

JOANS LAST WORDS

It's not where you work but who you work with that makes you want to come to work everyday.

I started working at Eltham Vets in July 1989 and have thoroughly enjoyed the many years working at the clinic. Never has there been a day when I didn't want to come to work.

My work has always been varied, challenging at times and for the most part satisfying. One of the best parts of the job has been the people I've worked with, both colleagues and clients, many who have become friends outside of work.

I owe a huge thanks to both David Higham & Alistair, two amazing supportive bosses always having the best interests of the practice and the staff at the forefront and thanks also to the board members I've worked with throughout the years for their support.

Heaps has changed in the 34 years including numerous changes to our historic building and the increase from 7 to 20 staff. The biggest change has been in technology. In early years we hand wrote receipts; payroll was calculated manually, and I manually balanced the big black General Ledger. We had one computer when I started; now we have 26.

The culture at Eltham Vets and the people I've worked with have been awesome – 'get stuck in and get the job done'; professionalism; teamwork; and a happy, easy-going crew are all features of the culture. There's been plenty of hard work but lots of fun too – like the touch team playing in the Stratford competition, competing in Round the Mountain relays and numerous social occasions. You're being left in the best of hands with the new management team of Leon & Leigh and their amazing support crew. I will miss working at Eltham Vets but intend to enjoy more cycling, swimming, tramping, travel, time with grandchildren and some volunteer work.

Joan



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DECEMBER 2023

Our new boss (or Glorious Leader as he likes to be called) has indulged me one last time and granted me the honour of saying a final goodbye in this last newsletter of the year. There's a good chance you are sick of hearing from me so I'll try to keep this brief.

I started here as a very new green graduate in May of 1988, did just enough not to be sacked in my first couple of years and eventually got a feel for the job and the challenges that came with it. I also learned to swear at Eltham, thanks to a very fine example set by my boss at the time, Dave Higham. Dave was not afraid to tell a client what he thought in the most direct and frank manner. I discovered that this in fact was often the most effective way to get a point across as well. I apologise if I took that too far at times in the intervening 35 years, especially in the middle years where I almost certainly took it too far.

I became a vet because I read James Herriot books when I was about 12 and that inspired me to give the profession a crack. And other than the occasional late night prolapse and colicky horse, it's fair to say that I haven't regretted that decision. I'll remember many interesting cases, the people I worked with (who I will have already thanked by the time you read this), the countries I worked in thanks to this degree and many friendships that I have made simply through becoming a vet. Mostly though, I'll remember you, our clients. There are too many of you to mention so I won't. But thank you for putting your trust in me over all these years. Thanks for the support, the laughter, the in-depth post-mortems of All Black losses and the kind words when things got tough both professionally and personally. Long after I've forgotten the cases I'll remember the people, the funny stories, and the magnificently inappropriate jokes and comments.

I'll think of you when summers get dry, grass gets short, when it looks like facial eczema or flystrike might be a problem this year, and when I read that the payout or schedule has gone up or down. And especially when I am tucked up in bed on a filthy night in spring listening to the raging storm outside and wondering which of you is out in the rain and mud trying to calve a cow and which vet has just been dragged out of their warm bed to help. As mad as it sounds, I might even miss those nights and the feeling of satisfaction when you pull out a live calf and get a heartfelt thank you from a grateful farmer. It's been a privilege to lead this organisation and to help you where I can to the best of my ability. It has meant the world to me.

I'm leaving you in very good hands; we have a vibrant new management team looking to launch the practice forward (by the way he doesn't really want to be called Our Glorious Leader; I made that bit up), a terrific support crew and a fantastic group of vets, all of whom are far better vets than I could ever hope to be. So, you're going to be fine. Look after them.

Take care everyone. Thank you and all the very best. **Alistair CEO 1999– 2023**

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Jill Watson CVN/RAT

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Karen Bellamy Erin Bryant

Alex Rowlands (maternity leave)

WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE ELTHAM VET SERVICES TEAM, LONAY PRICE.

Lonay is Taranaki born and bred and brings to the team extensive management, exotic and companion animal nursing and customer service experience accumulated over the last 9 years. She has a Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, and is currently studying towards her Bachelors Degree, alongside having multiple other animal related qualifications. Lonay has a particular interest in anesthesiology, orthopedics and animal welfare. Much of her time outside of work is dedicated to furthering the training of her 6 dogs, travelling around the North Island and exhibiting her two Japanese Spitz and two Basset hounds in championship shows. And if that is not enough, her Sundays are spent as an obedience dog training instructor for the North Taranaki Dog Training Club.

