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

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What started out as a fairly promising season seems to have taken a bit of a downward swing on many farms over the last few weeks, with milk production dropping and cycling activity decreasing in the second half of October, due to the inclement weather. Still, there seems to be plenty of grass about, and things can only improve as we move into the mating period.

Clinic News: At the Clutha end we are slowly sorting our way through the variations in staffing we have been running with for most of the year. Sadly, Megan Bradly will be departing before Christmas, we wish her well with whatever the future may bring. We are grateful for all she has done for us (and you) in the last six months, especially getting our in-house mastitis culturing system up and running. This has provided some significant benefits to a number of clients who have faced BMSCC grades this season, and will continue to provide help to those herds right through until drying off time.

Her place will be taken by Hamish Moore, a new graduate from Massey University Vet School, who will start with us in the new year. Between now and then, we are hoping to ease Tash back into some farm animal work, and we will be using our traditional back-up vet for this time of year, Ali Maw, from Taumata.

Judith Ray (Clydevale) was one of a number of our clients who came to a meeting we organized for Dexcel, regarding where and how farmers get information about mastitis. Thank-you to all those who attended, but for her trouble Judith and Stephen are the winners of the spot prize of a fishing rod and reel set. Congratulations!

Mastitis Matters

You should recently have received our flier, outlining some of the ways we can help with mastitis management on your farm, especially relating to milking machine function. During these investigations, we are often asked when, and how often should liners be changed.

A liner is at its best the day it comes out of its box, and from then on, it only goes down hill. It is therefore best to start the new season with new liners. It is a myth that it is best to do the first month of milking on soft old liners (to be kind to the soft teats) before replacing them.

The table below gives the life of liners in days (twice a day milking) for given herd and shed sizes.

	Herd size													
	200	250	300	350	400	450	500	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
Number of clusters in shed	16	100	80											
	20	125	100	83										
	24	150	120	100	86									
	28	175	140	117	100	88								
	32	200	160	133	114	100	89							
	36	225	180	150	129	113	100	90						
	40	250	200	167	143	125	111	100	91	83	77	71	67	63
	44		220	183	157	138	122	110	100	92	85	79	73	69
	48			200	171	150	133	120	109	100	92	86	80	75
	52			217	186	163	144	130	118	108	100	93	87	81
	56			233	200	175	156	140	127	117	108	100	93	88
	60			250	214	188	167	150	136	125	115	107	100	94

Reproduction

By now, your plans for problem cows (late calvers, dirty cows, non-cyclers) should be well formed. As always, if you have any queries or problems, we would welcome the opportunity to help you out. On most farms, we believe early treatment with CIDRs and hormone injections is the best way to get non-cycling cows in calf early. The new NCC treatment regime requires three vet visits – when cows are checked and CIDRs are inserted; on CIDR removal; and a couple of days later. Please speak to a vet before booking your NCCs in, to come up with the plan that is best for you. Also, please be realistic when stating the number of cows to be treated, and when the time comes, have adequate help on hand to get the job done efficiently.

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 time taken to do the job, quality of the job done, and enjoyment of doing it. Yes, treating lame cows can be enjoyable and satisfying!

It is really frustrating when cows go down in the head bail during treatment. A belly strap helps to stop this – it makes the cow more comfortable and less fidgety, and physically prevents her from falling. Get hold of a trucker's stop (or a 5m length of strong, 8cm wide webbing) that can be tied to the side rail of the crush / bail above the level of the cow's back on one side, passed under her body, and brought up and tied (with an easy release knot!) above the cow's back on the other side. Better still, have two – one under the chest as well as one in front of the udder. Easy, cheap, and boy does it make a difference!

Young stock- Your Future

A cow is made, or marred, as a calf. AgResearch and Dexcel recommend that calves should have access to pasture from four weeks, whole milk for at least five weeks, and 1.5kg of high protein pellets per day until weaning at 10 weeks. Ten week target weaning weights for all animals (not mob average) are 80kg for Jersey, 90kg for crossbred and 100+ kg for Friesian calves. At Clutha Vets we strongly advise pre-weaning weighing, and we have portable electronic scales you can hire to do this. We can even send a technician to help with the process.

After weaning, they still require shelter, fresh water, and hay or straw for fibre. They should go onto long, high-quality pasture, which means the protein content of the concentrate can be reduced, but pellets or meal should be continued for 3-4 weeks.

Prescription Animal Remedies - Excenel

A number of farmers use Excenel (a fairly sophisticated antibioitic) for treating cows with endometritis (“dirty” cows), and lame cows. It has no milk withholding period, and registered “label claims” for both of these uses. However, the same label also says the bottle should be stored between 15 and 30°C and be used within 42 days of opening. Correct storage and use of antibiotics is important not just for their effectiveness in the sick animal being treated, but also for bacterial resistance, and the long term effectiveness of that antibiotic against future infections in other animals on your farm.



This Month's Retail News

- FIL tail paint 10 litre refill can – competitively priced, ask at retail.
- Dectomax 5 litre pour-on. \$425 net incl GST
- Ancare pour-on (Eclipse, Genesis). Delayed charge option available, and a 7-piece Maxwell and Williams bakeware set with 2.5 and 5 litre packs.
- Milligan's calf milk powder 20kg, \$89.01 Probably cheaper than taking milk from the vat.
- NRM Power Calf milk powder 20kg, \$82.96. Even cheaper still!
- Sargent Dan CVA Calf Meal 25kg, \$21.30
- Tux NRG dog biscuits 40kg, \$64.95