

In Calf Update

With the dry period looming, now is the perfect time to assess the body condition of your cows and put the appropriate steps in place to ensure the girls will be in good condition for the next season. Ideally we would like to see cows in body condition score 5.0-5.5 at calving. Cows that calve too thin take much longer to start cycling, therefore reducing the submission and conception rates.

Options to consider for increasing body condition in late lactation include manipulating the quantity

and type of feed provided (i.e. high quality crops vs. additional supplementation), preferential feeding of light conditioned cows, reduction of frequency of milking or drying off completely.

Heifers need careful monitoring over the next few months also. Getting them in calf is not enough, it is still important that they are fed well and grown out properly. Liveweight should be monitored every 3mths and steps put in place if they are found to be lacking. It is important to remember trace element supplementation and

parasite control in this group also.

Accurate body condition scoring is an excellent skill to have. Dairy NZ produces a very user friendly guide to condition scoring and DVD on how to condition score. These can both be ordered directly from their website. Alternatively, a free copy of the guide book comes with the InCalf reference book which you can either order from the Dairy NZ website or pick up from the Edendale clinic.

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We're on the web!
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New Vet: Liz Allen

We would like to announce that we have a new veterinarian, Liz Allen. Liz started in January, and is originally from a sheep and beef farm in the North Waikato. She is a graduate of Massey and will be predominately involved in

production animal practice. When not at work, you may find Liz playing social netball or touch. She is keen to give surfing a try in our chilly southern ocean, and can also be found out on the horse trails or tramping in the bush. Liz has a particular interest in

herd/flock health and dairy cattle reproduction. She is also keen to expand her large animal surgery skills. You will see Liz at the Edendale clinic currently. If you see her around, please stop and say hello and make her feel welcome!

Duck shooting

As opening morning comes and goes, it is a sign that the end of the season is just about here. Bulk milk counts are starting to creep up, milk production is lower and the cows are starting to get slower and slower coming into the shed. Drying off and (lepto if it is not already done) are just around the corner.

Udder infections during the dry period and in the following milking season can be minimised by things that happen at drying off. Hopefully by now, most of you have discussed dry cow antibiotic therapy with your vet and have dried off those lame, skinny and high

somatic cell count cows well before the planned start of drying off.

Below are just a few tips on drying cows off and the application of dry cow therapy.

Dry cow application is a big job and having plenty of well trained help and not being pushed for time does make the job easier.

- Drying off the cows in batches is a good idea and treat as soon as possible after milking.
- Judicious use of paint is important if drying off in batches!
- Be very particular

about good hygiene. Use alcohol wipes or cotton wool soaked in 70% alcohol (7 parts meths, 3 parts water).

- NEVER restrict water, but increasing the fibre in the feed and decreasing the amount of protein will cause the cows to dry off. Protein is the driver for milk production so a low protein diet will lead to drying off.
- Come in for your dry cow consult and our friendly vets will answer any questions you have!

Special points of Interest

- New veterinarian started at Edendale
- Scanning is on! We've been busy pregnancy testing
- Remember to water your dogs in the heat - heat stroke season is here!
- If your dogs are going into the boarding kennels, remember to make sure they are up to date on their vaccines - this includes kennel cough!

March 2010

Parasite Immunity in Sheep

In order for sheep to develop an immunity to internal parasites, they must be challenged by a significant number of these worms. This also applies for most infections and contagious diseases. In fact, purely as a curiosity, humans are the only animals to have a predetermined immune response to a foreign protein without ever having come in contact with that protein. This is why blood typing for transfusions is necessary for humans.



Immunity to internal parasites starts to develop from February onwards in this seasons lambs. There is significant genetic variation within and

between the sheep breeds in the development of parasite resistance and parasite tolerance. There is some difference in opinion of breeders as to the best way forward; breeding for parasite resistance or parasite tolerance.

With the lambing of hoggets it is important to maximize their growth and general health. As such, there is a limited opportunity to allow a parasite challenge so that their immunity for

parasites can develop. Avoid drenching too soon after weaning their first lambs to allow this to occur.

This means that many mobs of two tooth ewes can be carrying significant worm burdens at tupping. This will have a negative impact on their lambing performance as two tooth.

It would be advisable to do a faecal worm egg count in mid March on two tooth ewes which were mated as hoggets to assess the need for a pre-tup anthelmintic drench.

