

Special points of interest:

- There is a new DairyNZ induction recording system for inductions in the 2014-2015 season. This means that ALL herds which are inducing MUST have their information recorded 60 days before inducing. Any farmers that do not fulfill these requirements will not be allowed to induce this season. Please book an induction consult as soon as you have your induction information available. We will also need your NAIT number this year.
- For reference, the VCNZ have changed the rules for veterinary certificates. We are now only able to write certificates to the closest meatworks, regardless whether the farmer is a supplier there. The wording is quite straightforward and we have no room to move on this so please keep it in mind when requesting works certificates.

Thinking of Mating Already?!

With scanning coming to a close and milk production beginning to wane next season's mating is fast approaching. This brings us to the adage; 'failing to plan is planning to fail' and this sums up how important it is to continue looking ahead to mating.

I'm sure everyone out there has those cows which 'just aren't firing' or 'falling behind'. These statements are often referring to her milk production or her body condition or in most cases both. The question we are looking at here is how will this affect her future reproduction?

Body condition (BCS) is crucially important for optimal reproduction come mating. Of particular importance is the cleaning out of her uterus after calving and kicking her ovaries into action to get her cycling once again.

During the process of calving every cow gets a bacterial infection in her uterus. In a well conditioned cow, she will have the energy in reserve to start her immune system quickly and clear the bacteria out. In poorly conditioned or otherwise compromised cows the immune response is sluggish and this is one of the reasons we see 'dirty cows' with a uterine infection.

These thinner cows will not only have trouble clearing the bacteria but they will also run into problems with getting rid of their afterbirth. Retained after birth



(membranes) acts as a wonderful, stinky, rotting conduit for bacteria to lounge and party in. These bacteria are very hard for the cow's immune system to attack as they are hidden in the afterbirth.

It is crucial that the cow gets rid of this post calving infection so that her uterus has a chance to shrink back down to a state where its ready for another calf. The longer the infection hangs around, the longer it takes for the cow to cycle and therefore the later she will get in calf.

So, one of the key goals of mating is getting your cows cycling early so they can get in calf as early as possible. For her to cycle her ovaries must be functioning at full capacity. Once again this requires energy. If her body doesn't think she has enough energy stored up it won't let her ovaries start up, therefore she won't start cycling.

The more cows that have at least one cycle before planned start of mating the better, as more cows will then be inseminated on their second cycle. Conception rate on the second cycle is 7-8% higher than the first cycle.

So what should the target be? The optimum BCS at calving is 5.5 and 5 for heifers and cows respectively FOR EACH ANIMAL. This means your average should be higher than this. If you are unsure of your herds condition score we can come out and score each cow to give you an average and range.

But that's the score at calving, how is that important now? Well weight takes time to put on. Those skinny, poor doing cows will take even longer to get up to target. This means we have to start thinking about it now.

Cows are most efficient at gaining weight while they are still lactating. This means anything you can do mid-late season to keep/put condition on cows will pay off in the long run. Once they have dried off however they don't have to put energy into making milk. For this reason any very thin cows should be dried off now so this energy can go into weight gain. The point to note here is that the cow will still need almost as much feed as before she was dried off as she still needs that energy to put weight on.

After your planned dry off date the cows will have a very big calf inside. This reduces the room for food and as a result means cows cannot put condition on after this date. So the take home message is dry off at the condition you want at calving.

Duck Itch

With duckshooting coming up we are anticipating an increase in the number of dogs (usually Labradors) coming in with duck itch.

Duck itch is an all encompassing colloquial term for dermatitis in dogs which have been hunting. In general this manifests as itchy, red irritated skin. The dogs can then traumatize themselves with their feet or teeth and tongue to the point where the skin is bleeding and infected and the hair is missing.

In some dogs, treatment is

mainly bathing with a special prescription shampoo, although more severe cases often require antibiotics and steroids.

This is caused by microbacteria, protozoa and fungi which live in healthy ponds and rivers. If not removed after swimming, these can irritate skin, causing the itch and redness.

The easiest way to prevent duck itch is to wash your dog with a mild dog shampoo after swimming in the ponds or rivers. Dog's skin has a different pH than ours, so using a human shampoo or soap can actually traumatize the skin more and

cause problems of its own. In most cases, washing within a few hours of swimming is sufficient to prevent a visit to the clinic.

