

Not such a merry Christmas

With Christmas approaching and the fat content of food likely to go up its important to consider your pets health. Gorging on fatty foods can cause a very painful disease in both cats and dogs called pancreatitis. This is

inflammation of the pancreas (the gland producing digestive enzymes in the gut). This inflammation causes the pancreas to start digesting itself which is extremely painful. Treatment involves prevention of dehydration

and pain relief and depending on how severe the disease is the bill can be quite large.



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Healthy Hoof Programme

Herpes; Taking the fun out of reproduction

Many farmers will be familiar with the disease commonly called IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis). This is a herpes viral infection which affects the upper airways of cattle. The same virus can also cause a genital infection known as IPV in cows and IBP in bulls. It essentially causes crusting and inflammation of the genitals.

The main effects it has of reproduction is to cause early embryonic death in cows which shows up as long returns to heat and reduced sperm count in bulls. Bulls are the most important source of infection so are the most important to control. Infection with the herpes virus

causes a high temperature in the bulls. The high temperature causes decreased sperm production. This makes the bull temporarily infertile for approximately 5 weeks. Once they return to full fertility they can still act as disease carriers. For this reason using young bulls is an important means of protection. Vaccination is another means of protection which is currently worryingly underused. Vaccination does not stop infection however it makes it much less likely that the bulls will get a high temperature and therefore will not get a depressed sperm count.

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As the bulls will return to normal after 5 weeks it is advisable that the bulls are on property at least 6 weeks before intended use so any infections have time to heal before mating.

Vaccination can be done at anytime over 4 weeks of age and requires a booster. There is a combination vaccination with BVD to simplify management. Perhaps after scanning would be an appropriate time when there are not as many jobs on a dairy cockies list.

The cost of vaccination is nothing compared to the cost of herpes. Be proactive and stay safe.

Body Condition Scoring & Healthy Hoof

As most are probably aware there have been a couple of vets move on from Vetco and a few new, enthusiastic arrivals.

With these new vets come some new opportunities. We have recently had two vets become accredited by DairyNZ under their Body Condition Scoring regime. This standardizes condition scorers throughout the country. This will be a useful tool which farmers can use to get an idea where their herds condition is at and what steps

need to be taken, if any to correct any discrepancies compared to where their condition should be. It can be said that a complete feed budget cannot be done without knowing the average condition and the range in condition of your herd.

We also have a newly accredited Healthy Hoof provider. Again this is done through DairyNZ and is aimed to provide vets with greater skills in lame cow treatment and in particular prevention of lameness. We will be able to

provide 'lameness busting' services so if you are having a problem with lame cows we can come and work with the farm owner and staff to change management, lane way and yard set up to reduce the problem. You can calculate the cost of your lameness problem through the DairyNZ calculator on their website.



<http://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/health-conditions/lameness/lameness-cost-calculator/>

Special Points of Interest;

- We would like to welcome all farmers to our annual Christmas BBQ on Friday 12th December at our Edendale Clinic.
- Scanning is coming up all too soon. Remember to get booked in early so you get your preferred date and time.
- If you do your own disbudding consider enquiring about getting a prescription for local anaesthetic from us next year. Local anaesthetic is very cheap and fairly easy to give. It certainly makes the job easier and the calves recover much better.

Scabine Update

As you are probably aware, this season we have experienced significant difficulty with the efficacy of two batches of scabby mouth vaccine.

This has been a very trying time for our clients and we appreciate the courteous manner in all of our dealings with you.

MSD have offered replacement vaccine to rescratch lambs treated with the affected batches.

This offer has been taken up by the majority of our clients.

To date MSD the suppliers of the vaccine have not found a specific cause of the vaccine failure. They assure us they will be continuing to investigate the cause of the failure in order to prevent problems in the future.

Christmas/New Year Hours

Vetco Edendale and Kennington clinics will be closed on the following days:

Christmas Statutory Days..... 25th & 26th December 2014

New Year Statutory Days..... 1st & 2nd January 2015

Southland Anniversary Day..... 19th January 2015



If you require Veterinary Services while our clinics are closed please follow the usual after hours procedure which is dial the listed clinic number. Your call will be automatically diverted to the cell phone of the duty veterinarian. (After dialing the clinic number there is a pause while the call is diverted, please wait while the call is being connected).



Inside this issue:

- Swedes: Good or Bad 2
- Eggs of the future 3
- 1080 3
- Herpes 4
- Body Condition Scoring & Healthy Hoof 4

Delivery Service

If you require product delivered please phone before 10.00am and the delivery will be made the same day.



Swedes; Good or Bad?

Swedes have been the talk of southlands pastoral cattle farmers for the last few months and for good reason. One of the major problems that can occur with brassica grazing has raised its head.