Inside this issue:

Trace Elements	2
New Vet	2
Oddspot	2
Healthy Hoof	3
Clostridial Diseases	3
In Calf Update	4

Leptowise Reminder

As we are heading towards the end of the season and drying off, the season for leptospirosis infection is just beginning. All dairy cows, calves, heifers and bulls need to be vaccinated yearly for lepto, as not only are the cows at risk, but you and your staff are as well.

Calves need two vaccina-

tions 4-6 weeks apart, and older cattle need a jab every 12 months. Before lepto vaccine can be given out, you must visit us for a cuppa and a lepto consultation. This half hour chat is an important reminder of all the other factors involved in a complicated disease, and is important for the farm owner or

manager to attend. Staff are also encouraged to attend to emphasise the need to take responsibility for their own safety.

Please ring Mel or Sheryll and make an appointment for your consult as soon as possible.

Trace Elements



As preventative animal health management programmes overtake the 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' approach, trace element and mineral supplementation is becoming a much greater proportion of farmers' animal health spending.

Maintaining mineral and trace element levels will both minimise health problems and contribute to the overall productivity of the herd. Minerals affect fertility, hoof health, growth, and milk production along with susceptibility to disease. Appropriate and timely supplementation maximizes the benefits to the farmer and stock. Low blood or storage mineral levels without evidence of clinical disease cause severe production losses. Inappropriate or insufficient supplementation is the most common cause of this subclinical disease.

Occasionally, mineral interaction with other elements in the soil or pasture may result in low mineral levels despite seemingly adequate supplementation. A well-known example of this is the copper/molybdenum interaction, whereby high

molybdenum levels in soil will prevent adequate absorption of copper from pasture.

During the wintertime, mineral usage and need changes due to changes in feed and production. The best way to prevent productivity losses over winter is to ensure adequate levels before the risk period, by supplementing cows and ewes in May/June if required. Cattle are especially susceptible to copper deficiency over the winter period, and copper supplementation pre-winter is generally advantageous.

Ewes are often selenium deficient, and this can have a large impact on lambing percentage. Supplementation is easy, so if your flock has a lower rate of multiple bearing ewes at scanning, mineral testing may help identify a deficiency.

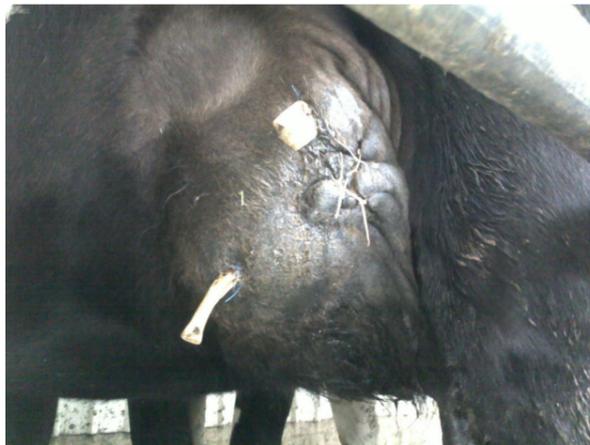
The only way to determine if your stock have adequate mineral levels is to check their blood or liver levels. Different minerals are best tested for at different times of the year. Each farm is unique in its mineral needs, and testing can be focused on your farm's history and areas of concern.

The minerals we concentrate

most on in Southland are cobalt, copper, selenium, magnesium, and calcium. We see clinical deficiencies in each of these at different times of year and in different classes of stock. Stock off grazing for the winter are particularly at risk, especially regarding copper and phosphorus. In order to prevent subclinical (lost production, low fertility, poor growth rates) and clinical disease (milk fever, grass staggers, pregnancy toxæmia), it is prudent to test stock before the risk period (eg heifers' copper before winter grazing, cows for magnesium/calcium in the transition period, lambs in late summer/autumn.) These are very busy and stressful times in the farming calendar, but trace elements should not contribute to this stress.

There are blood and liver testing packages available to target at risk groups in many different environments. In fact, cull cows or lambs at the works can easily have liver samples taken. Please give the clinic a ring to talk about testing your herd or flock today.

Oddspot



An unusual mating injury! This cow was seen after being ridden by the bull and ripping a hole in the skin over her udder. It left a large and jagged hole with skin edges which didn't meet well.

