

## CALVING PERIOD MASTITIS - CONTROL ACTIVITIES

With spring upon us again here is a revision of the important bits from the SAMM plan in regards to helping reduce the likelihood of mastitis.

### Calve cows in a clean environment

- Reduce exposure to environmental mastitis
- Calve onto clean pasture
- Do not calve cows on standoff areas

### Minimise Mastitis

- Remove the calf from the cow as soon as possible
- Completely milk the cow out by machine

Milk twice daily from first milking onwards

*Be aware that this milking out practice may increase the risk of milk fever in high-conditioned, older cows and any others with a previous history of milk fever*

### Teat Sanitation

- Post-milking teat spraying throughout the entire lactation is proven to reduce the incidence of new mastitis by up to 50%

### Minimise Teat Damage

- Minimise damage to teats as this is a major cause of new infections
- Make sure the machine is functioning correctly with a full machine test
- Start the season with new cup liners

### Newly Calved Cows

- Run as a separate colostrum mob
- Withhold milk for 8 milkings (cows) or 10 milkings (heifers)
- Extend this period if cows do not milk out properly

### Fast Efficient Milking

- Ensure milk letdown, especially in heifers
- Milk out all quarters of all cows twice a day
- Avoid over-milking and under-milking

### Leaking Cows

- Milk prior to calving to ease pressure
- Teat spray every time through the shed at spring concentration
- Do not put milk into bulk tank

### Teat Spray

- Spray teats with an effective sanitiser after every milking throughout the entire lactation
- Maintain teat condition - up to 15% emollient in cold muddy conditions
- If teat condition is a problem consider teat spraying with added emollient for a week before calving
- Ensure whole surface of teat is sprayed. Use at least 20ml/cow/milking
- Use a teat spray which has "Passed Protocol A 1997"
- Use according to label instructions including mixing at higher concentrations during periods of high challenge (muddy conditions)

Thanks to the good folks who put together the SAMM Plan. It is a really valuable tool.

Take advantage of all that good advice and use it.

## MASTITIS STUDY SHOWS CURE RATE AND FERTILITY GAINS

Treating mild clinical mastitis with an anti-inflammatory as well as an antibiotic can have a big impact on both cure rates and reproduction. Published in January 2016, the "Fertile Study" involved over 500 cows across 6 countries, and found cows treated for early season mastitis with the long-acting anti-inflammatory Metacam®, in addition to an antibiotic:

- Had a 16% improved cure rate.
- Had a 10% increased first service conception rate.
- Were 10% more likely to be pregnant 120 days post calving.

The negative effects of inflammation from mastitis on udder health and milk production are well understood, and it is now becoming clear that it also significantly impacts on the ability to become pregnant. Cows which have had clinical mastitis have poorer reproduction than their herd mates. It is thought the inflammation caused by mastitis affects:

- ◆ The ovary and its ability to produce high quality eggs for fertilization and,
- ◆ The ability of the cow to maintain an early pregnancy.

In addition to this, the study demonstrated the additional use of Metacam significantly improved mastitis cure rates – a world first finding. Using a single dose of Metacam in combination with your standard post-calving mastitis treatment not only makes the cow feel better, but also has the potential to provide significant long term performance and economic benefits for your herd.

To find out how Metacam might fit into your mastitis treatment plan, or to get it added to your RVM authority for the season get in contact with one of our team.

### Grounds for Divorce

*A judge was interviewing a woman regarding her pending divorce and asked, "What are the grounds for your divorce"? She replied, "About four acres and a nice little home in the middle of the property with a stream running by." "No," he said, "I mean what is the foundation of this case?" "It is made of concrete, brick, and mortar," she responded. "I mean," he continued, "what are your relations like?"*

*"I have an aunt and uncle living here in town, as well as my husband's parents." The judge took a deep breath and asked, "Do you have a real grudge?" "No," she replied, "we have a two-car carport and have never really needed one." "Please," he tried again, "is there any infidelity in your marriage?"*

*"Yes, both my son and daughter have stereo sets. We don't necessarily like the music, but we can't seem to do anything about it." "Ma'am, does your husband ever beat you up?"*

