

Finally after years of cancellations and frustrations we've got our **annual golf day back** and this year we've got a treat in store for you. Olympic rowing great and general all round good bastard, Eric Murray is attending the day and will be our guest speaker after prize giving. I've heard a rumour that he's a pretty handy golfer too and it sounds like he's going to play as well. He's a large human so I imagine he hits the ball a long way.



Anyway we're thrilled that he's agreed to come and entertain us with stories from his life and career, which I'm sure will contain plenty of humorous anecdotes.

So make sure you come to our golf day this year. And even if you don't play, come along after prize giving and listen to Eric Murray. Mark it on your calendar. Thursday 8th June. Eric is expected to speak around 7.00 pm.

Farmers Golf Day Thursday 8th June

Join us at
Eltham Golf Course
for a fun day of golf,
food, drink & great
prizes as we say
goodbye to one
season and hello to the new one.
Entry Fee \$10.00. Entries limited.
**Entries to the clinic
by 2nd June
Ambrose format**



CHANGES TO PENICILLIN WITHHOLDING PERIODS FOR NEW SEASON

The regulatory body of MPI, the ACVM, have been looking closely at antibiotics and reassessing dose rates and withholding periods in the last year. The first group of antibiotics they looked at were the penicillin group, which is the most widely used group of antibiotics in livestock.

They have decided that some penicillin products were being used at dose rates that were too low (which in theory promotes antibiotic resistance) and therefore, the WHPs that applied to those products were no longer suitable. In our case the two injectable penicillins we use most are Intracillin injectable, and Duplocillin, which is our long-acting product.

Recently they brought out new directives for WHPs. New product packaging, when it comes out, will reflect those new WHPs.

As a result the milk WHP for Intracillin has gone from 72 hours to 96 hours (6-8 milkings). Meat remains at 10 days.

In terms of the increasing dose rate recommendations - the current dose is 10-25mgs per kg. That's anywhere between 20-50 mls per cow per day. In the case of footrot it has traditionally been 20-25 mls daily for 3 days. For a seriously sick cow we've always recommended double that (which is why on your RVM authority we've said 20-40 mls depending on what you're treating).

The new single dose rate will be 20mgs per kg, which equates to around 35 mls daily. That's a lot to give a lame cow daily for 3 days. Especially when we've never had any issues with 20-25 mls doing the job.

For Duplocillin the milk WHP has been raised from 120 hours (10 milkings) to 35 days. Yes, you read that correctly: 35 days. And meat WHP has gone from 30 to 91 days.

Those are default WHPs so clearly the people who make Duplocillin have put their hands up and said "we're out, we're not prepared to pay the money to do the work and provide the data proving the actual WHPs of our product".

So effectively Duplocillin will no longer be useable for production animals once the new packaging comes in and we are currently trying to find a suitable alternative to replace it.

Before you all go screaming to the shed to throw these products away, we have been advised that products with old labels that are already in circulation can be used in accordance with their existing labels until the expiry date shown on the product label. So if you've got Intracillin in the shed with the old WHP & dose rate, if you continue to use it at that dose rate (20-25mls daily for an adult dairy cow) the label withholding periods continue to apply and the authorisation does not need to change immediately. The same would apply to any cows treated with Duplocillin.

For now, don't panic. We don't expect to change anything on your RVM authorisations until the end of this season. At that point WHP recommendations and your RVM authorities will reflect the new requirements and any "old" product in store will be re-labelled and eventually replaced with the new product and packaging.

And, in the meantime we'll try & find a replacement option for Duplocillin as your long-acting alternative.

Inspirational thought for the day:

The only person you can truly rely on is you.

What a bloody nightmare!

*I bought my husband a
Get Better Soon card the
other day.
He's not sick.
I just think he could be
a lot better.*



APRIL 2023

I think it's fair to say that in the lead up to Christmas, most of us were predicting a long hot, humid summer. Eczema would be a factor and with all the grass around the season would go deep into May. Now we're in April it feels more like the season could come to a sudden halt with the next cold snap. Certainly we didn't get much of that long hot summer and, thankfully, it looks like eczema won't come to much so I'm giving up on predictions. Well, other than we won't win the Rugby World Cup this year. Mind you if we do, Razor is on a hiding to nothing when he takes over.

So another season begins to draw to a close and we find ourselves deep in dry cow & RVM consults with Animal Wellness Plans thrown in as well.

Ryan has written a couple of articles for this newsletter relating to both so please take a look. He's a smart man and well worth paying attention to.

We started April minus one of our most respected senior veterinarians because of course, Polly retired. We're already missing her and are hoping she gets horribly bored at home and comes back begging to put the overalls back on within a few months. Well, we can dream. She has written a farewell for this newsletter since she didn't get to say goodbye to many of you.

We're also missing one of our younger vets for the rest of the year. Michaela has heard the call of the wild and has headed off on a long-awaited overseas adventure. She won't be back until the end of the year and her absence will be felt deeply. We wish her a wonderful time away but look forward eagerly to her return.

