



CLUTHA VETS DAIRY FARMER NEWSLETTER



December 2016



Clinic News

Well it's been a bit up & down weather-wise over the past few weeks - hot, cold, windy and fairly wet, and at the time of writing it looks like this is set to continue for a bit.

Treating non-cycling cows is now tapering off, and we're seeing, typically for the time of year, a number of lame cows. Before anyone knows it we'll be dusting off the scanners and toughbooks for preg testing.

The winner of last month's Moovie quiz was Raewyn van Vugt. The answer: 1999 movie - Lake Placid; and the trailer picture was of Betty White setting up her cow to be the bait to catch the monster crocodile terrorising the residents of Black Lake, (and they made 4 sequels!). Thanks to everyone who sent in or phoned up with their answers.

Finally - from all of us to all of you, your families and staff - we'd like to wish you Happy Christmas, and the very best for 2017.

Bull Mating

We are over the hump with AI, as it were, but even with the world's best AI regimen, 20% of your herd will still require bull power to get in calf.

Getting the most out of your bulls:

- Make sure the little swimmers can do the job; there's no point feeding and managing a dud bull! Breeding soundness exams are part and parcel, get them done - last month!
- If you have had some pet bulls living in a back paddock left over from last year, it's worth thinking about their mineral status - are you on top of their copper and selenium?
- Make sure your bulls are disease free; every bull should be BVD tested, and have completed the two dose course of BVD vaccine at least 4 weeks prior to going out. Lepto vaccination status is worth considering when selecting your bulls - at a minimum, they should be vaccinated as they arrive at your property. 7 in 1 vaccination covers this, plus prevents clostridial diseases, bonus!
- That footsore bull? He's not making any babies. Check your bulls

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regularly, and bring them in for a look and treatment ASAP. Not only a good idea to keep them doing their job – they need to be well enough to get on the truck at the end of the season. If the infection gets into a joint, there's no rescue. Even the best facilities can be a match for a sore, angry bull; keep yourself and your staff safe from harm, get a vet to see him and sedate him if needs be.

- Make sure your bulls don't get shagged out – rotate them frequently. Any longer than three days and all the required parts start getting tired, any more than 10 and you're asking for trouble.
- Having two teams is ideal: establish the bull groups well before mating, and keep them the same throughout to reduce the amount of time bashing heads and maximise their useful energies.
- Try to keep the bulls off the lanes and off the yard if possible, it really helps to save their feet.
- **So how many bulls will I need?**
 - A rule of thumb is 1:30 2yr old bulls in the paddock at any time for all estimated non-pregnant cows, and 1:15 or 1:20 for your heifers.
 - Well-grown yearling beef bulls are fine over smaller crossbred cows but don't expect these bulls to serve as many cows - an approximate ratio is 1:20. The advantage of yearling bulls is they can be used next year as a two year old – as long as weight gain is restricted.

Be conservative when estimating the pregnancy rate; a 90% submission rate with a 50% conception rate over six weeks of AB will produce a 70% in-calf rate.

This means: **for a 400 cow herd with a 70% in-calf rate, two teams of 4 bulls are required.** Don't underestimate the amount of semen you need! *Each bull only needs to get one cow in calf and he's paid for himself.*

Lame Cows

Concerned about your submission rate? Cows not showing heat? Slow cows?

Whenever a bad spell of wet weather visits the area (November, anyone?), lame cows seem to pop out of nowhere. Research shows that farms with a seasonal lameness percentage greater than 7% are likely to have some ways of decreasing the problem, whether this is through management or infrastructure/tracks and laneways. Through the Healthy Hoof Programme we can help you identify

things that could help, and we can also train your staff in prevention and treatment of lame cows. If you're interested in the Healthy Hoof Programme or want to talk about your lame cows, please contact us at the clinic.

In the meantime, work out a routine to get your lame cows treated promptly, and make taming those wacky toes a priority. Overgrown feet and lameness can quickly progress to a stage where more expensive and laborious treatment is required; do less sooner, rather than more later.

Non-cycling cows

At this time of year, it can be helpful for us to scan ovaries – we can see what's going on, and choose individual treatments for the cows depending on their needs. This maximises the efficiency of the money spent, and also makes sure we don't waste time by accidentally stopping cows from cycling.

Phantom Cows

A phantom cow is when a cow is mated and fails to come on heat 18-24 days later even though she has failed to conceive. It is estimated that around 13% of cows in the average Friesian/cross herd can be put into this category.

There are a number of possible causes of this syndrome including:

- Heats that go undetected
- Early embryonic loss
- Cows going anoestrus
- Uterine infection, cystic ovaries, or other diseases.

If you have used a PG programme or treated a large number of cows with CIDRs around the start of mating, and are concerned about a particularly high non-return rate in your herd, we would recommend early pregnancy testing. This can be done as early as 6 - 7 weeks into mating.



Pregnancy Testing

Getting quality data from your pregnancy testing makes for quality wintering management design, calving plans for next season, and plans for tweaks to next year's mating. Clutha Vets' pregnancy testing is more than just "scanning your cows". We will customise our service to meet your needs. We offer advice on the best time to scan your cows, and have a team of experienced scanners available at the right

time to accurately age pregnancies. We manually check cows scanned empty, which also allows us to identify cows unsuitable to carry over. Results can be electronically recorded on our ToughBooks (or you can use our technicians to do it). We can upload results directly to MINDA, promptly providing comprehensive reports, including empty cows, weekly due-to-calve, and expected due date by cow number lists. We offer a safe and efficient service at a competitive price. Phone the clinic now to discuss how we can help you out.

Calves

As more calves are weaned and head away for grazing it is important to monitor their progress and keep husbandry procedures up to date.

