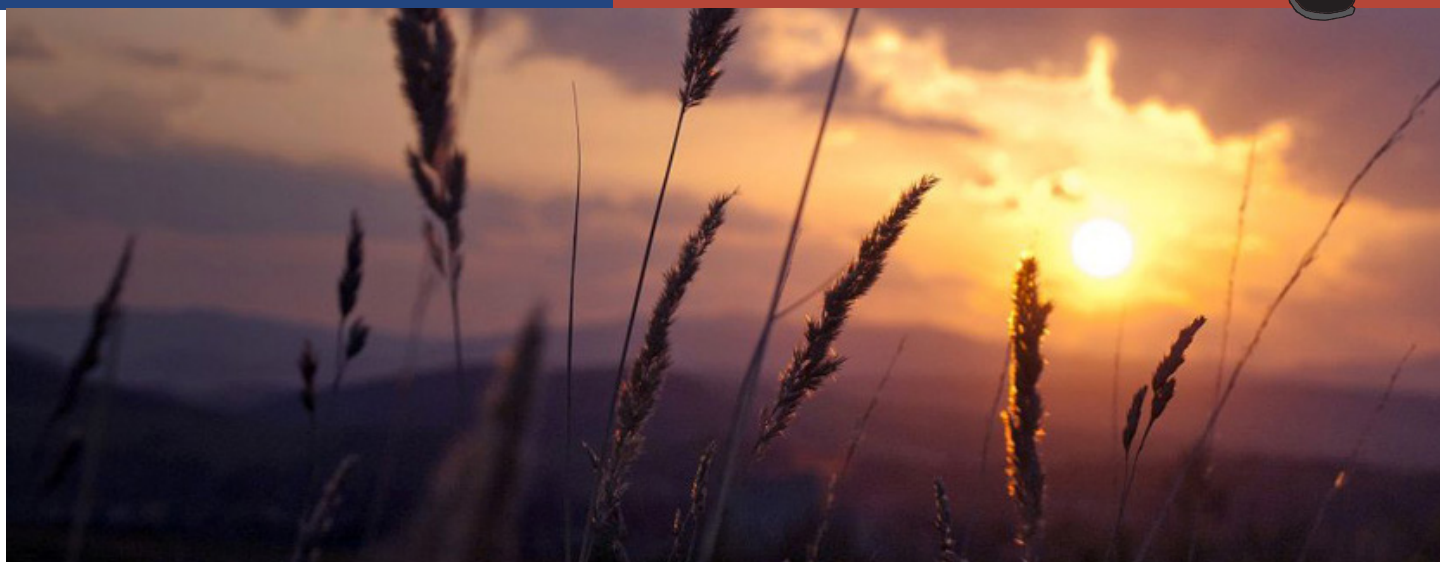
Over the Fence

Greetings from Wanganui Vet Services

March 2014 • Issue 19



Quarterly News and Views



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- >> Theileria Update
- >> Gold Standard Dry cow therapy
- >> Facial Eczema Management
- >> New Strain of Herpes Virus
- >> Barbers Pole

Animal Health Reminders

For the next three months:

- Pregnancy Testing Cows
- Leptospirosis Vaccinations Cattle
- Check Any Untested Rams
- Monitor Facial Eczema
- Toxo /Campy /Salmonella Vacc Ewes
- Yersinia Vacc Deer

At the time of writing, we are enjoying a very warm week as we head into another autumn. Stock are still doing well, but conditions are getting dry – hard work digging a strainer hole at the moment! Farm commodity prices are at least holding and prospects are good in the medium term, so let's keep producing as much as we can

It has been a great summer for stock – certainly a big change from last year. We have seen high percentages of lambs away in early drafts and dairy cows are continuing to produce at excellent levels. Early indications are that in-calf rates are above average this year and ewe condition is generally good so we should see plenty of lambs this coming season.

We have seen very few herd or flock health problems, though drench resistance in sheep continues to show up. It really is worth doing post-drench egg counts to monitor the situation on your farm – this is a free service when using most of our drenches and should be a routine farm management procedure.

The new disease due to Theileria infection has shown up on another property last week – remember that if you are farming only cattle, they should have another Bayticol about now to get rid of the adult ticks. The Theileria story is still unfolding but hopefully we should know a lot more about where it will go by next year.

