



Eltham Vets were very proud to sponsor the Ngaere school children who qualified for the national Agrikidz final, a fantastic achievement. One team won the final and are now the NZ Agrikidz Champions for 2013.



Joan congratulates Bev & Geoff Carter on winning the crate of gardening equipment in the nationwide MerialAncare Frontline promotion.

### Nitrate Poisoning

**New grass, crops, nitrate poisoning and sudden death.** It's that time of the year again!

#### Signs of Nitrate Poisoning:

A desperate situation. Cattle usually show signs of poisoning 4 to 8 hours after grazing toxic pasture/crops as the nitrate needs to be metabolised into its toxic form nitrite in the rumen before toxicity occurs. We usually get calls to see affected stock around lunchtime, cattle having been put onto toxic pasture that morning. It often occurs on a dull overcast day where the plant is unable to photosynthesize leading to a buildup of nitrates.

Affected animals are drunken, weak and staggered and deteriorate rapidly leading to death. They may gasp for breath and have very dirty blue coloured gums and conjunctiva. If you take a blood sample, it is distinctly chocolate coloured instead of the normal dark red.

However most animals are found dead.

Animals that have apparently recovered may abort - usually within a week after exposure to high nitrate feeds.

#### Reducing the risk

Management factors that can help reduce deaths due to nitrate poisoning include:

- Testing new pasture and suspect crops prior to the first grazing. Take a pasture sample in the morning and deliver it to us prior to 10am. We should be able to report the result to you within 24 hours
- Introducing cattle to suspect crops in the late morning or early afternoon. Pastures accumulate nitrate during the night and in dull weather. Sunlight reduces the accumulated nitrate.
- Making sure cattle are not hungry when you put them onto suspect pasture. Provide supplementary dry matter (hay, silage, etc) before cattle go onto the break.
- Reducing the time period cattle are grazed on suspect pasture. Allow cattle no more than 1 to 2 hours grazing on the suspect feed.
- Check cattle regularly for signs of poisoning. The toxic metabolite peaks in the blood about five hours after ingestion of nitrate.

Contact us immediately if any signs are noticed. Cows die rapidly from nitrate poisoning and require intravenous treatment with an antidote A.S.A.P.

### Police Stop at 2:00 A.M.

An elderly man was stopped by the police around 2 a.m and was asked where he was going at that time of night. The man replied, I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late." The officer then asked, Really? Who's giving that lecture at this time of night?" The man replied, That would be my wife."



**Dentist Joke**  
The dentist pulls out a numbing needle to give the man a shot of Novocain. No way! No needles. I hate needles! the patient said. The dentist starts to hook up the nitrous oxide and the man objects. I can't do the gas thing. The thought of having the gas mask on, suffocates me!" The dentist then asks the patient if he has any objection to taking a pill. No objection, the patient says. I'm fine with pills."

The dentist then returns and says, Here's a Viagra. The patient says, Wow! I didn't know Viagra worked as a pain killer!" It doesn't said the dentist, but it's going to give you something to hold on to when I pull your tooth!



**EPRINEX 3 + 1 FREE**  
3 x 5 litre + 1 x 5 litre FREE  
(No Withholdings)  
Promotion ends 31 August

**OR chat to John about other pre-calving treatment options**



### June 2013

It seems winter has arrived at last. Lindsay is on holiday in Dunedin and just e-mailed photos of thick snow from his son's kitchen window & Joan reported driving through light snow in Midhurst this morning so it's probably fair to say that it is indeed now winter.

Not a lot to report for this newsletter - the vast majority of you dried off earlier than usual thanks to the drought and are reporting reasonable growth rates so that hopefully you all have decent cover to get you through the winter.

We've had a pretty good scanning season with empty rates averaging below 9% for the first time in a number of years thanks to very favourable conditions last spring and through mating, on the back of cows calving in very good condition. Whether the same applies this season we will have to wait & see but I know most of you have made great efforts to dry cows off before they got too thin & will be endeavouring to have them as close to BCS 5 as possible by calving time so fingers crossed. A lot really depends on what the weather chooses to do over the next three months (when is that any different?) and that is out of our hands.

The situation with rotavirus vaccinations has changed suddenly this winter thanks to the major supplier being unable to supply. See in the newsletter for what has changed. Luckily Pfizer (now called Zoetis - who knows why) have been able to come to the party with their new vaccine but there are a couple of logistical changes that are covered on the next page.

Nicola is on a delayed honeymoon in UK/Europe and will get the shock of her life when she gets back to the cold Eltham winter so be sympathetic if you find her sobbing uncontrollably behind the counter over the next month. As she comes back Sue leaves for a month or so with Tony on a well-deserved overseas jaunt herself. USA, China, England & Europe beckon and we all wish her & Tony a wonderful time. Lots of Facebook photos please to make us all jealous! While they are both away we have been lucky to have Lisa back on the front office team.

What else is happening? Well the Hurricanes are flattering to deceive once again & the Warriors look a sad bunch & most likely my NSW Blues will falter in the State of Origin so as usual it will be down to the All Blacks to lift my spirits over the winter. Do you really want me to comment on the Black Caps? Didn't think so.