Giving your dog a pre-duckshooting warrant of fitness can also identify any problems. Many duckshooters use this as a reminder to also give the dogs their yearly vaccinations. For duckshooters going on to sheep farms, worming is particularly important, as you do not want to be the cause of a sheep measles outbreak.



Bloat First Aid

This season the clover growth is high and we have seen a lot of bloat in cattle. In general dairy farms see less as bloat oil is put into the water, but we do still see sporadic cases.

In NZ, the most common cause of bloat is frothy bloat. This is when the high amount of protein in the diet (high clover levels) cause bubbles in the rumen. The bloated gas is trapped in these bubbles, and the cow cannot effectively belch them out, causing her to continue to bloat. Stabbing cows in general is not an effective treatment for frothy bloat as the foam does not effectively come out of the hole.

There are a few rules of thumb to follow when dealing with a bloated cow or cows.

Try to keep the cow as calm as possible. If she is very bloated and stressed, she will not be able to breathe and this will make her far worse.

If the cow is able to walk to the yard, she is NOT bloated enough to need to be stabbed. Only stab a cow as a last resort. A stab wound should be at least 5 inches long. Try to only make one incision.

If she does need stabbing a better alternative is a bloat trocar. The sleeve on the trocar keeps the wound open to allow as much gas as possible to escape. In general, cows stabbed with a trocar do not require stitching, just a few days of antibiotics. Instilling bloat oil down the trocar is also helpful.

The best treatment is to orally drench the cow with 25-30ml of bloat oil (depends on the type of bloat oil, check the package for individual dose rates). BEFORE

drenching, mix up to 1L volume with water as bloat oil is very caustic and can burn the cows oesophagus. Oral starter drench bottles work well for this.

An alternative method is to inject 25 mL of bloat oil into the rumen. Use a milk fever needle, but make sure you change needles between drawing up the oil and injecting, since if the oil gets into the tissue it will abscess. Inject in the same place you would stab the cow.

If you have any cows present with bloat please ring us as soon as possible. Bloat wounds are difficult to manage even when fresh, but leaving them will greatly decrease the chances of a positive outcome.

"If the cow is able to walk to the shed, she is NOT bloated enough to need to be stabbed"

Leptowise Reminder

A quick reminder that the Leptowise programme has changed. Calves will now require three shots, the first one being in October, then November/December and May, at the same time as

heifers and cows. We will be doing you Lepto consultation for next year at the same time as your PAR consults (assuming this has not already been done) to allow you to pick up your Lepto or have it

delivered in October. As a reminder, we will send a letter out in early October to remind you that your calves will need vaccinated.

Pig Mites

A couple of weeks ago we went to see a young pig whose owners had noticed her scratching and itching a lot. She had done enough itching and scratching to make her skin quite red and inflamed, especially on her legs and ears. This had been caused by mange.



Sarcoptic mange is reasonably common in pigs. The mite causes intense irritation in the skin where it lives. The ears and legs are usually the first areas to be affected and the resulting itching and rubbing leads to skin damage. You may notice a pig shaking its head if it has mange on its ears. After several months, untreated mange develops

into thickened, rough dry skin covered in greyish crusts. As well as discomfort and irritation, mange results in decreased growth rates so it is a disease that should be treated and eradicated from pig herds.

The mites are spread from pig to pig either by close contact or by contact with recently contaminated surfaces. Once off the pig, the mite dies in about 5 days.

It can be treated with two injections of dectomax given 10-14 days apart. Because it is easily transmitted between pigs all pigs that could have contact with each other should be treated when mange is seen in the group.

The young pig I visited responded

well to the treatment and within a few days was no longer itching. Incidentally, because dectomax also kills intestinal parasites, the treatment also killed a whole lot of large intestinal worms which were found in her faeces within 1-2 days of the first injection. With the worms gone her faeces became more firm and her owners say she's also eating less food than she had been. As she's the only pig on the property she won't be exposed to any more mange from other pigs but any new pigs should be checked before they come into contact with mange free pigs.

Is That Egg Ok?

I'm sure many of you out there reading this have a few chickens kicking around helping keep Sunday morning breakfasts that little bit more exciting with eggs. But is any egg a good egg?