So, with Polly retired and Michaela off on sabbatical that leaves us a couple of vets short heading into the new season. During the week it shouldn't be an issue but when spring hits and we double up on afterhours you might find your vet a bit more tired than usual when he or she comes out for that late-night calving. Normally we have had no problems getting a replacement or locum vet to cover shortfalls but this time we've drawn a blank. In fact I haven't had a single application. I was chatting to my mate Harry over at Waipukurau Vets and he told me they have had three young vets head away on their OE's and they can't find anyone either. So the vet shortage is real and we're finally feeling it here at Eltham.

This winter we start work on the conversion of an old storeroom into a flash new small animal surgery and radiology suite. That's very exciting and will help future proof the practice as we look ahead to more and more small animal work for our vets. Leon has done the bulk of the planning and ground work for this project and we can't wait to see the final result.



You may also have noticed that we gave the outside of the clinic a spruce up recently. Thanks to Allan McCullough and his crew for the great job they have done smartening up the beautiful old building we call home. That should keep it looking shipshape for another 10-15 years as we fulfil our obligations to preserving and maintaining this historic building.

As usual for this time of year most of the content is related in some way to drying off. Please remember to fill in your dry cow questionnaire that was sent to you with the last newsletter. We need that info to help you make the best decision when drying off so please be a sport and get it filled in and back to us well in advance of your expected dry off date. And finally, we have a proper golf day back this year with a guest speaker so mark the 8th of June on your calendar & we'll see you then.

This is my last piece for our newsletter. As our regular readers will know, I retired at the end of last month after 20 years at Eltham Vets. I have mixed feelings about retiring. It is wonderful to look forward to doing some of the things I have always said I wanted to do, but there is also sadness at saying goodbye to what has been such a big part of my life.

As I insisted that I write a farewell piece so I thought I would share with you the most important things I have learned in almost 43 years as a vet. Here goes:

- If you feed them right, they don't get sick.
- The reason God made heifers was so we would appreciate cows.
- Not everyone who has animals is nuts; but everyone who is nuts has animals.

Thank you for all the good times, for your patience, your trust, your encouragement and for teaching me so much. It's been a privilege working for you.

Polly

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Karen Bellamy Erin Bryant
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ANIMAL WELLNESS PLANS – GETTING THE TIMING RIGHT

The Fonterra co-operative difference has been with us for a few seasons now, and part of it is sitting down and doing an “animal wellness plan” with a vet. We are in the process of implementing an updated version that looks quite different to the ones you’ve seen in the past, hopefully it is both easier to use and adds more value to the conversation. If we have to sit down and do it, you may as well get something out of it right?

Also, up until now we have been doing your animal wellness plan consults whenever you have rung up to book them (usually right before a shed inspection). However, they are designed to be done at the end of the current season, where we can review how the season has gone and, using that information, plan for the **next** season.

So, we should be sitting down and reviewing the 2022-2023 season around April/May and writing a plan for the 2023-2024 season. If we’re clever we could even get our RVM consult done for next season at the same time! Two birds with one stone.



REPRO REVIEWS

As we go around the district scanning, we often hear people frustrated with a higher than expected empty rate and comments such as “makes you wonder why we spent all that money on CIDRs, trace elements, bulls, extra feed, scratchies”, whatever it may be. We also hear comments like “I **think** it’s the young cows letting us down” or “one of the bulls must have been a dud” or “the cows just didn’t seem to be cycling”.

If we sit down to do our animal wellness plan at this time of the year, after we’ve scanned your herd (or you’ve done a milk test), we can have a careful look into your mating information and work out what actually led to the result you got (i.e. we can do a “repro review”). Then we can plan to improve results in the most cost-effective way possible. There’s no point spending money on extra bulls next season because you feel like the bulls were the problem, if in fact bulls weren’t the problem at all and instead you had a poor conception rate in the AB period. We need access to your MINDA data to do this so please sign that piece of paper that we keep putting in front of your noses and return it to the clinic.

So, if you are looking at getting your animal health plan done in the next few months and have concerns over your reproduction performance, why not tag on a repro review and once again get more value out of your visit to the vets!

DRY COW SEASON IS NEARLY HERE

To ensure you can pick up your dry cow therapy treatments (DCT) when you require them **please remember to fill in and return your dry cow form well ahead of drying off.**

We cannot dispense dry cow treatments before a vet has looked at your form and made a recommendation on the information you have provided. Ryan has tweaked the questionnaire to make it a bit more user friendly so please try to answer the questions fully.

The more information we have the better.

Again this year we are adding a dry cow treatment release form which you will receive when you get your recommendation form.

This release form must be signed and returned before you can collect any dry cow treatments.

We will also provide you with your “DCT prescription” when you pick up your dry cow to hopefully prevent those scenarios where you have a shed audit a few months later & we have to scramble to print off a retrospective prescription because it’s not on your new one. Please remind the front counter staff if they forget.

If you or your workers require more training around dry cow therapy treatment administration please contact the clinic to register your interest. There is also an excellent website with loads of useful information on drying off and administration of DCT and Teatseal.