*"Yes," she responded, "about twice a week he gets up earlier than I do."*

*Finally, in frustration, the judge asked, "Lady, why do you want a divorce?"*

*"Oh, I don't want a divorce," she replied. "I've never wanted a divorce, my husband does. He said he can't communicate with me."*

## ASSISTING AT CALVING

You should provide assistance to calving heifers and cows when any of the following occur:

- Heifers not making progress within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- Cows not calved within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- Calving has not occurred within 3-4hrs after membranes have ruptured
- Delivery has commenced; the calf's legs or head are (just) visible externally and it is obvious the presentation is abnormal
- Delivery has commenced; the calf's legs or head are (just) visible externally and the calf is not delivered within 30 minutes for cows, 1 hour for heifers
- If you see the calf's tongue hanging out

If you think that a cow may have calved (e.g. she may have placenta hanging from the vulva) but you have not found the calf, perform a vaginal exam to ensure that she has in fact calved.

If you assist too early, the cervix and vagina may not be fully dilated and by pulling you risk severe damage to the cow and more difficulty in removing the calf.

If you cannot feel the calf's head, do not presume that the two legs presented are hind limbs. They may in fact be front legs and the head is twisted back (our most common presentation when called out). Check to make sure you can positively identify the hocks of both back legs and the calf's tail before attempting to pull a backwards calf.

If a cow shows signs of discomfort during the course of the day (e.g. getting up and down, licking or kicking flanks, etc) bring her in and examine her. If the cervix feels closed but things are 'tight' and 'not right' she may have a twisted uterus and need immediate veterinary attention.

If you cannot bring the calf into the correct position within 10 minutes, or if you are not sure what you are feeling or how to proceed, stop and seek immediate assistance.

Make sure you keep things as clean as possible by using plenty of hot water, disinfectant and soap plus plenty of lubricant. Always have a clean bucket available to use when calving cows – a quick rinse of a bucket that has been used to carry milk or colostrum is not suitable.

**Key Point:** if it's calving season & you see a cow that looks "not quite right" the most likely reason for her looking like that is that she is trying to calve so get her in and check her out. If you don't know what you're feeling, get us out to take a look.



## BOBBY CALF WELFARE

Bobby calf welfare is important and farmers, transport operators and processors all have a role to play. These guidelines will help you meet the welfare needs of animals in your care and to comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the industry agreed standards detailed in the animal welfare codes.

On the farm bobby calves must be given the same degree of care as every other calf on the farm.

- ◆ Colostrum – bobby calves must be fed colostrum (2-4 litres/calf) within the first 24 hours of life, preferably within 6 hours. To provide immunity, colostrum should be fed to them twice daily for the first four days of life.
- ◆ Handling – handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- ◆ Weather protection – bobby calves must be protected from extremes of weather, especially wind, rain, cold and heat. They should be moved to a sheltered, draught-free calf shed as soon as practicable after birth.
- ◆ Housing – a lying area that is well drained, covered with comfortable material that is regularly topped up to keep it dry and odour free. Exposed concrete and bare earth are not acceptable. There should be no hazards likely to cause injury to the animals e.g. sharp objects, slippery floors.
- ◆ Water – calves must have free access to clean drinking water at all times.
- ◆ Age – calves must be a minimum of four days old before being transported off farm.

In addition to being a minimum of four days old before transport, the following signs will indicate if a calf is fit for transport:

1. Healthy – eyes are bright, not dull or sunken. Ears are upright. No visible disease (e.g. scours), deformity, injury, blindness or disability.
2. Strong – able to bear weight on all four legs. Able to move freely around the pen.
3. Hooves – firm and worn, not rounded or soft.
4. Navel – dry and withered, not pink/red, raw or fleshy.

Feed – at least half the day's ration of colostrum (or colostrum substitute) is given on the day of transport within 2 hours of pick up.

As of 1st Aug 2017 you must have a suitable loading facility. Visit [dairynz.co.nz/calves](http://dairynz.co.nz/calves) for details. and/or talk to your transporter about how to make loading as easy as possible.