This season has seen the crop cost some farmers greatly in dead stock, lost production, reduced fertility and the pain of seeing animals suffer. Subclinically affected animals appeared to be ill thrifty, often losing weight, were prone to metabolic conditions such as milk fever and ketosis and some developed mild-moderate photosensitivity (sunburn) on their udder if it was white. More severely affected animals suffered rapid weight loss and any animals with white areas of skin would become severely photosensitive with skin peeling off, effectively suffering from 2nd and in some cases 3rd degree sunburn.

There has been a fairly solid link found between swede crops and liver damage. This has been shown via blood tests of entire

herds and autopsy examination of individual animals. The condition has many close similarities to facial eczema which those of you former northerners will be familiar with.

The issue that remains is that there has been no solid proof of why the swedes have caused this liver damage. The current theory goes that there is a group of compounds in brassicas called glucosinolates. These are particularly concentrated in swede leaves and are at even higher levels in stressed swedes. In a slightly acid environment of a subclinically acidotic cow these are converted to nitriles which are toxic to the liver hence liver damage.

This theory suggests that the animals are eating a large amount of stressed swede leaf and have some degree of acidosis.

The extra leaf consumption can be explained by the shortage of frosts over winter and a period of good growth in late winter/spring. The frosts are

needed to improve the palatability of the bulbs, if they taste gross then cows are less likely to eat them and favour the leaves. The good period of growth also saw some swede crops explode and look more like kale due to the tall leaves. In some cases farmers opened the animals up to try and eat the leaves before they got out of control, again this increased leaf consumption.

It is important to realise this is not entirely new. There have been cases of liver damage on all types of brassica from turnips to rape over the past 10-20 years. This is the first time there has been such an outbreak.

Again speculation comes into play but it could be suggested that this is due to a combination of the ever increasing use of brassicas in dairy production, feeding practices becoming riskier and new cultivars being far more successful and aggressive growers than swedes of old.

Returning to the brassicas and ensuring good transition is essential. It is important to have the animals on the same crop at grazing and when they come home and ideally the same cultivar. In many cases (but not all) of swede toxicity this year it was in animals returning from grazing onto crops at home then having problems. This was particularly bad when changing from a non brassica crop such as fodderbeet to swedes.

DairyNZ has some very robust guidelines on transition management on their website and also some good information on swede toxicity.

Also any animals who have previously suffered swede toxicity should not be grazed on summer turnips. They are still likely to have underlying liver damage.



Eggs of the future! Raising those little fluffies right

Its that time of year when the hard work the rooster has been putting in visiting all the hens is paying off. Baby chicks!

These little balls of feathery fluff are likely to be giving you the scrambled eggs of your near future so its important to raise them correctly. Having said this the mother hen does most of the hard work for you.

Firstly and arguable most importantly they need shelter that they can access. Remember their legs are pretty darn short to start with so shelter needs to have a low entry so they don't get stuck outside. They also need plenty of fresh bedding for insulation and ventilation but not drafts to reduce the incidence of respiratory infections. This is true for their food and water

bowls also. They need to be low enough that their wee beaks can reach in there.

It is important to have the right food available for the chicks and pullets. As they grow they are susceptible to parasites particularly coccidia. They should therefore be fed a pullet growers meal which contains a coccidiostat and provides protection from coccidia. When the chicks are old enough to be separated from their mother they should be fed separately as the coccidiostat reduces egg production and quality in adult chooks so they should be kept from eating the growers blend if possible. Chicks can be separated at a very young age but require a lot of work if this is done. When they have lost most of their

down feathers is a good time to separate them.

If you have many young chickens then you should consider worming them every 6 weeks also. They are susceptible to worms at a young age and these can really stunt their growth and future reproductive performance. There are several options for treatment, many are off label for the drug but appear to work well.

Kids will tell you how tasty a chicken nugget is and I'm certain a cat or passing hawk would say no different when it comes to baby chickens. They should have plenty of easily accessible cover to avoid roaming predators.



1080 – A non political article at last

The department of conservation has a vast southland wide 1080 scheme this year to try and counter act the effect of the beech mast years which have recently been happening more and more regularly. Beech mast is when the beech trees in the forest flower and the seeds cause an explosion in rodent populations. The 1080 is being used to help minimise this. The use of poison is kept to a minimum however you would still be hard pressed to find bush in Eastern Southland

which hasn't been baited recently.

This article is simply a timely reminder of how toxic this can be to our domestic animals and in particular dogs.

Death from 1080 toxicity is not something to take lightly, it is certainly not a pleasant sight so please take measures to protect you animals.

If using dogs for hunting keep a close eye on them and keep them from scavenging dead animals or eating unidentified objects on the ground. Keep

some washing soda crystals in your kit. These can be given to your dog by mouth to induce vomiting. Keep a sample of vomit so the poison can be identified.

Farm dogs and livestock should be kept out of the bush. Check your boundary fences to make sure no animals will go on a bush holiday.

