

APRIL 2009



Do you like our new logo? After an exhaustive process involving many different designs we have ended up with a new logo that isn't all that different to our old one, just a bit flashier. We looked at many options, most with the mountain involved and various animal species. The trouble is, once you start with one species you think "I should really add a sheep or a dog or a cat or..." and suddenly your nice clean logo looks like Noah's Ark. So the mountain it is, with our name in bold print below it. And no, we didn't consult local Iwi, Government departments or Waitangi Tribunals. We just made a choice and went with it. We hope you like it.

Nearly five months into the year and I still haven't watched a full game of Super 14. I've tried (believe me) but within a few minutes I'm fidgeting and channel flicking and generally give up altogether. It's dreadful! As luck would have it I was on a plane a few months ago and watched an entire replay of the All Blacks vs. Springboks in 1996 when we won the series and that was a game of rugby. All the 'fish-heads' need to do is watch a few games from that era, change the rules back and we'll get back the game we knew and loved and (what's more) understood.

Thanks for asking but no I haven't been fishing in my kayak this summer (combination of doctors orders post-surgery and a morbid fear of 6 metre great white sharks) so haven't added to my impressive haul of trophy-sized snapper. However, our action man vet Adrian has and has done really well in the last few months with many good sized snapper and plentiful kahawai. How he manages to find time to do this in between scanning at some un-godly hour in the morning and train for his next marathon or ironman is beyond me. So if you want to hear from someone with the balls to actually get out there and catch fish, talk to him. Perhaps next summer...

**Empty rates.** Do you really want to know? Does it matter? I always hear horror stories early in the scanning season, generally from neighbouring practices, about how bad things are. While this may be true of individual farms we generally find that by the end of scanning the average for our area is around 10%. Sure enough, as more results come in we are heading in that direction. However we have found a trend with regard to non-cyclers and that is that we appear to have got better results overall for those of you who used Cidrs + the extra injection at removal time. Again this is a general trend and for some of you it wasn't as successful as hoped but the trend seems to indicate a higher percentage of cows holding to that first insemination if given PMSG when the Cidrs were removed. We'll follow up on that later so as to give you a better recommendation before next mating.

The recession is biting although as yet we don't feel we have been too affected. Most of what we are doing now on farm was planned ahead and probably budgeted for. What happens in the new season however is anyone's guess as cashflows dribble to a halt and wallets get squeezed. We may feel the full effects more then as you start making tough expenditure choices in spring and beyond.

**Facial eczema** was more of an issue this season due to the rain that fell pretty regularly in early autumn to coincide with some very hot and humid days. We are seeing very few new cases now in terms of peeling skin and so on. We may see a few cows during winter that continue to lose weight as their livers struggle to recover. Most cows, even the badly affected ones, will recover given time and TLC. If they continue to go backwards despite all your efforts - that's a pretty good indication that they aren't going to make it to spring and should probably be culled or humanely destroyed.

Andy Aitken will be away for a month in May visiting family and cycling around the French countryside eating garlic. Apparently he is hoping to be snapped up as a last minute replacement for Lance Armstrong in the Tour de France. Good luck Andy, see you in 4 weeks.

Finally, a few giddays to people. Liz Bartley (long suffering wife of our Kaponga "Regional Manager" Richard) celebrated a major birthday recently. We hope it was a good one Liz and wish you well with all you've had to deal with this year (Let's face it; being married to Richard would be tough).

Congratulations to Josh Robins, son of our very own Jim, who was recently selected to represent a NZ team in Western riding vs. Australia later in the year. Well done Josh and good luck. And finally a big good luck wish to our chairman and "Big Kahuna", Alistair Abbott, who goes under the knife in a few weeks to get a new hip. Good luck 'Abbo', we'll be thinking of you. Hopefully the nurses will be as good looking and attentive as the "Grid Girls" that John and Andy hooked up with at the Hamilton 400 a few weeks ago (see photo back page).

