

1st of May Reminder -Transition heifers

If you are sending your heifers away grazing this winter and you are proud of how well you have grown them and you want that progress to continue while away grazing then do your heifers, yourself and your grazier a favour and spend the final 2 weeks before they go away preparing them for the change.

If you feed meal it's highly unlikely that the grazier will and if they go from one feeding regime to another in 24 hours on top of a stressful truck journey then they inevitably will go backwards for a while until they adjust. You can't afford heifers to stop gaining weight. So, 7-14 days before leaving home, remove all meal and/or 'additional' feeds that won't be provided once away and have them on grass only, because that's what they are most likely going to be on for the next 12 months. In other words try and match what they are going to be getting at grazing and get them ready for it before they get off the truck.

Also 24 hours pre trucking provide ad lib hay or straw to reduce transit stress and condition loss.

Harvey Norman?

I was listening to the radio this morning when the host invited callers to reveal the nicknames they had for their wives.

Best call was from the guy who called his wife "Harvey Norman"

Why?

No interest for 48 months!!!



Farmers Golf Day

at Eltham Golf Club

Thursday 7th June

Men's & Ladies, Golfers & Non-Golfers.

Entry Fee \$10.00. Entries limited.

Entries to the clinic by 1st June

Jubilee Guest Speaker - Keith Quinn

BVD Bulk Tank Testing

Price change for next season

This year we've been ringing around and booking in BVD bulk tank testing for next season. It's an important part of BVD control and we've been pleased with the response.

Most have been selecting the LIC monitor pack which was \$325 this season and is the simplest option for most herds. We've just been informed that the price is increasing for next season so we thought we'd better let you know what to expect: it's going to be \$350. Other prices remain unchanged at this time. All lab testing prices are set by the lab and subject to change. Booking through us still saves you the \$45 reporting charge.

If you haven't already booked in bulk tank testing, give us a ring.

Mamyzin Milk Quality Winner Collects Prize

As promised Kathy Rowlands is pictured collecting her Mamyzin Milk Quality Award and \$1000 credit on her account from AI.

All she needed to do to qualify for this award was grant us 3rd party access to her milk quality and production records from Fonterra and then have the lowest bulk tank count for the season.

All you have to do to be in a chance of winning the award next season is to do the same. Go to your account on the Fonterra site and assign us 3rd party access to your milk quality & production records and SCC results.

Our account name is 'prolapse'. Easy



Eltham Vet Services

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

Up until 1926 when the Veterinarians Act was passed into law, anyone could offer veterinary services in New Zealand without needing to be registered as a qualified veterinary surgeon. A lot of early "vets" were farmers with a bit of animal husbandry knowledge, farriers, rural doctors and chemists. Any qualified vet usually came from Britain, Canada or Europe. A vet school was actually established at Otago University in 1904 but there were no enrolments so it closed in 1907.

The very 1st vet club was established in Southland in 1903 but lasted only 2 years. The next club began in Balclutha in 1907 and was staffed by a mixture of vets and "veterinary practitioners" and still operates today as a "traditional" vet club but the idea of a national vet club movement was still 30 years away.

In 1937 a hard nosed, tough talking Scottish veterinarian named Allan Leslie came to Eltham to run a vet practice on behalf of the Federation of Taranaki Co-op Dairy Companies. Those companies comprised Pembroke, Lowgarth, Cardiff, Ngaere, Mangatoki and Eltham. Dr Leslie had arrived in NZ in 1928 to teach at Lincoln College where he not only taught local farmers but also practiced veterinary medicine in the area.

Allan Leslie lodged at the Central Hotel in Eltham and ran the clinic out of a lab at the NZ Co-op Rennet Company, where staff took calls on Leslie's behalf during office hours. The first 5 year agreement between the contributing companies expired on July 1st 1942. At the annual meeting of the Eltham Co-op Dairy Company, then Chairman Mr Charles H White declared the vet group had been a great success, proving to be an essential part of the dairy industry and had been the reason for reduced losses in dairy herds relative to those in districts where a veterinary service was not in operation.