Obviously there are three main parts of an egg, the shell, the white, and the yolk and each part can go wrong making those omelets or scrambled eggs just a little lacklustre.

Firstly there is the shell and the main problems are usually soft/deformed shells and excessive poo on the shell. Soft egg shells are usually due to inadequate calcium intake. In extreme cases this can lead to the hen becoming egg bound where she

can't push out the egg. Calcium usually comes in the form of layers of grit, crushed egg shells or lime flour which is on hand for most dairy farmers. Increase the amount offered if you are getting soft shells. Another less common cause is water that is too salty, usually bore water. Try adding 1g/kg of feed of vitamin C (found in many bread improvers) as this helps the hen cope with the excess salt.

Poo on the shell. This indicates the nesting boxes need to be cleaned and have bedding replaced more regularly. Failing this it can mean the hens have diarrhea and may need drenching with cydectin or similar.

Smelly eggs– Clean the layer boxes more regularly to reduce bacterial

contamination of the eggs. The bacteria get in through tiny pores in the eggshell and cause them to go rotten more quickly.

Pale yolks– this is most often fixed by feeding more greens in the hens diet to increase vitamin intake. In some cases it is caused by coccidiosis however the birds will usually be losing weight and have diarrhea in this case.

Watery egg whites– This indicates insufficient protein in the diet. It can be mended by feeding higher protein diets such as whey.

In the next issue we look at why your hens may not be laying enough eggs.

Dog Dosing Programme

As many of our long time members are aware we provide a dog dosing programme for worms on your farm. This stemmed from the original hydatid control programme, but is now focused on dog health and sheep measles prevention.

Farm dogs are more likely to be

infected with worms than dogs living in town. For sheep measles control, dogs must be wormed monthly. Sheep measles can be wind spread and can travel up to 10km. This can be a major cost to our sheep farmers, so they appreciate people keeping unwormed dogs off their property.

Dogs which have no contact with sheep can be wormed every three months, as should cats. On the programme, these tablets are sent out in the post and will arrive every month or three months as needed. We can send tablets for either dogs or cats. If you are interested, please contact us

Liver Disease



Over the past few months we have seen many cows with photosensitisation. This is often caused by liver disease. The liver has a large range of functions so when it is diseased and not functioning properly there can be many different problems.

Photosensitisation - Seen commonly especially in the late summer and autumn. It appears as severe sunburn on the white skinned areas of cattle. Cattle may be agitated and kick at their abdomen. Initially the white skinned areas become slightly raised compared to the coloured skin and there is usually a clear line of demarcation between the two. Over the following weeks the white skin becomes damaged and large scabs slough off.

Weight loss and loss of production - Affected animals may lose body condition, growing animals have decreased growth rates and milking cows have lower milk yields. These can in turn have negative effects on reproduction.

Central nervous system signs - these can be very varied or may not be seen at all. They include a depressed or dull attitude, blindness, uncoordinated walking, excitability and at worst convulsions or coma.

Jaundice - This a yellow colour seen in the normally pink areas of the gums, the inside of the vulva or the whites of the eyes.

Fluid accumulation under the skin - This can appear as a swelling under the jaw and/or in the brisket area.

Haemorrhage- Bleeding is not commonly seen as a result of liver disease but can occur. The liver normally produces clotting factors and bleeding may result when the liver can no longer produce enough for normal clotting to occur.

What are the causes of liver disease?

Liver disease can be caused by many things. Abscesses may develop in the liver due to calf navel infections, systemic bacterial infections and damage to the rumen from excessive grain feeding

(causing acidosis) or ingestion of sharp metal objects (hardware disease). Ragwort and mouldy feed are also causes of liver disease. Fortunately, in Southland we don't get facial eczema or liver fluke which commonly cause liver disease in other parts of the country.

What can you do for cows with signs of liver disease?

If you have a cow with early signs of photosensitisation the most important thing you can do is provide shade for it. A zinc ointment applied to the white skin blocks the U/V rays and seems to be soothing on the skin. There is also available generalised liver support treatments. One, Liver X, which many farmers are familiar with, has recently been taken off the market by the French parent company. The replacement is a product called Metabolase, which comes in a 500mL bottle. Other treatments are dependent on the underlying cause so should be considered on a case by case basis.

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