

Oxytocin – Call Me Dr. Feel Good

Most dairy farmers out there will be familiar with oxytocin. Oxytocin is sometimes referred to as the feel good hormone as in people it is associated with bonding, friendship, child recognition and in the most intimate situations which is largely

irrelevant to dairy farming.

Where it is important and commonly used is heifer milk let down at their first milking and in cases of mastitis. It is also extremely useful at calving.

It contracts the uterus very rapidly and goes a long way to making sure the after-birth is spat out.

I would go as far to say that any assisted calving should get oxytocin. Its cheap, effective, and may even make the cow 'feel good'.

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Metrichecking

Metrichecking is a simple, rapid and effective way of checking large numbers of animals for endometritis.

Endometritis? This is a low grade chronic infection of the interior lining of the uterus. It stems from calving where bacteria enter the uterus of all calving cows. The type of bacteria and the cows response to it determines whether the cow will cure her self or continue to be infected.

Why is it an issue? Put simply, she can't get in calf. The infection and pus in her uterus tricks her ovaries into thinking she is pregnant, pregnant with a stinking, gunky pus baby. This means in some cases the uterus becomes quite a nice place to grow and will nurture the bacteria much

as it would a calf. As you know, a pregnant cow won't cycle so neither will a cow pregnant with pus.

In addition to this, sperm dies in pus so she can't be successfully inseminated.

In order to fix this problem a metrichecker is used. This finds pus that has leaked into the vagina from the uterus. Antibiotics are then used to control the infection, these are commonly known as a 'metricure'.

The troubling thing with metrichecking is that the longer after calving it is left then the more animals will self cure meaning fewer have to be treated.

Conversely the

longer between metricure treatment and mating, the better the response in terms of getting back in calf.

This means we must come up with a compromise. I would suggest leaving cows at least 3 weeks post calving is good and no more than 8 weeks. This means herds must be done in several 'mobs'. This won't work for everyone but the closer it can be abided to the more successful the ordeal will be.



Special Points of Interest

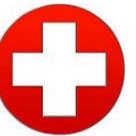
- With such a bad season for parasites last year it is important to note that pasture burdens could be high coming into this spring, particularly for Nematodirus in lambs. Be extra vigilant for parasitism.

Extended Opening Hours

From Saturday 8th August until Sunday 4th October 2015 our clinics will be open 7 days 8.00am-5.00pm

After Hours Veterinary Service

Please phone the listed clinic telephone number when you require veterinary services after hours. Your call will be automatically transferred to the cellphone of the on call veterinarian. If you are required to leave a message please leave your name and phone number. As many calls to our after hours service are made from cellphones, reception at times can be distorted. If the veterinarian has not responded to your message please do not hesitate to call again.



Merchandise and Product Requirements

All products will be available from the clinics during our weekend hours

Delivery Service

If you require product delivered (this includes the above weekends) please phone before 10.00am and the delivery will be made the same day. You can also email us your delivery requirements on the following address: deliveries@vetco.co.nz



Inside this issue:

Ewe Metabolics	2
Dog Obesity	2
Dislocated Hips	3
Pica	3
Broken Lamb Legs	3
Oxytocin	4
Metrichecking	4

Metabolic Treatment of the Lambing Ewe

With lambing almost upon us it is time to put some consideration to metabolic treatment of ewes.

Ewes have three primary metabolic diseases around the time of lambing. These are most commonly referred to as grass staggers (low magnesium), milk fever (low calcium) and sleepy sickness (low energy, ketosis).

Grass staggers usually presents as a shaky, staggy ewe, she may be down and may be acting strangely but often bright. This usually happens soon after lambing.

Milk fever usually shows up as a floppy, depressed ewe, often unable to stand. They can bloat up on occasion as well. Again this is most common soon after lambing.

Sleepy sickness seems to show up as dopey ewes wandering around aimlessly. They may seem blind and not worried about approaching farmers

or dogs. They may be down. This is most typical in triple bearing ewes shortly pre-lambing.

Unfortunately all of these diseases can appear very similar.

Treatment is often with injectable metabolic solutions. The most common would be Calpromag. This is great product. It contains calcium for milk fever, magnesium for grass staggers and B₁₂ for appetite stimulus. Unfortunately it does little for sleepy sickness.

