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"It is normal for cows to lose condition after calving"
Cows will typically lose one condition score between calving and mating naturally due to high production.

Calving–The Canine Obesity Epidemic

In the mind of a Labrador, calving is a pretty special time. It's the time of year that cows start expelling delicious morsels from many different holes. Most of all afterbirth and colostrum.

Both of these are plentiful and calorie rich and apparently delicious to a dog.

The best way to prevent obesity overwhelming your pooch is to eliminate the risk of them consuming too much extra food. This could be removing the food source (unlikely as you can't collect all

the afterbirth) or restricting the dogs access. This would usually mean keeping them in the yard. This is also a good idea later on in the year when the cows are pregnant as dogs can spread Neospora which commonly causes slips.

Withholding their normal diet is not a good idea as milk and membranes is not a complete diet and could easily lead to nutritional imbalances and associated diseases.

If your Lab did manage to put on a load of weight we



recommend feeding them 20% less than they would have to maintain their normal weight. This is most easily done with a specialised, low calorie, weight loss diet which has instructions on how much to feed.

Disbudding Calves

There are multiple reasons why horns are routinely removed from cattle. Cattle with horns are a risk to herd mates and stock people. The horns can also curl around and become ingrown. Additionally, the welfare laws state that animals with horns of a length that might cause injury or be damaged cannot be transported unless special provisions are made so that injury cannot occur.

Right now calves are popping out left, right and centre. Most of them will have little horn buds ready to grow into big horns if left untouched. Disbudding involves cauterising the horn bud using a hot iron. Between the ages of 2-6 weeks is the ideal time to disbud calves. As they grow the buds become harder to remove.

Calves are routinely given local anaesthetic and sedated before disbudding. This provides pain relief and restrains them during the procedure. The local

anaesthetic lasts 2 hours after which time feeling returns to the wound and signs of pain such as foot stamping, head and tail shaking, ear flicking, reluctance to graze, vocalisation and general restlessness may be seen. Recently there has been a lot of research to (determine if) anti-inflammatories such as ketoprofen, metacam and rimadyl can be used along with sedation and local anaesthetic. The results show that the use of these anti-inflammatories along with local anaesthetic provides the best pain relief. Calves graze and ruminate after the procedure and their behaviour is comparable to calves which have not had any painful procedure at all.

The use of anti-inflammatories along with local anaesthetic and sedation is now the recommended procedure for calf disbudding

throughout the world.

The dose of anti-inflammatory is based on the calf's weight.

Price for a 60kg calf including GST range from \$5.55 to \$10.86

Options;

DeBud local anaesthetic and sedation only

DeBud with Ketofen(short acting anti-inflammatory), local anaesthetic and sedation

DeBud with Metacam(long acting anti-inflammatory), local anaesthetic and sedation

DeBud with Rimadyl(long acting anti-inflammatory), local anaesthetic and sedation

We recommend the use of anti-inflammatories to minimise the negative effects that dehorning may cause. Please drop in or give us a call to discuss the pros and cons of anti-inflammatory use with disbudding of your calves.

Special points of interest:

- This is the last year that routine inductions will be legal. Next year this service will no longer be available so accurate and effective mating management this year is vital to avoid late calvers next year.
- Calves will need their first Lepto shot in October this year meaning they will receive a total of 3 shots in their first year.

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When do I wean these babies?

Weaning decisions should be based on weight and on amount of meal being consumed. Ideally calves should be eating at least 0.75kg of calf meal or pellets per day as this indicates the rumen is ready to cope with an all solids diet. We recommend feeding calf meal well past weaning (i.e. 4-8 weeks post); it should be of good quality, have at least 20% protein and contain a coccidiostat. Feeding meal post weaning will help to maintain good growth rates and prevent coccidiosis occurring.

Ideal calf paddocks to wean into would be – calf proof in their fencing, sheltered and have good drainage. Farms traditionally have a limited number of calf proof paddocks. These paddocks are often used year in year out which can result in high numbers of residual parasites if the paddocks aren't rotated or adult cows aren't used to 'mop up' parasites left on pastures.

The main indication that the time is right for weaning is calf weight. Weaning target weights for Holstein-Friesian calves is 90-110kg and 65-85kg for Jersey calves. Calves should be weighed every three months post weaning to ensure they are on target to reach mating weights (60% mature live weight).