The experiment in Eltham had proved to be so successful it was decided to extend the agreement for another 5 years and was now being tried in other districts where progress was hampered only by a shortage of veterinarians.

And thus the Vet Club movement was born. And it began here in Eltham. Allan Leslie is now acknowledged as the father of the NZ Vet Club movement and was responsible for setting up numerous vet clubs throughout Taranaki and then New Zealand.

Over the next two decades Leslie worked with farmers in the promotion of veterinary clubs, in 1947 becoming Chief Veterinary Executive officer to the Veterinary Services Council. His persuasive powers won over leading farmers who often needed considerable convincing of the economic advantages of using veterinarians. He was once famously quoted as saying "Ye cannae call yerself a vet until ye have filled a paddock full of deid coos"

At the VSC his influence on this practice continued as he was responsible for 'allocating' vets to vet clubs throughout NZ. In 1951 he allocated probably our most respected and revered veterinarian Hendrick "Hank" de Jong.

This year we celebrate the 75th Jubilee of Eltham Vet Services.

We would love it if you would join us either at the clinic on Saturday 14th April for a BARBEQUE LUNCH from 12.30 - 3.00pm or at our

JUBILEE CABARET that evening at the Town Hall.

There's a lot to celebrate!

Please phone the clinic to let us know you will be joining us for lunch and for your cabaret tickets before Thursday 5th April.

Clinic & Farm Supplies

Railway Street, Eltham

Ph. (06) 764 8196

www.elthamvetservice.co.nz

Trading Depot

Hollard Engineering,

Victoria Street, Kaponga

Ph. (06) 764 6686

J Larkin 0274 482 585

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 Duthie Frank Suter

Deserved Award For Former Chairman

The Allan Leslie Medal is awarded at the annual conference of the Association of Rural Veterinary Practices (formerly known as the Federation of Vet Clubs) each year.

It is awarded to either a veterinarian working in club practice or a director of a club practice and is given in recognition of outstanding service to the Veterinary Club movement in New Zealand.

Named after our practice founder, this award was presented to our former CEO, David Higham in 1999 in recognition of outstanding service to this practice and his pioneering work in Neospora research.

This year the Allan Leslie Medal was awarded to our former chairman Alistair Abbott in recognition of his outstanding service both as chairman of Eltham Vets and for service on the executive of the national organisation.

Congratulations and well deserved Alistair; we're proud of you!

P F I Z E R L I V E S T O C K V A C C I N E S

ANALYSIS OF THE AGREEABULL™



Bopriva™ is a unique new vaccine that temporarily reduces testosterone in bulls making them easier to manage in large mobs – for improved pasture management and savings in time and labour. Talk to your vet or visit www.bopriva.co.nz to find out how Bopriva can turn your bulls into Agreeabulls.™





Don't forget to test your cull cows for copper and selenium this autumn

Copper deficiency reduces milk production, fertility and calf viability. Cows use up their copper stores over the winter so samples taken this autumn will tell you if your cows have sufficient copper reserves on board to carry them through until next spring. Liver samples are much better than blood for determining copper status. The copper content of grass grown on the Taranaki ring plain soils is marginal for dairy cows. Most 'papa country' soils will not provide enough copper for dairy cows sent out winter grazing. And soils high in molybdenum, iron and sulphur such as the Ngaere swamp bind copper and cause a secondary copper deficiency. So dairy cows on all grass diets in Taranaki *may* need extra copper. However, PKE is a good source of copper for dairy cows, so if you feed more than 250kg PKE /head/yr they *may* not need any extra copper at all. And if you feed more than a tonne of PKE /head/yr they *may* be at risk of copper toxicity. Avoid all this guess work by requesting liver samples from your culls at the works.