Due to the area affected and the amount of space left when the skin edges were closed, a drain was placed to allow any infection or fluid

buildup to leak out. This picture is taken 5 days later, when the drain is about to be removed. The skin was healing well, although obviously some plastic surgery will be required for her to ever model again!

At printing she is healing well, although we expect a long healing time for this sort of injury.

Healthy Hoof Update: Treatment Facilities

How do your treatment facilities stack up?

Having good facilities available to treat sick and lame cows on farms can make the difference between an unpleasant job and a downright dangerous one!! Good facilities are necessary for both employees and vets to effectively treat sick animals; it can definitely speed up the process too!

Consider these factors....

- At the very least you will need a race with a sturdy head bail and back bar.
- A vertical upright post can be used to anchor back and front feet once you have lifted them.
- Make sure you have access to both sides of the race and that each foot can be reached and treated.

Maintenance is also important. Try to fix problems as soon as possible (if you are not able to do it yourself either nag the person on the farm who can, or organise for a contractor to come and mend it). Although number 8 wire is a kiwi icon, it is not a suitable fix-it solution for a head bail or broken race!

- If a custom built crate is available then use it, but the crate must be well anchored (e.g. bolted onto the concrete).
- Aim to always have a second person with you when you are treating cows for both safety and ease.
- Other essentials include good lighting, a non-slip surface and preferably running water.
- To ensure you can deal with sick and sore animals in all weather why not consider putting a roof over it too.
- Look after your people and

your cows by taking some time to ensure there are adequate treatment facilities to deal with sick or sore cows. Don't make the cows wait because your set-up is lacking.

If you have a problem with lame cows or are interested in minimising the risk of your cows becoming lame consider joining the Healthy Hoof Programme. The programme was developed by DairyNZ to provide a step-by-step approach to managing lameness on dairy farms. It has been successfully piloted on farms throughout the country.

Trained providers are now available nationwide to deliver the programme. If you would like to learn more about the Healthy Hoof Programme then contact Kristen at the Edendale Clinic.



Good facilities can speed up the process!

Clostridial Diseases in Ruminants

Clostridial bacteria live in the soil and the intestinal tract of animals. They can cause rapid onset of disease and death by production of toxins and gain entry to the host by invasion or by being ingested.

Common names for clostridial diseases found in New Zealand are pulpy kidney, tetanus, blackleg, malignant oedema, black disease (associated with liver fluke), botulism and big head in rams. These diseases often affect the best animals in the group and many require specific conditions to allow proliferation of the organism.

Vaccination of sheep against clostridial disease is common in Southland but vaccination of cattle is less often practiced. Vaccination of ewes 2-4 weeks pre-lambing provides passive immunity via colostrum for about 10 weeks. Vaccination of replacement stock consists of a sensitiser dose then a booster 4-6 weeks later which provides approximately 12

months active protection. If this vaccine is given early to all lambs there may be a weight gain advantage as the vaccine provides protection against ongoing pulpy kidney challenge.

Annual pre-lamb dosing keeps immunity at a high level. If ewes are unvaccinated pre-lamb a vaccine that stimulates active immunity against pulpy kidney and passive immunity (2-3 weeks protection) against tetanus may be used at tailing to protect against tetanus after this procedure.

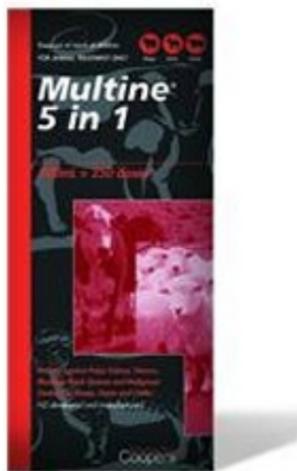
Clostridial diseases in cattle are generally sporadic in nature but can occur as an outbreak in some cases. Cattle are most susceptible to pulpy kidney as calves and black leg and malignant oedema as older cattle although other clostridial diseases are occasionally diagnosed.

Initial clostridial vaccination is usually at 3 months of age

with a booster 4-6 weeks later and an annual booster thereafter.

Clostridial vaccination is a fairly inexpensive way of minimising a risk to your stock. It is especially important to consider before invasive procedures such as dehorning or castration of bull calves as these procedures increase the risk of clostridial disease occurring.

Vaccines are available as a plain 5-in-1 vaccine or in combination with various trace elements and worm treatments. A combination with leptospirosis vaccine is known as 7-in-1 and there is a recent vaccine available that offers protection against 10 clostridial bacteria.



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