

PR Release:

Attention to detail pays dividends

When Rangitikei farmer David Gordon says he's meticulous, he's not kidding. He pays close attention to everything from the exact time sheep spend in the shower dip, to the accuracy of his drenching guns, to the security of his boundaries.

The 216-hectare rolling property, 10 kilometres from Marton, has been in the family for three generations and runs a mix of sheep, beef and cropping. There are 1,600 commercial Romney ewes and a 90-ewe Suffolk stud. Suffolks are used as terminal sires over the Romneys and he achieves excellent weights and growth rates.

Last season he produced 2,000 lambs averaging very close to 19 kg. The first of them are off the property at 12 weeks of age by late November (at 18 kg last season) and they are all gone by March. The lambs are brought through with the assistance of a regular four-weekly drenching programme.

He buys in beef weaners at 200 kg liveweight, which he takes through to 240 kg deadweight in just 12 months. About 25 hectares are cropped each year, mainly with malting barley.

David's attention to detail has brought him some good results over the years, and he's acutely conscious of the returns he gets from different strategies. For example, putting zinc into the troughs to counter facial eczema yielded an extra tonne of wool, while a pre-weaning tapeworm treatment for the lambs adds an additional 2 kg to lamb finishing weights.

But it was a problem in his stud Suffolk flock that had him stumped. Despite using a five-in-one at docking, he was losing about half a dozen good big ram lambs each year between docking and weaning – for no obvious reason. He was also having stud lambs born dead. "It was so frustrating!"

"About six years ago I saw a snippet in the paper about another Suffolk breeder who had similar problems and he'd used Covexin® 10 with some real success," David says.

He consulted his vet and they decided to implement a programme with Covexin 10 in the stud flock.

The vaccine protects against the organisms that cause the "traditional" clostridial diseases such as pulpy kidney, tetanus and blackleg that are covered by conventional five-in-one clostridial vaccines. But beyond this it contains protection against a further five clostridial organisms, for example *Clostridium sordellii*, or *C. perfringens* Type A. These are known to cause sudden death in otherwise healthy and fast-growing animals being intensively raised.

The ewes receive a pre-lamb vaccination and the lambs receive shots at docking and weaning. The rams are also vaccinated.

"Since I started doing that, I just don't lose stud sheep any more! The lamb survival at birth is much better now, and I'm not having sheep dying on me any more. It's made a colossal difference."

David says vaccinating the lambs with Covexin 10 in their own right adds the certainty he wants when it comes to preventing sudden deaths from clostridial disease.

And for a farmer who puts such care into his animal health planning, that's an important detail.

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Caption: David Gordon: Vaccinating stud flock has made a "colossal difference".

If you're proud of your stock, only the best protection will do.

Covexin® 10: Superior protection for ALL clostridial diseases.

Covexin® 10 is a Prescription Animal Remedy (P.A.R) Class I. For use only under the authority or prescription of a veterinarian. Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. A9028. Contains inactivated toxoids of *Clostridium perfringens* (types A, B, C and D), *C. novyi* (type B), *C. septicum*, *C. tetani*, *C. sordellii*, and *C. haemolyticum* and inactivated whole cell culture of *C. chauvoei*. ©Registered trademark. Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, 33 Whakatiki Street, Upper Hutt. Phone: 0800 800 543. COV-458-2009