Most of the Taranaki ring plain soils are low in **selenium** so we usually recommend annual application of selenium pills at 1kg/ha with your capital fertiliser. However, excess selenium is also toxic so careful monitoring is essential, especially if selenised drenches or supplements are used. Soil selenium availability is affected by rainfall and some high rainfall farms need extra supplementation over and above annual prills. Nearly every farm has been a high rainfall farm this year! Selenium plays a vital role in protecting the udder against infection so it is nice to know your cows have enough before drying off.

The works also offer liver **cobalt** testing. Cobalt levels are always good at this time of year so I don't recommend this test.

As with all testing, the results are only as good as the sample tested - 'garbage in garbage out'. The cows sampled should be representative of the rest of the herd. Sick or Facial Eczema cows, and ones which have been dry for weeks or months won't have the same mineral status as the milking herd.

We have liver analysis request forms at the clinic. We fax one to the works at least 5 days before the cattle arrive, and you take a duplicate to go with the cattle on the truck. Results take about a week to come through and we give you a written report. Five coppers and four seleniums should give us a good idea of you herd's status for less than \$250. **Don't forget!**

Dry Cow Therapy

I have been offered numerous articles from various companies that make DCT & teat sealants to put in this newsletter. They all contain great advice and statistics showing the importance of dry cow therapy, teat sealants, hygiene and so on. The trouble is, invariably they end up as an advertisement for their own product so I end up not using their articles. However the message is the thing I want to convey and a few key points:

For best results (curing existing infections and reducing new ones) you need to use the longest DCT you can relative to the length of your dry period and the resultant withholding period.

The average dry period is apparently 77 days. At this length the use of a DCT product with a protective claim of 10 weeks is ideal and by and large that's all you will need.

You will see and hear conflicting talk on the merits of a single 10 week product as being just as good as using a DCT + teat sealant combo and the exact opposite depending on who is telling the story.

The problem is both are correct depending on how you look at it and which study they choose to show you.

If your average dry period is between say 60-80 days then yes, a 10-week product is probably all you need. If the dry period is longer than that then clearly the protective benefit of DCT will have diminished by the time the cow calves and in this case she would be better protected by the addition of a teat sealant.

In any herd you will have early and late calvers. Even with a dry period of 60 days there will be a significant number of cows in that herd that will be dry for 10 weeks or longer. Maybe they would benefit from the addition of a teat sealant while the earlier calvers would do fine with just a tube of DCT.

Then there are high cell count cows. According to recent research even if you manage to cure a high cell count cow with DCT she is 4 times more likely to be re-infected in the new season than her lower cell count herd mate.

There's something different about her that makes her more vulnerable - maybe she is unable to form an effective teat plug (another claimed benefit of DCT is that it hastens the formation of an effective teat plug).

So, if you've decided to keep and treat a higher cell count cow, perhaps you should be giving her the added protection of a teat sealant as well as DCT? The same applies to any cows you are drying off early - the protective benefit of DCT will be long gone by the time they calve so consider adding a teat sealant. And what about a cow that turns up empty at scanning that you decide to carry over? She's not going to be milked again for about a year and a half so a tube of Teatseal after DCT would be a great idea for her.

There's a lot to think about & decide, which is why the more information you can give when you fill out your Dry Cow Consult form this year the better advice & recommendations we can give you.

Please help us to help you.



Milking longer this season? Is it worth it?

It's been a remarkable season for farmers. Rain has been a constant all summer and as a result we have more grass than usual for this time of year and stock generally in very good condition. The temptation if you are a dairy farmer will be to milk longer this season. Fair enough; it's a good opportunity to cash in on a good year.

But before you decide to extend your season make sure you aren't going to end up paying for it next season.

It is well established and pretty much universally agreed that drying cows off around condition score 5 is ideal as it sets them up for winter, leaves them calving in good condition and will result long term in cows cycling sooner after calving, which ultimately leads to a more compact calving and more days in milk at the front end of the season where it really counts.

All the advice we get these days is that you set your cows up for a successful mating at drying off by drying them off at CS 5. Before you decide to keep those cups on for a month longer than usual ask yourself "how much extra milk will I get by doing this and what will it cost me in the long run?"

