

# CUD

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



August 2016

## Clinic News

Calving is definitely well under way, with a number of cows seeming to calve somewhat earlier than expected as usual. Our vet staff are all back on board now, although we are currently advertising for a full-time position at Milton as a replacement for Keara. Most of our vets have seen a bit of calving action already and are comparing stories about different manipulations, fetotomies & C-sections.

Our pre-calving seminars were well attended, so hopefully you managed to pick up a few helpful tips & tricks. We have just completed the round with a BBQ at Clydevale last week. In Balclutha we have a new Head Technician, Kim Bastiaansen, starting shortly, so please make her welcome when you come across her. We wish you all a successful spring, and we're all hoping that the weather plays its part.

## Prevention of Metabolic Disease

1. Avoid grazing effluent paddocks, especially on Springer and Colostrum paddocks.
2. Late summer is the only time potassic fertiliser can be safely applied.
3. Do not apply nitrogen to springer paddocks in early spring.
4. Avoid sudden major diet changes around calving.
5. If you have to make changes try to keep at least 1/2 the diet constant - e.g. if you are going from feeding crop to grass, increase the hay and/or silage and continue to feed hay/silage when the animals are on grass. If you are going to an all grass diet reduce hay/silage slowly.
6. Ensure the trace element status is monitored and adequate. Copper and selenium are most important.
7. Macro mineral status, particularly magnesium and calcium, are vital. Cows have a daily requirement for magnesium as this is not stored like calcium. Magnesium chloride (Mag-C) is best to be used before calving. It is best delivered mixed with the feed by diluting the required amount (120gms/cow/day) with water, adding a little molasses for improved palatability and spraying the silage / hay. It is ideally given on food, as absorption of magnesium occurs in the rumen and not the abomasum (where most of the water goes when drunk). If putting Mag-C in the water, no more than 60g/cow/day by this route, and extra Causmag to make up the difference.
8. Immediately post-calving consider a starter drench, especially where transition is not ideal. Starter drenches individually given to each cow provide readily available calcium and energy, and are useful in preventing milk fever and ketosis. “Head Start” is best, but there are a number of cheaper copies available. Alternatively a “home brew” can be made (300ml monopropylene glycol; 300gm vegetable fat prills; 300-400gm calcium enriched molasses).
9. After calving when cows are in the colostrum mob it is important to supplement magnesium, and in some instances, calcium. The best form of magnesium to use after calving is magnesium oxide (Causmag). Dust at the rate of 70 - 100gm /cow / day  
Magnesium chloride after calving is not as suitable a source of magnesium as mag oxide because
  - i. It delivers only 10% elemental mag as opposed to 50% from mag oxide (so much more is required)
  - ii. Unlike mag oxide it has no additional antacid effect.

In general magnesium is best supplemented by mixing with feeds as this ensures the magnesium reaches the rumen which is the main site for magnesium absorption.

10. Calcium may also be supplemented after calving. A suitable product is Calcimate. Calcium levels are in the order of 0.4 - 0.6% in Autumn and spring grass; but the cow's requirements are in the order of 0.8% to 1.0%. Cows are a walking bank of calcium stored in their bones, so can survive this deficit for a short time. However in some cases it makes good sense to supplement calcium, it being the macro element. Calcimate can be drenched or dusted on to pasture with a suitable motorbike drawn fertiliser spreader at the rate of 150g/cow/day. In general, it is necessary to continue drenching or dusting until at least the start of mating, or when milk peaks; and at least well in to November when grass becomes harder and firmer, and clover content increases. At that time calcium levels will rise above 1% in the pasture.

### **Clutha Vets Guide to Calf Resuscitation**

In the event of a calf born alive but weak or not breathing, there are a few things that can be done to get them going. Note that all calves are born with fluid in their airways and stomach. In a normal birth, the fluid in the airways gets absorbed back into the tissues rather than coughed up.

Step 1: Prop the calf up onto its chest

Step 2: Clear the upper airways using a finger to wipe the nose and mouth, or suction, e.g. pump action resuscitator or large syringe with a soft tube attached.

NB – swinging, dangling, or hanging the calf over a rail is no longer recommended practice. The fluid often seen coming out when calves are dangled like this is apparently primarily from the stomach.

Step 3: Stimulate breathing

- Pinch the nose
- Poke a bit of straw, grass, or a finger up the nostril
- Pour cold water carefully over the head and ears
- Rub the head and ears
- If these are ineffective, you can use a pump action resuscitator to manually inflate the lungs, but you **MUST** close off the oesophagus (food pipe) using pressure from a hand on the left side of the throat to avoid inflating the stomach.

### **Energy Watch**

Just a reminder that the best time to check cows for evidence of Sub-Clinical Ketosis (SCK) is from 5 to 14 days after calving. 15 cows should be bled to assess whether this condition is affecting your herd. There is a clear correlation between presence of SCK and reduced fertility, with recent NZ studies showing 7% lower 6-week in-calf rates in herds shown to be affected. Please call us if you think this service would benefit your herd performance.

### **Checklist for this month:**

- Complete Spring consultation, with RVM authorisations and planning for farm actions
- Book in your first round of Metrichcking from 2 weeks post-calving
- Book in your first round of calf debudding from 3 weeks of age
- Send us your calf rearer's email address to go on the mailing list for our Calf Link eNewsletter. Email addresses to [edunne@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:edunne@cluthavets.co.nz) or [smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz)
- Magnesium supplementation for early calvers
- BVD blood test yearlings

## **Retail**

**Merial Ancare** - Buy 2 x 3lt Eclipse E Inj & get a Waeco 55lt Icebox

- Eclipse PO 10lt & get a Waeco 55lt Icebox

- Buy 3 x Eclipse E Inj 500ml & 1 FREE

- Eprinex 20ltr + 1 x 5lt Eprinex (promo pack) & get a Waeco 55lt Icebox

- 3 x 5lt Eprinex & received 1 x 5lt FREE

- Buy 10ltr+ of Eprinex or Eclipse PO; or 2lt Eclipse E Inj & win a spot on the "Wanaka Wine Tour"

**Zoetis** - WIN \$5000 TRAVEL! From drench to vaccine, scratch to mastitis treatments.

- A Stoney Creek Shirt on 2 x Starter Dectomax Packs.

- Great pricing on Dectomax Herd Packs & Dectomax Starter Packs.

- The Cydectin 17ltr is back in stock!

**Alleva** - NeXepirin Microject - Buy 1 x 500ml & get a \$75 Prezzy Card!

- Reward Minidose. Low dose liquid monensin. Great price.

**Milligans** - Calf Milk Powder a new season price.

**Cheap as chips!** Short Dated Headstart Gold – Very Limited Stock. Be in quick.

Regards John Neave

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