A big congratulations to the O'Learys in winning the Avondale Cup with their horse 'Who Shot the barman' – I would imagine the barman was quite busy that night! We continue to punch above our weight with the successes our owners and trainers in Wanganui have in horse racing, so well done!

FODDER BEET

Over the last 5 years the use of fodder beet for feeding cattle has increased considerably. Why? Because it does have some good features

- ▶ Good weight gains and finishing from ad-lib feeding
 - ▶ It is the cheapest form of energy available of all crops
 - ▶ Very high yields. (20-30Tonnes/ha)
 - ▶ Very high levels of available sugar
 - ▶ Can be stored for up to 6 months
 - ▶ Has a high ME. Up to 12
- The use of sugar beet creates options for early weaning of beef

calves, for wintering one and two year old cattle and wintering beef and dairy cows.

There are some pitfalls that you need to be aware of:

- ▶ The high sugar levels can result in high levels of lactic acid in the rumen; Lactic acidosis. Same problem as when overfeeding with grain so there needs to be a period of adjustment whereby cattle are introduced to sugar beet slowly over a 1-2 week period from grass and have access to fibre e.g. silage or hay at all times.
- ▶ Leaf protein is 17% but bulb protein is 10% or less so overall protein levels are too low to support very high growth rates in young stock. The high ME and sugar levels are good for putting condition on adult stock
- ▶ Dry matter is quite low at 8-11% and the NDF fibre levels low at 10% so it is essential to supplement with a fibre source to maintain normal rumen function.

FUTURE OF NZ BEEF HERD

The continuing rise of the national dairy herd has seen a corresponding decline in the national beef herd. From a peak of 2.3 million beef cows in 1975/76 the breeding herd has fallen 54 percent to 1.05 million cows by 2012 and those that have remained have retreated mainly to the North Island's hard hill country (73 percent of the national herd is in the north island). The big issue is that Beef cows use 75% of their feed intake for maintenance and only return about 7cents per kilogram of dry matter consumed compared to approximately 20cents for dairy grazing and 16cents for ewes.

The other issue that is keeping the beef herd at the bottom of the table in respect to profitability is reproductive performance. The average beef cow calving percentage has been stuck about 82% for the past 40 years. Considerable research has been undertaken into diseases that affect reproduction including, Neospora, BVD virus, IBR virus, Leptospirosis and Campylobacter as well as work on bull soundness and cow nutrition and although some farmers have made some good gains by using the benefits of this research, overall the performance has not improved much.

One change that has helped profitability for a few farmers has been the successful use of calving 2 year old heifers with an additional calf in the cow's

lifetime. However some farmers have had poorer results with too many calving problems and dead heifers particularly when mating target weights have not been achieved or use of bulls leaving too big a calves .

Unlike sheep; beef cows are not good candidates for twinning and also the conception rate in beef cows is inherently a lot lower; 50-60% compared to 80-90% for ewes.

For all the negatives however beef cows still have a place in helping maintain pasture quality particularly in hill country. Being able to survive on as little as 3-6kgDM per day during the winter and then being able to increase their intake to 16-20kg DM during the spring flush after calving is an advantage that few stock classes can match.

Pasture quality is a critical driver in the hill country for ewe, lamb, steer and heifer performance and beef cows are really the only class of stock that can do it successfully so they do play a big role in improving the profitability of other farm enterprises

Looking to the future the beef cow will retain their place particularly in hill country. The beef cow of the future is likely to be somewhat fewer in numbers, moderate framed, predominately angus, produce high growth rate progeny, continue to have moderate reproductive performance and will be closely aligned to the pasture quality role. To get the best return; fitting the cow feed demand with the pasture growth curve will be paramount which means the start of calving has to coincide with the start of the spring flush.



THEILERIA UPDATE

After the initial devastating outbreak on one of our dairy farmer client's farm in the spring where a large number of the herd were affected and a large number had to be given blood transfusions; there has only been the odd isolated case since then in our practice with no more disasters. However we all need to be

on our guard and it is likely there will be more reported cases around the country after a large number of stock movements occur in the dairy industry in the autumn. Heifers coming home and going out to grazing. Cows going out to winter grazing.