Mature Cow LW	Jersey – 450kg	Friesian – 500kg
3 months	80	90-100
6 months	135	150
9 months	180	200
12 months	225	250
15 months (mating)	270	300

Drenching and trace element supplementation programs should be implemented from weaning though sooner if calves are looking ill thrifty. Programs are farm/grazier specific but as a general rule of thumb calves should be drenched with an oral combination drench every 4-6wks until they are too big to handle then changed on to a pour on. The last pour on going into autumn should be a combination drench which covers lung worm. Oral drenches should NEVER be added to milk. Trace element supplementation should include selenium, B12 (cobalt) and copper.

Mating Management– Getting Cows up the Duff.

Early calving means longer lactation and more litres of milk in the vat. To ensure this happens cows need to get in calf early in the mating season.

We have several hormone therapies available to synchronize and start cycling in cows.

The best way to think of a non-cycler program is that you are aiming to get cows that haven't cycled pre-mating to cycle in the first week of mating. This means you have



to be tailpainting 5 weeks before the start of AI. This is so you can pick up cows which haven't cycled since the start of tail painting and start them on a non-cycler program 10 days pre-mating. Such a program will not increase your conception

rate, decrease your empty rate or increase your 6 week in calf rate however it will on average increase lactation length by 16 days which gives a clear profit from treating.

We also offer synchrony programs to condense calving spread. These are a lower cost however not a treatment for non-cyclers. If considering synchrony you need to be prepared for huge numbers of calves on the first few days of calving. Conception rate is also likely to be slightly

Bulls– They Want To Do The Job, But Can They?



Lameness

Drafting lame cows regularly can help save you time and money. Treating a couple of mildly lame cows every few days takes much less time than treating an entire mob every couple of weeks. Early treatment also reduces recovery time and antibiotic use.

Once the future of your herd has been established through AI of your early cycling cows it is up to the bulls to tidy up the tail ends and ensure as many cows as possible will be milking into your wallet in the coming season. Bulls can have a massive impact on your herd however not all bulls are equal in terms of getting cows in calf.

First thing to consider is bull breed. The obvious choices are Jersey and Friesian. Jersey is a good choice for calving ease which is a particular concern in first calvers. Friesians have the main advantage of good sale value of bull calves as bull beef animals. Other breeds may be considered. Angus can be useful as they can make good beef calves and often easy calving. Be aware however many Angus now have American genetics which gives a much bigger animal and more difficult calving.

Individual bulls can have markedly varying fertility. The best way of testing this is to have the bulls reproductively examined by a vet. We will check for any abnormalities or obvious disease which will lower fertility. We can also measure scrotal circumference. Bigger balls do

a better job in this case so size is important.

Semen evaluation is also a good idea. This is the best way to make sure your bull's sperm will be swimmers not sinkers. This is done by collecting a semen sample and examining it. This allows us to see whether the sperm are normal, vigorous swimmers or whether they are incapable of swimming to the cows ovaries. Common abnormalities involve sperm swimming in circles, having two heads, malformed tails and sometimes no tails. These are all due to abnormalities in the bulls testicles which cannot be detected by palpation. The better quality the sperm and the more vigorous the swimming, the more cows will get pregnant.

It is important to also remember that sexual heath is an important consideration for cows, they can get the venereal disease. Vigilance is important to prevent bulls who are festering cesspools of STIs spreading their corruption through your herd. The diseases of importance are Vibriosis, Tritrichomonas, Herpes (pustular vulvovaginitis, same disease as IBR) and BVD. Vibriosis and Tritrichomonas are largely avoided by using

young bulls as old bulls are more likely to have become persistent carriers. These three diseases typically cause early embryonic loss which is seen as return to heat more than 21 days after mating. IBR can be tested for and bulls coming onto the property should be free. Again using young bulls is an advantage for the same reasons as above. These two diseases typically cause early embryonic loss which is seen as return to heat more than 21 days after mating.

BVD should absolutely be tested for and vaccinated in every bull coming onto the property. It is all too easy for a persistently infected (PI) bull to sneak past the defences and spread their disease around the cows. This can lead to lower conception rates, abortions and birth of defected and infected calves. It is important to note that PI bulls are often small, weak and generally pathetic looking HOWEVER NOT ALWAYS. They can appear normal so the only way to be sure is to test.

Your best looking, most expensive, proud bulls is not worth the grass he is eating if he is incapable of getting cows pregnant so be proactive with bull management rather than reactive.