**Clinic & Farm Supplies**  
Railway Street, Eltham  
Ph . (06) 764 8196  
[www.elthamvetservice.co.nz](http://www.elthamvetservice.co.nz)  
**Trading Depot**  
Hollard Engineering,  
Victoria Street, Kaponga  
Ph. (06) 764 6686  
**J Larkin 0274 482 585**

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**Office**  
Joan Hughes      John Larkin BBS  
Nina Bloemen    Lisa Goldsworthy  
Jill Watson      Frank Suter

### Farmers Golf Day at Eltham Golf Club Thursday 4th June



Entries are limited so get yours in now to avoid missing out.  
Men's & Ladies, Golfers & Non-Golfers  
Entry Fee \$10.00  
**Entries to the clinic by 29th May**

## Seasonal Reminders

### Dairy Farmers

- Fill in and return your Dry Cow Consultation forms before coming in to pick up Dry Cow therapy for the year.
- Don't sacrifice cow condition at the end of the season to get a few extra litres of milk - you'll pay for it at the start of the new season.
- Make sure all calves have had both their shots of leptospirosis and/or BVD vaccine before they leave the farm (or arrange to get the second shot done at grazing).
- Do you know the BVD status of cows recently bought and about to arrive on your farm 1<sup>st</sup> June?
- If your herd size is about to increase substantially have you let us know so we can adjust your prescription for next season?
- Think about getting liver samples taken at the works to assess copper and selenium status going into the winter.
- Start booking your herd for **Rotavec** vaccination so they are done 3-12 weeks prior to calving.
- Please let us know if you are shifting or employing new farm staff whom we need to meet.
- Have you ever had a drench test done to assess whether your drench is still working on your young stock - are there resistance issues we need to address?

### Sheep Farmers

- Have you considered having a drench test done to check the effectiveness of your drench and/or to check if there are any resistance issues we need to address?
- Remember to fill in your scanning booking form and return so Joan and Jill can book you in.
- If Barber's Pole is causing problems in your lambs, remember that ewes are also more susceptible to this worm than other round worms so you need to monitor them as well, especially around tupping. Faecal egg-counts and larval culture might be worth considering to help you decide whether to drench or not.
- Have you considered vaccinating your beef cows with **Rotavec** this winter to avoid outbreaks of Rotavirus in your calves?

## How Much Selenium are you getting in your Fertiliser?

I've had a few interesting conversations with clients recently regarding just how much selenium they are getting when prills are added to their fertiliser. The accepted rate has always been around 1kg of standard prills per hectare to deliver 10g of elemental selenium per hectare per year. Ravensdown's latest selenium prills are called 'Selprill Double' and are put on at 0.5kg per hectare to get the same rate (i.e. double the strength of traditional prills).

Unfortunately it seems when it comes to spreading many of you are actually getting your prills applied at 1kg per tonne of fertiliser. So, unless you are putting one tonne of fertiliser on each hectare you will not be getting adequate levels of selenium in the pasture, which might explain why some farms who used to have plenty of selenium when tested courtesy of an annual application of prills in the autumn fertiliser now appear deficient. If you are only applying at 250kg per hectare you will only be getting a quarter of the selenium your farm actually needs.

So, please check with the guy doing the spreading and make sure it is being added at the correct rate: either 1kg per hectare of traditional prills or 0.5kg per hectare of the new double strength ones. One kg per tonne is a cop out by the company spreading your fertiliser because it's a lot easier to work out but your cows may be missing out as a result. Don't let them off the hook on this one!

Recently a number of our dairy clients have contacted us about liver fluke infections

### LIVER FLUKE ? – Don't Panic!

fluke does occur so they could well bring fluke back to the home farm.

recorded on kill sheets for their cull cows. These clients have not had liver fluke diagnosed before. They are absolutely right to be concerned. Liver fluke infection is a serious matter. The immature flukes burrow through the liver and the adults survive in the bile ducts for many years. Both stages cause anaemia and protein loss in the host. Trials have shown that even a mild infection will reduce milk production by 10%. A severe infection looks like Johne's disease.

However, liver fluke needs two hosts to complete its life cycle. The primary host is your unfortunate cow or sheep, the intermediate hosts are water snails of the genus *Lymnaea*. These snails live in swampy places and release liver fluke larvae onto vegetation. When this vegetation is eaten by cattle or sheep they become infected with liver fluke. Without the snails, liver fluke cannot complete its life cycle. These snails prefer non-acidic, low lying swampy areas with slowly moving water. So if cattle are fenced out of swampy places and drink from troughs rather than streams they are unlikely to eat infected water or herbage. And on the acid soils of the Taranaki ring plain these snails are uncommon.

In fact, in this practice we cannot remember diagnosing liver fluke in cattle which have never left the ring plain. The papa country to the east is a different matter; we do find liver fluke in cattle there. So what's going on? Well for a start more and more farmers graze young stock away in regions where liver

The infection won't be spread to other animals unless they also have the right snails on their property but it would show up as liver fluke damage when culled later in life. Also, livers from old cull cows can show a lot of wear and tear - old scars, abscesses, discolouration and peritonitis. Some of these might be mistaken for liver fluke damage. So even if one of your cull cows did show liver fluke damage at slaughter it may be from an infestation when young and may not be of significance to the rest of the herd. Or, it might! So what should you do?