The current status of Theileria in NZ is:-

- 327 farms have been tested positive for Ikeda starin of Thieleria (blood borne parasite)
- About 1000 cattle reported to have died
- The majority of cases in Northland and down to Waikato where a higher percentage of the tick population is.
- Cases reported in the lower north island have been sporadic including Wanganui, Eltham, Eketahuna and Napier
- The supply of drug to treat affected cattle in now in adequate supply
- Tickicide supplies for treating cattle with ticks are holding up and the ACVM has given approval for more to be imported.

To refresh your memories; the cause of the disease is a blood borne parasite called Theileria orientalis which is transmitted by cattle ticks when they feed on the animal's blood. It only occurs in cattle. Theileria damages red blood cells resulting in anaemia. The disease is not transmitted by direct animal to animal contact in the absence of ticks and there are no human health or food safety risks.

Symptoms

- Reduction in milk production
- Pale or white mucous membranes caused by anaemia as compared to a healthy pink colour. Check inside the vulva and the conjunctiva (membranes around the eye)
- Weakness and lagging behind when driven.
- Rapid breathing and heart rate.
- Reluctant to eat.

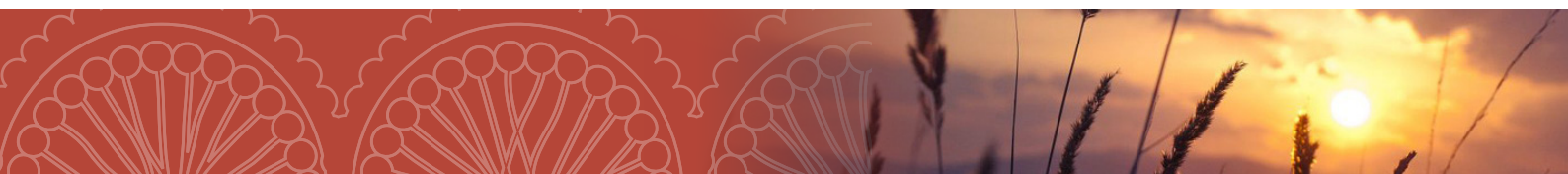
Cattle are most at risk when they have never been exposed before then moved to areas where infected ticks are present. Likewise, if an infected animal is transported, it can spread infection to ticks in the new location, in turn spreading disease to uninfected animals.

Management

- If you purchase cattle or take in grazing stock from the high risk area; Waikato north; treat with tickicide preferably Bayticol and quarantine for 2 weeks. Mind you keep in mind even if all ticks were able to be killed off infected animals will still have the parasite in their blood; so any naive ticks already in the environment could get infected when they feed off these bought in animals and then start spreading it through exposed cattle on your farm. If you don't have any ticks; no problem but can you be sure!!
- If you purchase cattle or take in grazing stock from low risk areas, check on the history of the farm and surrounding district and if no history of Theileria probably no need to treat. However have a good look for ticks and treat all stock if you find any.
- Good practice to keep tick numbers down on your own farm if you have any. **There are 2 critical times to treat cattle;** that will reduce the numbers of ticks.
 - ▶ Treat cattle with Bayticol between **July and August**. This will kill the nymphs that have over wintered. Nymphs once fed will become adults, so reducing nymph numbers early reduces subsequent adult numbers in October through to December
 - ▶ Another critical time to treat is when the larvae are active between **February and March**. By reducing their numbers there will be fewer nymphs to over winter (nymphs arise from fed larvae) and so next season there will be fewer adult ticks
 - ▶ Treatment outside the times mentioned will only target a small number of ticks as they are not as active at other times of the year. Maximum activity of each stage is compressed into a relatively short space of time hence the critical treatment periods.
 - ▶ Regularly check all classes of stock for ticks. Ticks are most likely to be found around the tail, on the udder, inside the legs, on the brisket and in the ears.
 - ▶ Use the new long acting tick and flea collar; Seresto on your dogs and cats to stop them spreading ticks.



Magnified image of a fully fed cattle tick (approx. 2.5mm)



BOVINE MALIGNANT CATARRHAL FEVER (MCF)

Every year we diagnose a few cases of MCF virus in cattle. A disease that is not well known and sometimes confused with BVD virus. It can cause all sorts of symptoms including cloudy eyes; nasty ulcers in the mouth, nose and vulva, scouring, nervous signs including convulsions, blindness,

enlarged lymph nodes and rapid loss in condition. Pregnant animals may abort. Most affected animals have very high temperatures and most affected animals eventually die. Most affected animals are 1 year or older indicating that MCF is a problem in older cattle and not a calf or weaner problem.