You’ll find it at www.zoetis.co.nz/dairywellness

If you then click on the “preventing mastitis” tab, then “best practice administration” you’ll find a whole bunch of short videos reminding you of the correct technique for putting in DCT and Teatseal.

*“If you can’t sit quietly after difficult news;
if in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm;
if you can see your neighbours travel to fantastic places
without a twinge of jealousy;
if you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate;
you can fall asleep after a day of running around without
a drink or a pill;
If you can always find contentment just where you are:
You are probably a dog.”*



DRYING OFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The benefit of dry cow therapy can be undermined by other factors that increase the risk of mastitis. Management practices around drying off should aim to minimise milk leakage and exposure to environmental risk factors (e.g. wet/soiled pasture) in the early dry period. This is important whatever dry cow therapy product you use.

Cows producing less than 10L/day can be dried off immediately without reducing feed. For cows producing more than 10L/day, restrict feed to maintenance for 3-5 days before planned dry off and remove any meal or PKE from the diet.

Include high levels of hay as part of maintenance and make water freely available. Milk once daily. The message you are giving the cows by taking these steps is that it’s time to slow down. Avoid the temptation to skip a day.

The cows may look tight, but they will develop a plug faster if left. If you bring them in and milk them again the initial plug will disappear, and you are telling the cows to start milking again. Drycow therapy is made to go into an udder that is milking, not an udder that is starting to dry off. Incorrect use of Drycow therapy increases the chance of inhibitory substance grades at the start of the next season.

Plan drying off dates well in advance. Allow for bad weather and the recommended stand-down time of 14 days between drying off and transportation of cows.

Dry cows off in small enough groups to ensure the process is methodical and not rushed.

Cows that leak milk after drying off have a 4x higher risk of dry period clinical mastitis. Manage feed intake pre and post dry off to minimise leaky cows. Keep the dried off cows on maintenance feed for 5-7 days including plenty of hay. The less mud and poo in the area they are grazing the better, so larger areas of short pasture are better than small areas with long grass. This may play havoc with your round but it’s only for a short time.

Avoid the cowshed for at least 14 days as many cows will let their milk down even if they come into the yard.

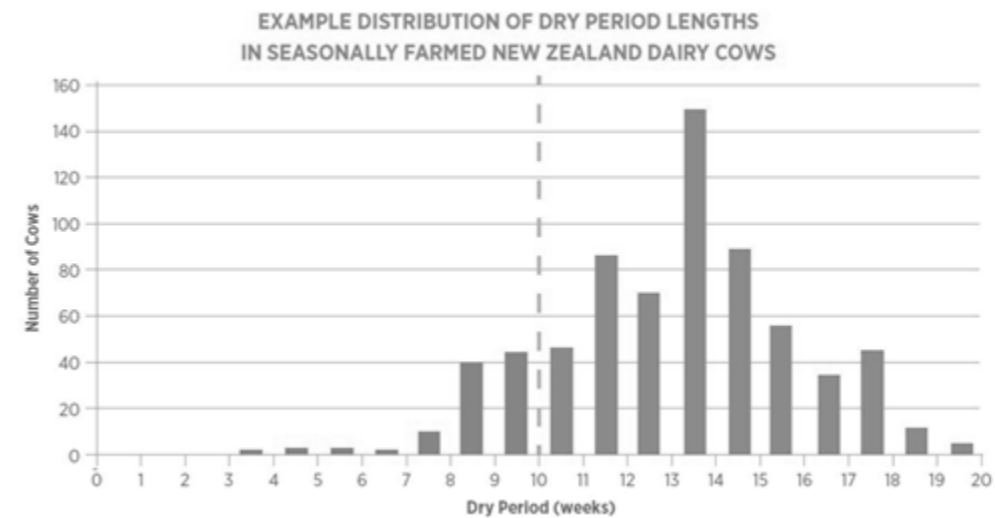
Check udders after 14 days, feel the udder for hardness, lumps but avoid stripping milk out unless you are sure an infection is present, otherwise you will strip out the teat plug.

Teat Sealants - A Great Mastitis Prevention Tool

Does your herd have a problem with mastitis around calving or do you graze off farm or have a crop for winter grazing? For these herds with increased risks of mastitis, teat sealants are a great option. Teat sealants are non-antibiotic and form a physical barrier immediately on insertion, blocking the entry of bacteria into the udder throughout the dry period. Teatseal is the only sealant that is proven to last for at least 20 weeks. Because they last so long in the teat, these sealants are the best product we can use to help combat a herd mastitis problem that occurs at calving. Teat sealants can be used alone or in combination with antibiotic DCT.



Are you drying cows off early? Large numbers of cows in New Zealand have dry periods that are longer than the protective period of any dry cow antibiotic. The graph below shows an example distribution of dry period lengths on a New Zealand farm. New Zealand studies have shown an average dry period length of approximately 13 weeks. The dotted line shows the protective period of the longest acting dry cow antibiotic. Teat sealants are perfect for use in cows dried off early, late calving cows or holdovers.



If you think that teat sealants would be appropriate in your herd please contact the clinic to talk to a vet or arrange to have a chat about it with your DCT consult.