Welcome onboard Lonay, we're excited to have you.



HERE ARE 10 REASONS WHY SANTA CLAUS COULD HAVE BEEN A FARMER

1. He works all year, just to give his stuff away.
2. He's good with livestock.
3. He knows how to get by with the same equipment season after season.
4. He works outside, even in bad weather.
5. He's good with kids.
6. His wife is an excellent cook.
7. He could stand to loose a few pounds (see reason #6).
8. He's used to getting in and out of tight places.
9. He covers a lot of ground in a hurry when the pressure is on.
10. He takes care of the needs of the whole world.



Join us at the clinic for an End of Year celebration!

**Wednesday
20th
December
5 - 10pm**



REMEMBERING GILES



It is with a heavy heart that all of us at Eltham Vets acknowledge the tragic passing of our recently retired colleague Giles Gilling. Giles came to Eltham as a fit young man in the mid 90's and stayed at Eltham Vets for 28 years before retiring earlier this year. He was well known in the area as a caring, hard-working vet who always put the best interests of his clients first. His work ethic and willingness to go the extra mile for a client earned him great respect and loyalty from those clients who all considered him "their vet".

He had a unique sense of humour and loved telling long, humorous anecdotes from his days at Vet School and his early years as a vet in the Orkney Islands. Always a bit of a maverick, he was an individual of great character who will be missed.

Our condolences to Giles' partner Erin, his children Alex & Emma, and his extended family. Any messages of condolence would be happily received and can be sent to C/- 210 Standish Road, Toko.

Rest in peace Giles.

EMISSIONS, EMISSIONS, EMISSIONS

In the last couple of weeks Adrian, Holly and Ryan all attended a training event with Fonterra about their coming emissions framework. The focus of the training was how it might look and how we could support our farmers through this change. Key takeaways from the training are as follows:

Why is Fonterra starting to measure or model emissions on our dairy farms?

- The government has already set targets for reductions in CO2 biogenic methane emissions.
- Fonterra will have to do something about emissions regardless of the government targets. By 2024 they will be legally required to report on their environmental impact. They face pressure not only from large international companies buying our milk products but also the banking/finance sector (similarly, individual farms may face pressure from banks around their emissions in the future).
- NZ dairy **was** the most emissions efficient in the world but dairy industries in other countries are innovating and have already caught up. If we do not make changes now, we will be overtaken and will no longer have that market advantage.
- The change of government is unlikely to stop the requirement for emissions measurement/monitoring/penalties/incentives.

When will Fonterra start to apply penalties or incentives and what will it look like for me on my farm?

- Fonterra has set a target of a 30% reduction in on-farm emissions INTENSITY. Emission targets can be either absolute emissions (total amount of CO2, methane and nitrous oxide produced on farm) or emissions intensity (amount of CO2, methane and nitrous oxide produced per kg of milk solids produced). Putting an intensity target on-farm rather than an absolute one means you can still increase production if the ratio of emissions vs production is dropping. These targets will be set against a baseline of the level of emissions in 2018.
- They are already using cow numbers, land area, feed inputs, milk production and nitrogen fertilizer use to estimate the kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalents produced per hectare on your farm. This can be found in your dairy insights report which can be found via Farmsource website.
- In terms of how reducing emissions will be incentivized or penalized, they said they could not tell us. They are still waiting for a final decision from the government around how a carbon price would be applied to farming so until they get that they cannot finalise anything.

How can I reduce emissions on my farm? What should I be doing now?

- Fonterra has a framework for meeting the 30% reduction in on-farm emissions which includes improving farm productivity and reducing wastage, using new technologies, and on-farm planting. The focus of the day was how we could help farmers with improving farm productivity and reducing wastage.
- The good news is that all the stuff you are currently working on to improve your business profitability, will also reduce your emissions intensity. Producing more milk per cow per year means that the emissions associated with each cow are spread across more kilograms of milk solids. A farm whose 500kg cows produce an average of 400kgMS per year will generate more kilograms of CO2 per kilogram of milk solid than a farm whose 500kg cows produce an average of 450kgMS per year (if both farms are using the same amount of feed to achieve this level of production).
- Improving your repro performance reduces wastage in terms of empty cows and reduced days in milk per cow for later calvers. A farm that gets cows in calf quickly (has a high six week in calf rate) produces more milk per cow per year.
- Reducing your clinical mastitis and somatic cell count improves production and reduces wastage (in terms of discarded milk) so improves milk production per cow per year.
- Reducing disease and lameness similarly improves production and reduces wastage and so improved milk production per cow per year.
- For now, have a good look through your farm insights report and have a close look at the areas highlighted for improvement.