SHEEP SCANNING

Most sheep farmers in our district now pregnancy scan their ewes because they have realized there is value in identifying twins, singles, lates and dries early so management decisions can be made with this information to maximize farm income.

For those of you that haven't or those of you that have forgotten why you are doing it!! Here is a list of the benefits

- Twin bearing ewes can be fed better on the better country. They need to be fed half as much again as single ewes. Correct feeding will result in bigger twin lambs born and improved survivability
- Growth rate after birth of twin lambs is improved because their mothers can be stocked at lower stocking rate therefore will be in better condition at lambing and produce more milk.
- Fewer lambs lost if twin bearing ewes are lambing on easier more sheltered country.

- Fewer deaths from sleepy sickness if twin bearing ewes are well fed.
- More wool and less wool break if twin bearing ewes are well fed.
- Less lambing difficulty with single bearing ewes because they are not overfed.
- Immediate removal and early sale of dry ewes usually at a premium. This also results in the saving of feed for the productive ewes.
- Late lambing ewes can be sold or held up so early feed is not wasted on them.
- Problems in sheep reproduction performance can be identified and investigated.

Scanning Twins/Singles. Scan 80-100 days after rams joined.

Scanning Wet/Dries. Scan at least 40 days after rams removed after tupping.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A BOOKING IN PLACE.

NEW LONG ACTING FLEA COLLAR FOR WORKING DOGS

SERESTO is the name of the new long acting effective flea control collar for dogs and cats.

- Long lasting protection for 8 months
- Kills fleas and repels and kills ticks
- Ideal way to ensure working dogs don't spread ticks to cattle with the risk of them getting the new blood borne disease 'Theileria'
- The two active ingredients are rapidly distributed across the entire body through the fat layer of the skin.



- The Seresto collar is odourless and water resistant because the active ingredients are stored in the fat layer of the skin, so being wet won't wash them away.
- It is safe to use in puppies from 7 weeks of age and kittens from 10 weeks of age
- It has a high safety margin for dogs, cats and people.
- It can safely be used alongside normal collars without damaging them
- Cost effective for working dogs compared to other treatments
- Highly recommended for working dogs.

There is no vaccine to prevent it and no treatment to cure it. Fortunately it is sporadic; only affecting an occasional animal.

MCF is easily confused with Pink Eye because the cloudy eyes that develop with

both diseases can look similar. If cattle are treated for Pink Eye without any response; the diagnosis may well be MCF. Call in a Vet to get the right diagnosis. It may require a blood sample to be sent to the laboratory to confirm the diagnosis.

GOLD STANDARD DRY COW THERAPY

More and more dairy farmers throughout NZ are using the gold standard combination treatment for their herd i.e. treating cows with a long acting dry cow antibiotic followed by a teat sealant e.g. Teatseal or Sureseal at drying off.

The results are impressive from all the feed back we are getting from farmers doing this. We have three of our own clients doing it now and they have been very impressed with results with a lot less mastitis at calving; less mastitis during lactation and lower somatic cell counts. Their antibiotic usage during lactation has decreased dramatically.

The cornerstone of mastitis control at drying off is

- to cure existing infections
- to prevent new infections during the dry and around calving periods

The ability of antibiotic DCT to cure existing infections and prevent new infections in the early part of the dry period is well known. The udder is reasonably resistant to new infections through the mid dry period. The risk of infection increases significantly in the two weeks prior to calving -just when protection from the antibiotic DCT is tapering off, or has long gone as is the case when cows have to be dried off early or when shorter acting dry cow products have been used. In addition, NZ work shows that up to 50% of teats have not formed a teat plug 7 days after dry off, and up to 5 % of teats never form a teat plug. 97% of new infections are in 'open teats', i.e. those in which a teat plug has not formed.