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### Veterinarians

Alistair McDougall BVSc - CEO  
Giles Gilling BVSc BSc MRCVS  
Andrew Weir BVSc, PGDip (Epi)  
Jim Robins BVSc, BSc, DipPharm  
Polly Otterson BVSc, MSc,  
Teresa Carr BVSc  
Adrian Clark BVSc  
Linley Gilling BVSc  
Lindsay Lash BVSc  
James Bruce BVSc  
Leon Christensen BVSc

### Office

Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS  
Jill Watson Sue Morresey  
Nicola Childs Frank Suter

**Eweguard is not available - chat to John for alternative options for pre-lamb requirements**



**Purchases of Exodus LA or Bionic Capsules will go in the draw to win an Amphibian Jacket (worth \$500)**

### Prescriptions Done For New Season

You should have received your **Restricted Veterinary Medicines Authority to Supply for the new season with this newsletter.**

These authorities enable you to purchase from the clinic or Kaponga Depot the drugs that are on your authority in the amounts entered. These drugs & the amounts are based on historical usage, consultation with you & knowledge of the situation on your farm.

As I often say, these are not set in concrete and can be altered at any time in consultation with one of the vets. New products arrive on the market all the time & sometimes are more appropriate than what you may have on your authority now so please feel free to have a chat with one of us at any time about what is on your authority & whether there is something else we have left out that you may think is more appropriate.

Since these have been prepared & printed there is already a new mastitis product that has been launched and may be just the ticket for a few of you (PenClox 1200 - see the article in this newsletter) so don't be afraid to ask if that is suitable for your farm this season.

## Rotavirus Vaccine changes this season

Many of you will have received my e-mail alerting you to this a few weeks ago but for those who didn't here's what has happened in the last month.

We have used Rotavec Corona vaccine with great success for many years now in the fight against Rotavirus in calves. It has its issues - namely lumps, danger to the person giving the vaccine and the ever increasing cost but its value in protecting calves against a killer scour was undeniable.

Having said that Pfizer have been pushing hard for a year now to get us to look at their version called Scourguard. It doesn't cause lumps, is safer for the operator and is a fair bit cheaper. The only problem with it is logistical because any cow that hasn't been vaccinated before needs two shots in its first year. Every year there would be a population of cows/heifers that need two shots pre-calving whereas with Rotavec you only ever needed one shot and that in itself was a major convenience to farmers.

We had decided that we would offer Scourguard as an option to anyone keen but would continue to offer Rotavec as well because it is well known, trusted and is a single shot vaccine.

However a few weeks ago that decision was taken out of our hands when MSD announced that due to manufacturing issues overseas it was unable to supply any Rotavec Corona vaccine this winter or certainly not in time to be any use to any dairy farmer who starts calving in July/August. Beef farmers who calve from September may be okay; watch this space - Rotavec may be available for you.

So for all our dairy clients we have one choice now and that is Scourguard. The problem we now face is that since it is the only real option for rotavirus protection across the country until September there could be a shortage so Pfizer are rationing it out.

The bulk of the vaccine will arrive in early July so if you have been vaccinating your herd annually you don't need to worry too much because the vast majority of your cows just need a booster about 2 weeks before calving. However there will be a group of cows (probably 3 year olds) who need a shot at least 3 weeks before the main group which means for most of you that will have to be done before the end of June.

For people doing it for the first time their whole herd needs two shots; the first in June and the second about 2 weeks before calving starts (minimum of 3 weeks apart). Because of the rationing taking place our earlier advice to do all your cows and heifers has had to be revised for this season at least to ensure the majority of cows get vaccinated. If you traditionally haven't done your heifers then this season isn't the year to start; just stick to your usual routine but make sure last year's heifers (this seasons 3 year olds) get pulled out this month for a first shot and then a booster with the rest of the herd in July. Our advice in future years will be to do your heifers as well as the adult cows.

It also means that we will be doing the vast majority of the vaccinating this year so we can more evenly allocate vaccines. In future years, because it's a safer vaccine, you will be able to do it yourself if you want (although with a vaccine like this we won't accept returns).

As I said, we've all been put in this position because the makers of Rotavec can't supply in time, so while it could get frustrating please bear with us & don't blame the makers of Scourguard because while they obviously wanted a bigger share of the market they weren't expecting to be handed the whole country in one season.

Teresa has been on the phone to many of you already to work through your requirements but if you're confused or haven't spoken to anyone yet & need to know more give us a ring to discuss what needs to be done on your farm this winter.

## ScourGuard® 4(K). The gentle and effective scours vaccine.

Calf scours is one of the most stressful and costly problems facing a farmer. So when it's time to protect your calves, you need a broad spectrum vaccine that is gentle on cows, but tough on scours.

ScourGuard® 4(K) has a tissue friendly formulation, for settled cows at administration and to avoid problems with injection site lumps.

What's more, ScourGuard (4)K is the only New Zealand scours vaccine containing both Rotavirus G6 and G10 strains, for truly broad spectrum scours protection for your calves.