Fortunately we have several tests for liver fluke infection in live animals. The best screening test for a whole dairy herd is a bulk tank milk sample test for antibodies to liver fluke. A pottle of milk from a well stirred vat will tell us if your herd has been exposed to liver fluke for \$80.

We can also look for liver fluke eggs in dung. A mixed sample from several different animals will increase the likelihood of detecting infection. This costs about \$25 per sample.

We have done both these tests for farmers who had liver fluke diagnosed on their kill sheets this year and the tests have been negative. So, if you get a kill sheet saying your cull cows had liver fluke, please don't rush out and treat your whole herd. Treatment isn't cheap and there are a number of different products on the market, some much more effective than others. Speak to one of us first about how to confirm the infection and the best way to treat it.

## Don't Forget Your Dry Cow Forms!!

Once again many thanks to the vast majority of you who have (or are in the process of) filled out their dry cow consultation forms prior to coming in to the clinic. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. For those of you who are forgetful or tend to lose things (in some cases, I suspect deliberately!) we have included another Dry Cow Consultation Form for you to fill in before coming in to get your Dry Cow Therapy for this season. (If you've already done yours and handed it in you may not get one depending how on-the-ball we are). This consultation is a requirement under the ACVM Act and without a consultation we can't sell you the stuff. It's not hard and for the majority of you that alone will be enough for us to make a recommendation. For some it will be the starting point for a consultation (either in person or over the phone) with one of the vets so we can give you better quality advice on what your best course of action is. Remember it's not all about just buying the stuff and putting it in; some of you may not need as much as you think, some may need more. Either way, it is important that you do your bit by filling in the form first – I've said it before, but you may actually learn something by doing it, so please fill in the form!!



## Dry Cow Therapy Tips

Now that drying off is getting close here is some advice to help you in selecting which cows to treat, which to leave, and which ones you should cull.

### Selection

The SAMM plan recommends that any cow that has had a SCC of 150,000 or above at any time during the season should be treated with DCT. For heifers this figure drops to 120,000.

One of the interesting things to arise from the DCT consultation forms you have been sending in has been how some people interpret things differently. We have had a lot of farmers who choose their cows based on the average of all four tests and some who select based on the last test only. In both cases they will be missing a large number of cows that need DCT. You must select based on the results from all FOUR tests. Others have set their own SCC thresholds based on either some pre-conceived ideas or money considerations. It hasn't been uncommon for some farmers to only treat cows above 200,000 or even 250,000. While the 150,000 recommended by the SAMM plan is a guideline, those levels have been chosen for a reason and are based on years of research and discussion in the dairy industry.

### Culling

You will all have different criteria for which cows you cull each year and it is not our place to tell you which cow you should cull and which ones you should keep, but, with regard to DCT, this is our advice:

Cull cows due to mastitis if:

1. She has had three or more cases of clinical mastitis during the season (for some of you that threshold may be 2)
2. She has been persistently high at each herd test
3. She has had previous DCT but remains high

Every cow deserves one chance to be cured with DCT. After that consider the "one strike and you're out" policy.

Just because you treat the whole herd each season with DCT, don't fall into a false sense of security about the mastitis risk to your herd. Whole herd DCT will only work to your benefit if you follow a sensible culling policy too.

Don't keep those same old high SCC cows each season and think that by treating them with DCT things will be okay.

Even with DCT, the best cure rate for chronic infections will be around 80%. That leaves 20% still infected putting the rest of your herd at risk.

### Whole Herd or Part Herd?

Often this decision will come down to available cash. That's fair enough. Having said that, check your SAMM plan again and look at their criteria for whole herd DCT:

- If after highlighting all the cows that qualify for DCT you find that this represents 40% of the herd or more you should do the whole herd
- If 10% or more of the herd had clinical mastitis in the previous dry period, or in the first month of this lactation you should consider whole herd DCT
- Management. If you are shifting farms or grazing off for the winter you should consider whole herd DCT.



Another interesting fact that you should consider is this: if you can't afford to treat the entire herd with a top of the line long-acting DCT have you considered doing the whole herd with a cheaper, short-acting product? Studies have shown that it might be more cost-effective to treat the whole herd with a shorter acting product than to treat fewer cows with a long acting one.