Don't extend your lactation at the cost of cow condition; it will cost you far more than you realise down the track. Have a read of the March edition of InsideDairy. Condition score at drying off is all they are talking about!

Dry Cow Therapy. Why should I treat low SCC cows?

If you follow the Samm plan you will note that they recommend that if more than 40% of the herd qualifies for DCT or 10% or more of the herd has had mastitis in the previous dry period or the first month of lactation they recommend that you treat the whole herd with DCT. Fair enough; and that's the advice we give after reviewing your herd test and bulk cell count data at the end of the season. However we do get asked quite a reasonable question about this fairly often: why, if I am treating all cows above the Samm plan threshold, do I need to do cows that have never had mastitis and are always below the line on herd tests? Can't I leave them untreated?

Yes you can and if you have a herd with a consistently low bulk cell count, it's quite reasonable for you to just treat individually based on accepted criteria. Of course by treating all your cows you do significantly reduce the risk of new infection during the dry period, giving peace of mind and lower rates of new infection at calving time. However, if you have a herd with a high level of clinical mastitis all season, a bulk count that is consistently high (above 250,000 regularly) and more than 40% of the herd qualify under the Samm plan guidelines you really

are running the gauntlet by leaving your 'good' cows untreated. It's all about risk management.

Scott McDougall put it this way:

"The issue is about misclassification and risk management. Most herds have a gap between the last herd test and dry off and even if we have 4 herd tests and good clinical data there will be some cows that are low SCC at herd tests with no clinical mastitis history, but that may well be carrying staphs or become infected between the last herd test and drying off because they are being milked with high risk cows. Also some Staph cows can have somatic cell counts below 150,000 at herd tests because staph is an 'intermittent shedder' of bacteria and don't pump bacteria out into the milk at a consistent rate all season so can fly under the radar. The higher the average bulk count, the higher the risk of infection within the herd."

Also leaving some cows untreated increases the dry period risk of (subclinical + clinical) mastitis.

He suggests that if you're still not convinced and would prefer not to use an antibiotic on these cows that they still deserve protection over the dry period and recommends use of a teat sealant.

Heating Up Dry Cow Tubes

"**Good practice reminder for farmers** - a recent outbreak of severe mastitis following dry cow administration provided an opportunity to remind farmers that treatment tubes must not be put in buckets of water to warm before infusion. This practice seems to be widespread amongst farmers but is contrary to SAMM recommendations."

This note in an e-mail from NZVA last year got me thinking that my effort to come up with something new in newsletters is probably a waste of time. It's probably better that we repeat the same topical stuff every year, because despite what we may think, many people repeat the same mistakes year after year. Putting DCT tubes in warm water to 'soften them up' before use is a classic example.

If you put DCT tubes directly into warm water before use, they swell and allow water into the tubes along with whatever is floating in that water (remember that every time you put your hand back in to grab another tube it is getting dirtier). So, along with the dry cow antibiotic you are now at risk of placing infected material directly into the udder. These bugs tend not to be the ones that DCT was invented for either. That's a recipe for severe mastitis and/or worse. There are ways to warm your DCT tubes up, but this is not one of them.

There are number of suggestions (remember you are warming them up not getting them to boiling point):

- Some farmers put the 4 tubes for the next cow in their breast pocket and let their body heat gently warm them (admittedly won't work on a really cold morning)
- Some put the bucket of dry cow into the hot water cupboard for an hour before heading off to the shed
- Many put a hot water bottle or one of those wheat pads into the bottom of the dry cow bucket to warm tubes

Most put the bucket of tubes into a larger bucket that has some warm water in the bottom of it and let the warmth radiate into the DCT bucket while keeping tubes dry and contamination free.

There are probably 3 or 4 other ingenious ways to warm tubes without risking hygiene and cow safety that I haven't thought of so ask around. Whatever you do just don't drop the tubes directly into a bucket of warm water because all hell could break loose in a few days if you do.