- Regular drenches are required (every 28 days from their fourth week on pasture) as calves have yet to build any immunity or tolerance of parasites. Remember a combination oral is the preferred drench for at least the first two drenches (no “mectins” if under 120kg! More on this below).
- Weighing calves also gives you a chance to monitor their growth and make sure they are on track to reach target weights (not just body condition!). If there is a problem, it's a lot easier to correct now before the calves fall too far behind. Clutha Vets is happy to weigh your calves for you (once or regularly), record their weights onto MINDA, and provide a detailed report with recommendations.
- Vaccination against leptospirosis and the clostridial diseases is also essential. If your calves have not received at least their first vaccination, please contact the clinic to organise it NOW, as antibodies derived from colostrum will have fallen to levels that won't protect the calves from infection.
- It may be time to be thinking of additional trace element supplementation, particularly copper and selenium.

Drenching:

Pre-weaned calves rarely require drenching as worm establishment, and their effects on the gastrointestinal tract, are much less in calves on a milk based diet. However, once calves are weaned and their intake is predominantly grass, worm burdens can rapidly increase over a period of a few weeks.

The most important factor for control is grazing clean pasture – pasture grazed by another species other than cattle, or has been cut for silage or been re-grassed since last grazed by calves.

In addition to the previous control measures drenching of calves is important **but must be done with care** as they are much more susceptible to toxicity.

- Never use drenches containing Abamectin on calves under 4 months or <120kg (e.g. Matrix, Alliance, Converge, Eclipse, Genesis).
- Dual action combinations (white drench + levamisole) are best for calves (e.g. Arrest-C).
- Never mix drench into milk or put it through the calfeteria.
- Never swap drench containers – if decanting into a different container, clearly label or put back in the original container afterwards.
- Double check the product and dose rate being used.
- Check the drench gun is measuring accurately.
- Weigh animals and split into groups if necessary. Whilst it is usually recommended to drench to the heaviest in the mob, this is not to be done with youngstock.

Leptospirosis Vaccination:

One of the main contributors for leptospirosis being present in herds, despite regular vaccination, is initial vaccination of the calves occurring too late. If left too late, calves may have been exposed and become infected with leptospirosis prior to vaccination commencing. Vaccination of infected animals is much less effective, and may pose a health risk to you and your staff.

Current best practice recommendations are for calves to receive their first two leptospirosis vaccines before 6 months of age. These are done 4-6 weeks apart. This is then followed by yearly boosters no more than 12 months apart. Leaving vaccination longer than 12 months apart results in a window of risk to you and your staff.

As the herd is often done in May, we recommend giving calves a third vaccination at this time to bring them in line with the herd. This third vaccination has the added benefit of boosting Clostridial protection of calves going onto crop over winter (Blackleg, Tetanus etc.).

An alternative option is to bring vaccination of the whole herd forward, including heifers/yearlings, to be done in December/January/February in line with the calves second injection.

Calf Hernias

Throughout the disbudding season, we found a number of umbilical hernias in calves. These ranged in size from 1cm (can fit a pinky in the hole,) to larger 5cm hernias (can fit 2-3 fingers in the hole). We suggested to keep an eye on the calves and check

Your vets

Balclutha Clinic

John Smart	BVSc
Jason Darwen	BVSc
Rob Mills	BVSc
Hamish Moore	BVSc
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc
Annie Jackson	BVSc
Steven Butler	BVSc
Elsbeth Dunne	BVSc, BAgSc
Isobel Topham	BVSc
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Bridget McCauley	BVSc

Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Marek Misiewicz	BVSc,
Tom Wallbank	BVSc

for closure at weaning, as many hernias smaller than 3 cm will close up on their own. Of the larger hernias, some will close while others don't and require surgery.

Now is the time to check the calves that we identified at disbudding. If the hernia is still present, then the calf requires surgery. Surgery is relatively simple - the calf is sedated, put on its back and the hernia repaired with sutures. All that's required is the calf to be kept off feed for 12 hours prior to the surgery to empty the rumen out - if the calf is full, it is more difficult to put everything back in. Umbilical hernias in cattle are thought to be an inherited trait, so we recommend not to keep offspring of affected animals. In some cases they can be due to a complication following an umbilical abscess. If left uncorrected, viscera (mainly small intestine) can become trapped within the hernia and strangulate (twist), causing severe colic and death.



Checklist for this month

- Sort out a post-weaning health plan for the calves - feeding; lepto and pulpy kidney / tetanus / black leg vaccination; drenching; trace elements
- Organise fertility testing of bulls
- Book pregnancy testing for your preferred date

Retail - Promotions for December

WIN WIN WIN - **WIN \$5000 TRAVEL** - exclusive to Clutha Vets!

From drench to vaccine, scratch to mastitis treatments. Selected Zoetis products put you in the draw!
Last chance - drawn for Christmas.

Dectomax, Cydectin, Clavulox, Orbenin, Lepto, Ultravac 7 in 1 plus more....

TAKE A MATE FISHING 2017 - Weekly draws have started.

Just get your calf drenches now - Eclipse, Oxfen C & Arrest C included

#1 Fisherman - Richard Kerr, Owaka

#2 Fisherman - Graeme Moffat, Te Houka

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Merial Ancare Drenches, Pour-ons & Ecto's - win a Stihl Power Tool package for Christmas, plus get a Merial Ham, plus a draw in the "Take A Mate Fishing".

Coopers Drench & Pour-ons - Go in the draw to win a \$500 Hunting & Fishing Voucher.

Boss Pour-on - get a Christmas Ham on selected drench.

NeXepirin Microjet - buy 1 x 500ml & get a \$75 Prezzy Card!



"All I'm saying is we band together, buy a few milking machines and keep the money for ourselves!"