

CUD

“Cows Under Discussion” or “Something to Chew On”



November 2015



Clinic News

The westerly gales of the last few weeks, following a winter of cold southerlies, indicate that the predictions of a strong El Nino summer are probably going to be correct. This is most likely to mean a cool, dry summer for the east coast of the South Island which will add to the challenges this season has already thrown at us. Start planning now, and remember MPI and DairyNZ are there with advice to help.

At the practice, between the gales and the showers, we have just about finished the calf debudding, are cleaning up the last of the metrichecking, and now we are right into the repro programmes. Days in milk next season will be critical on regaining the ground lost this season, so give us a call to discussing getting those early submission rates up.

Stage 1 of the Balclutha building work is nearing an end. By the time you read this we will have occupied the new upstairs office spaces, and won't be far off moving into the new small animal hospital. We are planning to offer a tour of the facility before our AGM on 24 November – all members are welcome to come along for a look.

One in five does matter! *(Chris - photo to go with this when they go out to do fertility testing on Wednesday)*

We are already identifying infertile bulls on farm. An infertile bull will serve cows but not get them pregnant, effectively blocking them from the other bulls. A minimum ratio is one bull per 25-30 cows and Dairy NZ recommends resting bulls two days on two days off. It doesn't take much to go wrong in your team before your remaining bulls are overstretched.

One in five bulls nationwide is sub fertile. Congenital defects are common in young bulls and if you buy a related team, you won't realize they all have the same problem until it is too late.

Testing bulls is probably easier and quicker than you think. We perform a physical exam then collect semen using modern electro-ejaculation which nowadays is the worldwide recognized standard. Bulls are graded using a number of different criteria. Scrotal circumference should be greater than 34 cm for 2 year olds and greater than 36 for mature bulls. Sperm motility is scored from 1 to 5 and the percentage swimming appropriately in a straight line is noted. Morphology testing looks for abnormalities in individual sperm which are most commonly found in Guernsey and Hereford lines.

Most bulls get a good pass. Some causes of infertility can be treated but it takes at least 60 days for fertile sperm to be produced after the problem has been corrected. Due to the tight New Zealand calving season most bulls end up being culled and replaced. Early testing is key.

Trace Elements *(Izzy)*

Even when cash flow may be less than wonderful, knowing where you're at with trace elements pre-mating (i.e. last week!) is worth the investment. If you can reduce your level of supplementation, great! If you need to give more, you know that the investment will pay off in days in milk next season. Insufficient minerals = insufficient conception rate! To boot, our pathology laboratory is on board this year with price specials for 'lactating cow profiles'.

The two to test, at a minimum, are copper and selenium. A quick one-hour visit is all that's required to sample 2 first-calvers and 4 mixed age cows for copper via biopsy, and a few extras for selenium via blood test. A deficiency of one or both results in a poor mating period, and fewer days in milk next season – the driver of your business.

Magnesium is another element worth testing for. If insufficient magnesium is limiting your production, you need to

know about it. It's a cheap fix!! Especially in a season where N and pro-gib are going to be a big part of your feed strategy, knowing how much they are interfering with mag levels is important.

Another point about feed strategy – It's easy to assume that because a cow is offered enough feed that the cells in her body are using it how they are supposed to. Not so, unfortunately... Adding a simple (and cheap!) blood test for "B-OHBs" (a marker for energy balance) can tell you black-and-white whether every cell in every cow is getting enough energy (udder and ovaries included). It's a problem better considered at this end of the mating period, rather than when looking back at your 3 and 6 week in calf rate.

Long story short – if you don't know where you're at, you can't do anything about it, and you might lose out on (a lot) more than just the cost of the testing.

Training Opportunities (Keara)

Clutha Vets are pleased to offer several training opportunities for your staff this summer. We have practical on farm workshops available for the topics below. Please email kbrennan@cluthavets.co.nz if you or your staff would like to brush up your skills and we will give you details of your nearest workshop. Let us know if there are other training topics you would like us to cover and we'll see what we can do for you.

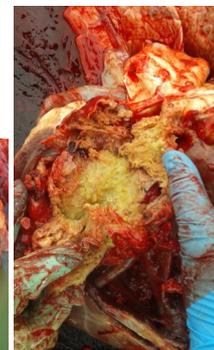
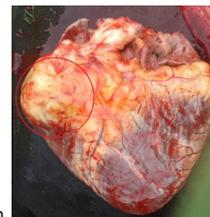
- Treating lame cows – Theory and practical training on how to treat the common causes of lameness
- Lame cow prevention – Staff level workshop on preventing lame cows on farm
- Cow health and condition – Staff level workshop on early detection of cow health issues
- Welfare matters – Management level workshop on welfare codes and requirements on dairy farms

Checklist for this month

- Monitor submission rates. 90% submission in three weeks requires 4.5% of the herd to be put up every day
- Treatment of non-cycling cows (metrichecking is not the same as treating non-cyclers)
- Call us for bull fertility testing
- Use herd test results to identify cows you may look to cull when the feed becomes tight
- Look at your BVD bulk milk monitoring results
- Plan a health programme for calves over the summer

An interesting case: (Bridget)

This cow was seen by us for being off colour and off her milk, and when we examined her we found a severe heart murmur. On post mortem there was a large abscess on one side of the heart.



Clutha Vets AGM

This year Clutha Vets AGM will be held at the Rosebank Lodge on Tuesday 24th November, 2015, at 8pm. All members are cordially invited to attend. Prior to the meeting we hope to be able to show anyone interested round the completed (hopefully!!) part of the clinic redevelopment.

This year the board have decided not to post out printed copies of the Annual Report. There will be limited numbers of hard copies available to anyone who would like one. It will also be available on our website or by email. Please contact the clinic or email smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz to request a copy.

Retail

Eclipse 2.5lt Pour-on - eprinomectin injection get a third free; or put another way, treat 200 cows and get the next 100 free.

Competition Winner - The last of our Calf-Link newsletters for this season went out last week and we'd like to congratulate the winner of our final quiz for the season—Melinda Tiller.

Balclutha Clinic

2 Wilson Rd
Balclutha
03 418 1280
admin@cluthavets.co.nz

Milton Clinic

106 Union Street
Milton
03 417 8032
milton@cluthavets.co.nz

Clydevale Store

2229 Clydevale Road
Clydevale
03 415 9121
clydevale@cluthavets.co.nz



www.cluthavets.co.nz

CLUTHA
VETS