Lepto

Most readers will be all too familiar with this little bacterium which turns cow urine from a harmless, warm, yellow liquid into a disease harbouring, potion of doom that can cause significant harm..

Recent New Zealand studies have meant a change in our Leptowise protocol. It is now necessary for every calf to get

three lepto vaccinations in order to comply.

This means their first shot will be in October with the second 4-6 weeks later. The third shot brings them inline with the herd in February or March typically.

Any other Lepto harboring animals on property should also be vaccinated. This includes sheep which can be

vaccinated with leptoshield or 7in1. Pigs absolutely should be vaccinated and the pig vaccine can be drawn off into single doses if you only have a few pigs. This also vaccinates against diamond skin disease which can be very nasty if people catch it.



There is more than one way to pluck a hen.

One problem which we are occasionally asked about hens is why one or more of the chooks is losing its feathers. Not only does this make your plump, prize hen look like its been sucked through a jet engine, it also compromises their ability to stay warm and dry.

There are two main categories of feather loss. Either the feathers stop growing/fall out or the hen actively pulls them out.

The most common feather loss is due to a hen brooding. In this case she will lose the feathers under her belly. This is so she can keep her eggs warm. It is commonly seen with hens who have gone 'clucky'. They spend most of their day in the nest box, cluck madly when you approach them and go off the lay. This is remedied by placing the hen in an enclosure by herself with a perch and no nest box for 3-4

days.

If hens are fed food other than formulated layer feed with calcium grit they can develop nutritional and vitamin imbalances which can cause abnormal feather production thus apparent feather loss.

Feather loss can also be due to a range of diseases. Most of these diseases are uncommon. Hormone imbalances can cause feathers to stop growing.

That is feather loss covered but feather destruction is probably more common. This usually involves either a bird destroying its own feathers or birds destroying each others feathers. This can be difficult to distinguish from feather loss but usually the feathers are split and matted and the bird may be bleeding.

This is most commonly caused by external parasites such as mites, ticks, and lice

causing skin irritation and self mutilation. These can be treated using Pestene powder dusted on the birds, nest boxes and perches.

Occasionally bacterial, fungal or viral skin disease can cause similar irritation and feather destruction, or sometimes feathers are normal but the skin between them is diseased. Such problems usually need vet examination and treatment.

Feather destruction can also be due to cannibalism. Once cannibalism starts in a flock it can spread and all birds get a taste for blood. The worst offenders should be removed before they eat your other little egg machines.

Occasionally you will get that one mad bird who just apparently doesn't like having feathers and as a result pulls them out. Adding feather fragments to her feed may help, or isolation as with 'clucky' hens.



Castration

Animals over 9 months are required by law to be given local anaesthetic during castration. Bull calves can be left intact to boost growth until they hit puberty at 150kg. At this age they will start playing up so castration is a good idea. At this size veterinary surgical castration is recommended.

Mastitis: Prevention is Better Than a Cure.

Everybody has a role to play in mastitis prevention. From those who get the cows in from the paddock right through to cups off all influence the rate of mastitis in the herd.

Milking cows that are walked through muddy gateways, dirty underpasses or wait in dirty yards in a shed with poor cow flow will have much more muck splashed up their teats and udders. This loads the teat and udder skin with more bacteria and the excess moisture increases bacterial loading at the teat ends where infection enters the udder.

Effective teat-spraying reduce bacterial load however excess moisture and faeces on the teats will

negate any advantage of teat -spray. Wounds, chaps, cracks and sores are places bacteria can attach to but also cause pain during milking. This causes incomplete milk out, cup slippage, low agitation etc which predisposes to mastitis. Emollient in teat-spray is important to maintain the skin health.

Applying the cups in a smooth, quiet manner reduces air intake thus reducing the amount of bacteria loaded milk jetting back up the teat. It also provides an opportunity to check the udder for signs of mastitis and teat damage. Even more care needs to be taken at cups off as any milk jetted into the quarter will be

in there for 12hrs before it is milked back out giving mastitis a chance to set in. This may not be clinical but will at least elevate her SCC and possibly the bulk milk SCC. It is also important to ensure even, proper milk out as well as giving a final assessment of udder health.

In a rotary booth cups on and cups off should be able to move around the shed to monitor for clusters with teat slippage.. This is much easier in a herringbone.

Showing awareness and interest in the milking process improves udder health, reduces antibiotic use, puts more milk in the vat but also makes the job environment more enjoyable and gives everyone a sense of job satisfaction!