Products are available for sleepy sickness such as injectable dextrose, Glucalpos which is much like Calpromag but with added dextrose (sugar) but without B₁₂.

These products can be given under the skin over the ribs. The skin is tented up and 100mL of solution injected under it.

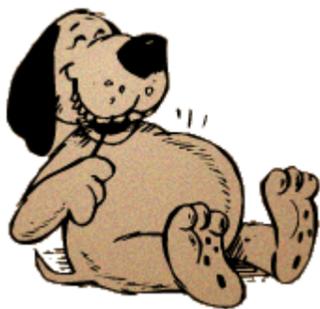
If you are not comfortable

that you can tell the three conditions apart then it may be wise to use Glucalpos and also give an injection of B₁₂. at the same time.

Oral metabolics are also available. In particular Ketol is often used for sleepy sickness. Starter Plus and Calol are also used for milk fever and grass staggers. They are very useful in mildly affected animals and as an additional treatment to injectable metabolics in more severe cases.

Prevention is the best course of treatment. Dusting pre-lamb with magnesium oxide will reduce grass staggers and milk fever drastically as well as impacting on bearing numbers. Some sheep nuts also have good magnesium levels so can be used in place of dusting. Preferentially feeding triplet bearers can go a long way to reducing ketosis.

can lead to more severe inflammation in the case of injuries, poor coat, stench, arthritis, the list goes on and all lead to a seriously reduced life expectancy. Every calf or placenta picked up is one less that your dog can eat. And one less on their waist line.



Placenta Potluck for Pooches

Calving and lambing causes an obesity epidemic in the local dog population every year. Suddenly there is a smorgasbord of afterbirth, fetal fluids and bits of calves or lambs lying around ready to be hoovered up by the house pet.

It is important that the

intake of placenta and dead animals is controlled as although placenta is a rich source of maternal hormones it is also a great source of excessive calories and can rapidly cause weight gain.

Obesity is a serious disease for animals and has many long lasting implications. It

Dislocated Hips: When the girls are too keen

Once the cows get rid of their calf their body pretty quickly starts thinking about getting filled up with another one. This brings on the joys of cycling. Some cows have been known to be particularly keen for some action which can cause some serious problems for their victims.

Often these victims come off second best in comparatively minor ways such as suffering a stone bruise, or getting some particularly nasty rub marks. These may impact on her production and even reduce her reproductive performance.

More serious problems are all too common however. Every year we see several

broken bones, usually legs, pelvis or spine. Permanent nerve damage is also a real possibility. These problems are usually a death sentence for the cow.

Dislocated hips are probably the most common bulling injury we see. The good news is these aren't the end of the world! They can often be fixed by a vet. They should however be treated as an emergency.

The longer the hip is out, the more damage is done and the less chance there is of getting it back in. Getting it early is key, ideally within 5 hours is very good. If more than 36 hours have passed then her chance of success is almost nil. The earlier the vet

comes, the cheaper it will be. It can be a 5 minute job or an hour long job, everyone prefers the 5 minute ones and the cows do much, much better.

Dislocated hips can be identified by how the cow walks. Often the affected leg will be fairly straight and not taking much weight while walking or standing. The usual giveaways are a strange lump on her rump; compare this to her other side, and her leg will be angled out so her toes and knee are pointing away from her on about a 30 degree angle. If they are down the leg will often be pointing directly out the side like she is doing the splits. If she is rolled on to her side and you try and bend her leg it will usually not bend.



Broken Lamb Legs

If splinting broken legs on lambs make sure the splint is a good fit. Any movement between the leg and splint will stop healing. Also consider giving them a dose of long acting pain relief. This is available at the clinic and has a very low cost.

Pica: Eating things they shouldn't

Pica is the medical term for eating non-food items. Here we are primarily thinking of pica and cows.

Usually in cows it is seen as eating gravel off laneways however it can be anything, from gate latches, plastic, steel, scraping galvanizing off steel work, drinking

foot bath liquid etc.

Cows are strange and will chew on random objects but if it is consistently happening over many animals then it may be a concern

Foreign objects can cause many illnesses and can

either severely affect production or kill the animal.

Its usually caused by salt or phosphate deficiency so if it is happening on your property then blood tests on 8 animals should spread light on the issue.