There's no sugar coating it, having to deal with these new regulations on top of all the other recent changes is not fun. Unfortunately, it looks like it is going to be part of the cost of doing business in a changing world. We are keen to help as much as we can so if you want to talk it through or go through a farm insight report together let us know.

SHED AUDIT AND DRYCOW PRESCRIPTION

Please remember to have a copy of your 22/23 season drycow prescription available for the QCONZ inspector when getting a shed audit done. You can call the office to get one emailed out to you if you have lost it.

PHANTOM COWS

Early scanning of non-returning CIDR cows can identify "Phantom cows"
Phantom cows are animals which have been through a CIDR program and not cycled in the 5 weeks post insemination giving the impression they are in-calf when in fact they are non-pregnant. There is a risk that following insemination, cows treated in a CIDR program may return to being non-cycling. If not picked up early these cows generally show up empty at final pregnancy testing time. Early pregnancy scanning of these cows 5 weeks after insemination allows the early detection of these animals allowing them to be proactively managed, whether that be with a prostaglandin injection or running another CIDR round. This approach maximizes the chances of successful pregnancies within the herd, ultimately boosting overall productivity.

Call the clinic to book your phantom cow scanning visit today.

CALF AND HEIFER MANAGEMENT

Growing your heifers well is key to getting the most out of your herd. Well grown dairy heifers have significantly increased milk production and improved reproduction compared with less well grown herd mates. NZ studies in 2012 showed that 50% of NZ dairy heifers were undergrown at 22 months by more than 11%. Things appear to be improving but the latest figures from LIC show that in 2019, 2020 and 2021 heifers were still about 5-6% behind target. There is approximately a 2kgMS production loss per year for every 1% behind target liveweight at 22 months old. So a group of heifers being 5% behind target equates to a 10kgMS loss per 2-year-old in the herd. For a 300 cow herd with a 25% replacement rate that is around \$5000 lost in milk production (at a \$7 payout) and this repeats for every year that the heifers are 5% behind target. This doesn't include losses due to poor reproduction performance or increased health issues.

To avoid the losses in production and reproductive performance heifers' growth rates must be improved, particularly in the 1st and 2nd winters where liveweights seem to be most likely to dip below target. It is hard to improve growth rates in the 2nd winter so the most practical course of action is to ensure heifers are reared well and are as far as possible above targets in the first 6 months of life, so they do not dip below target liveweights in their 1st winter. Options to help maximise liveweights/growth rates in calves are:

- Wean off milk at or above target weights (100kg for Friesian, 90kgs for crossbreds, 80kg for Jerseys)
- Continue to feed a high-quality meal post weaning, for one to two months until calves are eating 2.5kg meal per day.
- Preferentially feed calves the best pasture on the farm. Use mob management strategies such as daily shifts in front of the milking herd, calves set stocked at 2 calves per paddock, or daily strip grazing.
- Identify and separate lighter animals, keeping them in their own their mob to minimise competition and delay weaning until they reach targets.
- Give a Multimin injection at weaning – Injecting calves at weaning or in the 4 weeks prior to weaning helps to reduce disease caused by stresses or dietary changes and transport (a 2ml dose is \$2.20)
- Regular worm drenching ideally with an oral combination drench monthly from weaning until their first winter at least. Oral drenches are more effective than injectable or pouron worm treatments.
- Prevention or treatment of coccidiosis to prevent outbreaks of clinical coccidiosis at weaning. **Use Turbo Initial oral drench at or close to weaning. Turbo treats worms and gets rid of existing coccidia.**
- Regular weighing of young stock to ensure they are hitting growth rate targets. This is especially important if heifers are sent off grazing. Most farmers can recognize whether heifers are in good or poor condition but not many can tell whether heifers have actually achieved their target liveweights for a particular age without weighing.

Liveweight targets for heifers are: 30% of mature liveweight at 3months, 60% of mature liveweight at 6 months and 90% of mature liveweight at 22 months (just before their first calving).

If you need help setting up a young stock management plan including drenching and trace mineral supplementation give us a call at the clinic. We also have a weighing service if you don't have the time or gear to get it done yourself. We hire out scales and can send out a vet tech to help with weighing, recording drenching and entering weights into Minda.

Just call the clinic to arrange.

COMPETITION WINNER



Congratulations to **Allan Marx** the winner of the Spring Multimin 500m purchase competition!

He is all set for summer now with his Detroit Cooler, UE Boom 3, All Blacks Rugby home jersey and Gilbert Rugby ball. Thank you to Multimin for the competition.