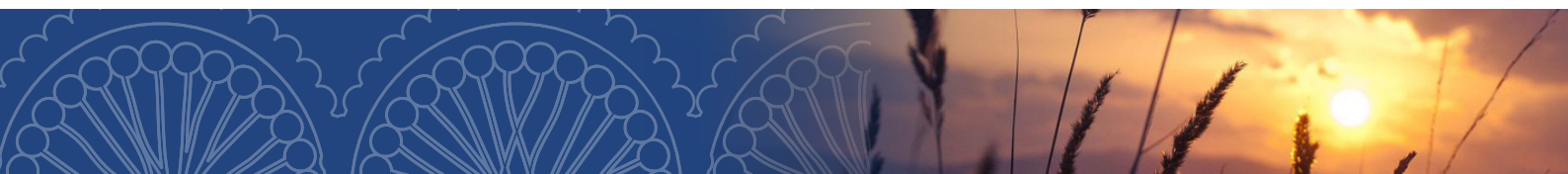
Adding a Teat sealant to your DCT programme means the udder is protected for the whole dry period. The Teatseal is generally removed either by the calf suckling or stripping out at the 1st milking. The use of a dry cow antibiotic followed by a teat sealant will reduce the number of cases of mastitis in the dry period and during lactation by at least 50%

ADMINISTERING COMBINATION THERAPY

Combination therapy must be used in lactating heifers with somatic cell counts >120,000 and lactating cows >150,000. You may just use a teat sealant on its own in heifers with somatic cell counts < 120,000 and lactating cows < 150,000 all season however the administration technique must be 100% hygienic otherwise serious mastitis may result from the introduction of mastitis forming bacteria at the time of teat sealant infusion without an antibiotic.

When administering combination therapy:

1. After cleaning each teat thoroughly with either a teat wipe or cotton wool ball soaked in 70% meths insert the dry cow antibiotic first.
2. Following its insertion massage the dry cow antibiotic carefully with a gloved hand up the teat canal into the udder.
3. Now the teat must be recleaned with either a teat wipe or cotton wool ball soaked in 70% meths.
4. Immediately after a tube of teat sealant is infused but do not massage it up the teat canal.
5. Treat all 4 teats in the following clockwise order one at a time LF, RF, RB, LB and finally spray and cover the teat ends with high strength teat spray





BEWARE OF THE BLOOD SUCKING WORM

Barber's pole (*Haemonchus*) is different to all other worms. It does not cause scouring like the others; instead it is a blood sucker. It is more likely to strike in the summer/autumn period after warm/humid weather and it can strike rapidly often without warning. Usually in lambs but sometimes ewes and even rams can be affected

Barbers pole sucks the blood out of the abomasum; the 4th stomach which results in:

- Ill thrift
- Pale gums
- Animals lagging at the end of the mob
- Collapsed or dead animals
- Rapid shallow breathing

In ideal weather conditions the life cycle of Barbers pole can be as short as 2 weeks so the usual drenching interval can be too short to prevent a sudden outbreak.

The best drenches to use to combat Barbers Pole are Vetdectin, Exodus or Genesis Ultra as they have prolonged activity and it's a good option to include one of these drenches in your drenching programme during the high risk summer/autumn period.

NEW STRAIN OF HERPES VIRUS AFFECTS HORSES IN THE WAIKATO

13 horses on a stud farm in the Waikato have been affected by Herpes Virus EHV-1 that has caused severe neurological symptoms. 7 of these horses have had to be destroyed. There have been no other reported outbreaks on any other properties so far. However, new cases cannot be ruled out as other animals were exposed to clinically affected horses. The single stud farm affected is maintaining voluntary quarantine and adhering to rigorous biosecurity measures. MPI is liaising closely with New Zealand Equine Health Association, the stud farm and their veterinarian to provide advice and support.

The history and clinical symptoms of EHV-1 myeloencephalopathy as it is called are as follows. The reported cases have occurred in a group of thoroughbred mares without recent history of travel. Horses have presented with central nervous system signs including ataxia and weakness or paralysis of limbs. In several cases the first presentation was urine dribbling or incontinence. In several cases, affected horses were found laterally recumbent without previous clinical signs. All affected horses are in a restricted area on the farm. Horses on this farm were up-to-date on EHV-1 vaccination, and



vaccination did not prevent illness. Movements within the farm are carefully restricted as part of quarantine procedures to reduce virus spread to non-affected horses.

Despite this being the first confirmed diagnosis of EHV-1 myeloencephalopathy in New Zealand, it is not unexpected. EHV-1 is a common virus in New Zealand and we routinely import horses from other countries that also have EHV-1 circulating. Although the neurological form of this disease caused by EHV-1 is rare, it may occur again, so we ask all horse owners to contact their Vet if a horse under their care develops symptoms as described.

