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

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Drying off seemed to go pretty well on most farms, and by now most cows are heading off farm for the winter. Hopefully you will get a chance to do the same! Although it hasn't been too cold and wet, the sun has been a bit scarce over the last couple of weeks, and some frosty mornings and clear days would be welcome – to keep the Vitamin D levels (and spirits) up, and to sweeten the swedes for my table.

Clinic News: At the Clutha end, we're down to a skeleton staff for the winter. Andrew has gone to Takaka for a couple of months (he'll be vetting there), to try to keep warm, and Hanneke has gone back to the Netherlands for a while. Teresa is cutting back on farm work, as her baby gets nearer; and Hamish, Jason and Alisa continue to nurse injuries. Please be patient if it takes a few minutes for us to find a vet to send out to you! Fortunately, Milton are soldiering on ok, and we have started the process of recruiting a fourth, permanent, full time vet for that end of the practice. Two Clydevale dairy farmers picked up giant flat screen TV's courtesy of the Merial-Ancare pour-on promotion. If you can't get to Carisbrook on the 12th July, head round to watch the game with Scott & Geli Smales or Craig & Leanne Lawrence!

Mastitis Matters – Clinical cases during the dry period

Treatment of clinical mastitis during the dry period is no different from treatment during lactation. It is vital to strip the infected quarter fully, at least twice a day. Treat the cow with lactating cow intramammary (or an appropriate injectable), but do not reinfuse dry cow at any time. Because the size and activity of the udder are reduced, the distribution and metabolism of drugs within it will be altered. This may lead to hidden residues after next calving, and IS grades.

Young stock- Your Future

There's little as frustrating and disappointing as a heifer coming in with mastitis – all that time and effort put into getting her to her first calving, and the potential for her life-time production to be decreased. That is why we recommend aggressive early treatment of all cases of heifer mastitis with injectable Mamyzin. But preventing the mastitis is an even better option. In some parts of New Zealand, treatment of all heifers about six weeks pre-calving with teatseal, is proving very effective, cost efficient and popular. The job is done by vets/technicians, and the practical difficulties can be overcome, with the right approach. If heifer mastitis is a problem for you, please give us a call to discuss the options.

Nutrition – Managing the brassicas

About this time of year we usually see a few cases of rumen acidosis on the brassica crops, not uncommonly half a dozen as a single “outbreak”. Cows die! The problems arise when the cattle have a sudden intake of a new, highly digestible food source. The problems are overcome by gradual introduction of the new food to the diet, and plenty of supplementary roughage. Start by letting the cows onto the crop for only an hour or so, when they have already had a good feed of grass. Step this up daily over a period of about a fortnight. Feed the crop in two small (rather than one large) break each day, and feed the hay/balage over as large an area as possible (in a line along the fence) or in as many feeders as you can manage. This will allow all cows good access to it, not just the bossy ones. And remember, even in winter, when the cows don't seem to be drinking much, they must have access to water.

Taking the pain out of lameness – Improving your facilities for treating lame cows

Decent working facilities make even the most unpleasant task easier, and allow you to do a better job. Nowhere is this more apparent than when dealing with lame cows. Taking the time (and spending a little money) to get well set up, will pay off rapidly - in safety, time taken to do the job, quality of the job done, and enjoyment of doing it.

With last week's revised payout announcement, how about spending a little on updating the headbail? Think about it even if you are a sharemilker – attaching and detaching a head bail to your current rails is nothing a welder and angle grinder can't cope with. Head bails with a vertical crush opening all the way to the ground (ie not a V) are so much easier to load cattle into and out of, and so much safer for both the cow and the operator.

Centenary Celebrations

Clutha Vets turns 100 this year, with celebrations set down for 19th -21st June.

Join us for the **Golf Day** in Balclutha on the 19th. It's a great escape from winter chores, and the aim is to have fun. Food and drinks are supplied, everyone gets a prize and the ability to actually play golf is largely irrelevant.

Or, the **Clinic Open Day** (Balclutha) on the 20th June. Programme:

12-4pm: Refreshments and BBQ

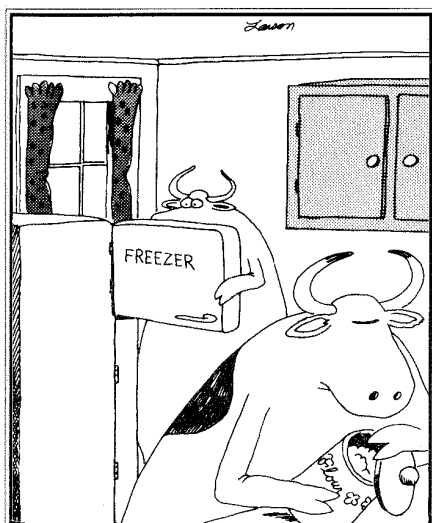
5.30-6.30: Happy hour at Rosebank Lodge

6.30-10pm: Speakers, entertainment and supper

Numbers are required for catering, so please contact the clinic to register for either of these events.

Things to do in June:

- Bring the cows back in (at least seven days after drying off) to check for mastitis. Feel the udders, but don't strip any milk, it will only disrupt the teat plug that is beginning to form!
- Order Rotavec for July collection (phone either clinic)
- Trace element supplementation for in-calf heifers
- Vaccinations 10 in 1; Salmonella
- Set up a shelter (deer poles, corrugated iron and a cyclone gate, with sawdust bedding) near the cow shed to use as a hospital area for downer cows and after tough calvings



While Farmer Brown was away, the cows got into the kitchen and were having the time of their lives - until Betsy's unwitting discovery.

Retail News:

We have secured a supply of **Milligans calf milk powder** at a very reasonable price. This is the high-quality powder we have been selling for the last few years. The price is even more attractive in the light of next season's forecast payout – in terms of both what that will do to the price of other powders, and the cost of taking milk from the vat. For orders taken in June (payment 20th July), the members' price will be **\$81.50 incl. per 20kg**. Immediate collection (or delivery for larger orders).

ZinPro have introduced a very useful new product to their range. This soluble powder (ie Dosatron compatible) is a combination of **AvailaZinc** (with all its proven benefits) with inorganic copper, manganese, cobalt, iodine and selenium in appropriate quantities. It works out a bit less than 9c/cow/day.