### Teatseal

If you have done the numbers and selected the cows that are getting DCT, what about all the others? Is it fair that your best cows go into the winter with no protection against mastitis while your higher cell count cows get DCT? Isn't that like giving Chris Martin the best cricket bat available to bat at number 11 while asking Jesse Ryder to go in with a tennis racquet and no box? Your low count cows may not need DCT, but they might still benefit from protection during the dry period and Teatseal may be the answer. Chat with us about this option if you are unsure.

### When am I drying off?

Given that this has been a good season and many of you will milk well into May or even June, don't forget your planned start of calving when we discuss DCT with you. Most of the longer acting products have long withholding periods too and this must be taken into account when choosing the right product.



### NZ Trial Work Shows benefits of MultiMin

Reproductive efficiency in dairy cattle is one of the most important economic drivers for New Zealand dairy farmers and managers. A healthy dairy cow delivering a healthy calf these days is the result of top management on a dairy farm.

Dairy cows these days are genetically geared for high levels of milk production. Heritability of fertility is very low. In practical terms this means that reproductive efficiency is hardly about hereditary at all and that the success of reproductive efficiency is mainly dependant on the environment, which means that the feeding and management program of a specific dairy herd should be clearly aimed to achieve high reproductive efficiency. This is a huge and complex challenge.

MultiMin is a combination of 4 minerals, copper, selenium, manganese and zinc, four of the most important trace elements involved in functions that are essential for optimum reproductive efficiency. MultiMin is an aqueous injection that can be used subcutaneously or intra-muscularly. MultiMin uses a patented process to present all four trace elements in a tissue friendly and easy to use product.

The "Targeted Use" concept is the strategic supplementation of trace minerals prior to critical events such as calving & breeding, when optimal physiological functions are required.

Overseas trial work where MultiMin was used 4 weeks prior to calving and breeding showed benefits to reproduction both in dairy and beef cattle. More recently MultiMin was trialed under the unique New Zealand dairy system to investigate the benefits of MultiMin on reproductive performance in typical pasture based dairy farms in New Zealand. Results demonstrated that animals treated with 5ml MultiMin four weeks prior to calving and again four weeks prior to breeding produced an extra 3.3% higher in-calf rate, a reduction in embryo loss and a reduction in conception time of 3.4 days compared to the control groups. The increase in-calf rate and the reduction in embryo loss are statistically significant which is important to determine the validity of trial data.

From a farmer's point of view, the results seen in this trial work could have a significant impact on the reproductive performance of their herd. If you want to know more, please give us a call.



### Help us to help you.

Herds are getting bigger and farming systems more complicated. If you ask one of us for an opinion or advice on something like mastitis or fertility it is

hard for us to get a good idea of the situation on your farm without asking heaps of questions and taking up lots of your time. It is quicker for you, and clearer for us, if we can have access to your records on line. Some of you have already given us this access and over the winter we will be asking the rest of you when you come into the clinic. You will be asked to set up **third party access for us to your SCC records on Fencepost and your Minda or Mistro repro records. We don't want access to any payment information on Fencepost and for Minda and Mistro we want 'read only' access so we won't be able to enter or change any data.**

*Judy got married and had 13 children. Her first husband, Ted, died of cancer. She married again, and she & Bob had 7 more children. Bob was killed in a car accident, 12 years later. Judy again, remarried ... and this time, she & John had 5 more children. Judy finally died, after having 25 children. Standing before her coffin, the preacher prayed for her. He thanked the Lord for this very loving woman and said, "Lord, they are finally together."*

*Ethel leaned over and quietly asked her best friend, Margaret: "Do you think he means her first, second, or third husband?" Margaret replied.. "I think he means her \*legs\*, Ethel..."*



### John and Andy get Lucky!

*See what happens when you win a trip to the Hamilton 400? All of a sudden you become very attractive to the opposite sex. That's what Andy and John found anyway when they went to Hamilton last week for the V8's. Judging by the looks on their faces, they were pretty pleased with how things turned out. John apparently didn't know which way to turn (or did he?)...*



### VACCINATIONS OVERDUE

**Calf vaccinations (two shots a month apart of Lepto and BVD vaccine) should now be complete.**



**Lepto vaccinations for in-calf heifers and the herd are now due. Please give the girls a call at the clinic to book in your visit.**

**Contact John at the clinic for Dry Off Pouron treatment options and quotes. Powerbuilt Tool promotion continues while stock lasts.**



**Keep your stock free of lice with Tempor. Receive a Merino Undershirt with each 5 litre.**