INDUCTION POLICY FOR 2014

It has been reaffirmed that individual dairy farms will be permitted to induce up to 4% of their cows to calve this coming spring. Where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to have occurred, application can be made for a dispensation to exceed this target. Please note that only 4% will be accepted this year, not rounded figures of 4% (eg. 4.8 - 4.9%). All induced cows will have to be recorded and reported.

FACIAL ECZEMA MANAGEMENT

Although at the time of writing spore counts were low, a change in the weather conditions favouring spore production doesn't take all that long to occur so be on your guard.

Light rain and high humidity after a period of warm weather with soil temperatures greater than 12 degrees C at night are conducive to a rapid increase in spore counts.

Facial eczema is caused by the ingestion of sporidesmin a fungal toxin which is found at the base of the grass plant particularly in dead material. When ingested this toxin causes liver damage which then prevents the normal removal of a plant pigment called phylloerythrin. When this toxic pigment circulates in superficial skin blood vessels, it reacts with UV light from the sun and causes skin eczema in exposed skin e.g. around the face hence the name '**facial eczema**' whilst the skin lesions are the most visible it's the underlying liver damage that cause the main production losses.

The main signs of facial eczema are:

- Decreased milk production in dairy cows
- Skin lesions that cause restlessness and seeking shade
- Agitation including head shaking, tail twitching and licking skin lesions
- Decreased growth rates
- Reduced lifetime production including poorer reproductive performance

Diagnosis

- Typical skin lesions in conjunction with high spore counts
- Blood test to confirm FE liver damage
- Post mortem to confirm typical FE liver damage

Treatment

- Provide shade
- Remove from pasture with high spore counts
- Provide safe feed including conserved feed e.g. silage/hay or crops

- Ensure access to good water
- Application of UV light protectant zinc cream on affected skin
- B vitamins to help liver recovery
- Antibiotic treatment for secondary bacterial infections

Prevention

- Monitor spore counts and take precautions when counts start rising above 20,000
- Can spray pastures with fungicide e.g. Mycotak, Sporex, Benlate or Topsin
Need to spray before counts get too high before the anticipated risk period. Protection will last 4-6 weeks if applied correctly
- Can use zinc treatment which should begin 2-3 weeks before spore counts become dangerous. The options are;
 - ▶ Zinc oxide drench daily for milking cows
 - ▶ Weekly zinc oxide drench for dry stock
 - ▶ Zinc sulphate in drinking water or via a dispenser
 - ▶ Intra ruminal slow release zinc boluses are one of the best options and last 4-6 weeks depending on which class of stock being treated. They will need to be repeated every 4-6 weeks as needed whilst risk remains high
- Southern facing cooler hills are usually safer to graze in danger periods
- Pasture management. Lower stocking rate with higher pre and post grazing levels
- Use safer feed e.g. Clover dominant pastures. Plantain and chicory; crops.
- Use conserved feed e.g. silage
- Sell as much trading stock as possible off the farm before spore counts reach danger levels.

SUMMARY

- Avoid litter.
- Avoid heavy grazing.
- Graze 'safe areas'.
- Prepare safer areas for rotational grazing through the FE risk period.
- Quit non-capital stock early.
- Use safer alternative pastures and legumes.
- Use crops/supplements.



What's Up



VET NURSING CLASS 2014

The 2014 Class of Veterinary Nursing students has kicked off with ten units to be taught before the Easter break, this includes **Anatomy and Physiology, Care of Cats and Care of Dogs** scheduled to run most of the term, giving the students the foundation for the rest of their learning for the year.

The students are just two weeks into their study year and we have already had them out on their first Field Trip learning the skills involved in large animal handling with Dr. David Rankin.

The work placements have also started with the students out and about experiencing the related industries. We are very fortunate to have the support of many organisations willing to take our students. These include Wanganui SPCA, Belmont Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Vets On Carlton, Pet Essentials, Pet Dog School, Animal Vision pets and gifts and Riding For Disabled.

You will also see our students busy in the clinic, at work in reception, small animal surgery and out with the large animal vets. They are easily recognisable by their crisp new scrub tops and their smiling faces!

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