Ask your vet about protecting your calves with ScourGuard 4(K).

**ScourGuard® 4(K)**  
GENTLE ON COWS. TOUGH ON SCOURS.

zoetis

Zoetis New Zealand Limited, Level 3, 14 Normanby Road, Mt Eden, Auckland 1024, New Zealand. Tel: 0800 ZOETIS (963 847), Fax: 0800 628 629. SCOURGUARD is a registered trade mark of Zoetis Inc. or its subsidiaries. ACVM No. A10057. RVM; Available only under Veterinary Authorisation.

## Inductions for the 2013/14 season

If you plan to induce cows to manage your calving spread you may have been notified by your supply company of the limits agreed for spring 2013. The MOU stakeholders group (Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand (DCANZ), the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA), Federated Farmers Dairy and DairyNZ) has set a limit of no more than 4% of cows to be induced in any individual herd for the 2013/2014 calving season. It was a landmark season for the programme in 2011/12 when the national herd figure of induced cows fell to 2.9%, below 3% for the first time, and current statistics suggest that further gains will have been made in spring 2012.

### Reminder

Only cows which have been identified and recorded by a veterinarian on the farm's Induction Plan can be presented for induction this season.

To continue to minimise the numbers of cows being induced, your dairy company is auditing induction records at an individual farm level. **You cannot induce more than 4% of your herd's total size this season.**

We need to make sure that you register your induction plan with us well before it is time to induce the cows.

Cows should be no more than 84 days (12 weeks) from their expected calving date, and no less than 56 days (8 weeks) from their expected calving date.

**If you haven't already booked an induction consult with one of our vets you are fast running out of time so make sure you give us a call very soon**

### "Take the Pain out of Mastitis"

A recent major NZ trial has confirmed that adding Metacam20 with an antibiotic for the treatment of mastitis not only takes the pain out of mastitis for cows, but also delivers economic benefits for farmers.

Published in 2009, the trial included herds from Waikato, Taranaki, Southland and Canterbury, with a massive enrolment of 727 cows ensuring robust findings.

In the study, the outcomes of treating with a course of the injectable antibiotic Mamyzin alone vs. a combination of Mamyzin and one injection of Boehringer Ingelheim's NSAID, Metacam20, were compared.

The results of the trial were clear-cut.

Whilst there was no immediate difference in milk production, the culling rate for the cows receiving combination therapy was 41% lower than the antibiotic alone group (with the main recorded reason for culling being empty rates). In addition to the culling reduction, there was also a significantly faster decrease in Somatic Cell Counts of the affected quarters, ensuring a speedier return to quality milk production.

These findings suggest that despite increased treatment costs, there are worthwhile economic benefits (around 5:1 return on investment) to be gained from using Metacam20 in conjunction with an antibiotic for treating routine mastitis. And also importantly, "the cows feel better faster!"

If you would like Metacam 20 added to your prescription for this season please give one of our vets a call.

### New Intramammary may be all you need

Modern thinking with mastitis is that early season cases are generally environmental while later on in the season the cases tend to become more cow-to-cow spread during milking. And generally the environmental cases are caused by strep uberis, which responds readily to penicillin (Lactapen, Penalone, Intracillin milking cow, Mamyzin, Penethaject) while the later season cases are more likely to be staph aureus, which is much harder to cure but may respond best to cloxacillin (Orbenin LA or Nitroclox). So that's what we've tended to do; based on the assumption that an early case will be environmental and will respond to penicillin we have recommended Lactapen, Intracillin MC, Masticillin & so on, while later in the season we have tended to go for Orbenin or Nitroclox.

For most farms this approach works pretty well but what about those farms where they have mixed infections from the start of the season? How do you know if you're dealing with a simple environmental case or a harder to treat staph case?

The answer is, you can't know without taking samples and because it takes a day or two before you get the results you have to treat with something until you get that result anyway. And here's another thing: about 38% of all Staph cases are resistant to penicillin while a similar number of strep cases are apparently resistant to cloxacillin.

If you have one of these herds where you really can't decide what treatment to reach for, Stockguard Virbac may have the answer for you. Someone very clever thought: what if we put penicillin and cloxacillin in the same tube? That way we could cover both major mastitis bugs in one treatment and increase the overall chances of a cure. Brilliant idea.

Getting the two drugs to mix isn't as easy as it sounds but finally (after 6 years) we can offer you PenClox 1200 High Potency Milking Cow from Stockguard Virbac. It contains 1gm of penicillin (like Lactapen) and 200mg of Cloxacillin (like Orbenin LA/Nitroclox) so in theory will treat all the main mastitis pathogens in one tube reducing the risk of treatment failure due to penicillin resistance or using the wrong tube to begin with. It does have a reasonably long milk withhold period and very long meat withhold (at this stage anyway, so until they sort that you wouldn't use it after Christmas) and costs a little more (about the same as Mastalone) but if you end up having to treat with multiple tubes this product could be what you've been looking for.

To find out more give one of our vets a ring to discuss whether it would be a suitable addition to your annual prescription for this season.