

ANIMAL WELFARE, TRANSPORT AND TRANSPORT CERTIFICATES



Are your animals fit enough to travel to the works? There is an App that can help you decide called FIT for transport. This app can help you sort through conditions that may need to be seen or talked through with your vet before booking a truck.

You may not be aware that you should not be transporting pregnant animals to the works within 4 weeks of their due date. The environment at slaughter premises is not considered appropriate for heavily pregnant animals and if you choose to transport them to the works you are opening yourself up to scrutiny from MPI due to welfare concerns during transport. You may transport pregnant

animals between farms eg. from grazing back to the milking platform in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy but the journey should be less than 2 hours and cows should be given magnesium no more than 24 hours before transport. No animal that is likely to give birth on the truck should be transported, if this occurs prosecution may result.

Animals with discharges, dead tissue, ingrown horns, blood, thick scabs that may bleed, mastitis, very thin cows (<BCS3) or sick animals may not be transported.

Animal welfare prior to transportation to the works is now also a concern. Black mastitis cases where the affected quarter has died and udder has subsequently healed, bulls with damaged penises, traumatised or diseased eyes, severely or chronically lame animals all raise animal welfare concerns about pain and suffering prior to the point where the animal can be certified. We need to be thinking about levels of suffering and the animal's wellbeing rather than just the end point of getting them to the works in a few months time.

Euthanasia early in the disease process may be a better outcome for the animal. Record details of the animals issues, date, any treatments given. If you are unsure call a vet. When a vet comes to consider writing a transport certificate for an animal it makes the job easier if it has been documented that the animals welfare has been considered from the beginning.



A few of you may recognise my face either through my similarities to two of the current slightly older vets, or from meeting me on farm as a student. I have just moved back home to the Naki after spending 6 years away at vet school in Palmerston North.

It will be great to see familiar faces, meet those who I have never

met and get out and about in the community. I am excited to get back to my favourite spots up the mountain, on my bike at the bike park, and at the lakes and beaches that I spent so much time at while growing up. **Jack**



Hi, I'm **Hannah**, one of the new grads to have just joined Eltham's amazing team of vets. I come from the kiwifruit capital of the world, a.k.a. Te Puke, but grew up on an idyllic dairy farm right next to the beach.

I like to get a taste of anything outdoors, whether it be surfing, diving, climbing a mountain or just a good roadie to see the sights, hence the Naki felt like a good move for me!

I enjoy both small and large animal medicine, with a soft spot for lifestyle animals. I can't wait to get stuck into working up a good 'smallies' case or tackling a difficult calving.

NEW CONVEYOR

We have purchased our own sheep conveyor. Our hope is to offer the conveyor year round with experienced operators to assist with any animal health related product application, whether it be drenching, vaccinations, fly treatment, mousing or uddering ewes or condition scoring stock. The conveyor can take all classes of stock & no job is too big or small!

So, save your knees and your back and let our new conveyor make those big days in the yards that much easier.



FEBRUARY 2023

So another year kicks in and before you know it, Christmas & New Year are distant memories and we're starting to think about drying off. Before that of course, you've got scanning & leptos to get out of the way, dry cow consults to do and grazing to organise for your young stock.

And, the ever present threat of facial eczema. So far, so good with respect to spore counts. Even out on the coast things are progressing slowly. Despite that, nearly everyone agrees that the conditions are setting up for a potentially bad season so please make sure you have preventative measures in place and are ready to act quickly if and when spore numbers take off. If they don't then you can just accuse me of being a worrywart and carry on. I'll be very happy to be proved wrong.

We have two new vets on board this year. Hannah Martin and Jack Matthews joined the practice in late January and are quickly settling in and working out where everything goes. You're bound to meet them on farm soon with vaccinating in full swing so please make them welcome; we'll need plenty more like them in the years to come. They both introduce themselves on page 4.

Of course the reason we've got new vets is because one of our most experienced and highly respected vets, Polly, is retiring at the end of March. She's so good we needed two new ones to replace her! We're going to miss her terribly and I'm sure you all will too. If she's on your farm in the next couple of months it could be the last time you see her in vet clinic overalls, so be sure to give her a hug (or handshake if that's more appropriate) and an expensive retirement gift (she paid me to write that last bit). We will be having a farewell dinner for Polly with colleagues, board members & family but there's not room for you all so **if you want to see Polly before she leaves** we'll be having a **barbeque lunch** for her on **Thursday 30th March** at the clinic from **11-3pm**. That will give anyone who wants to, the opportunity to pop in, have a bite to eat and a chat with one of our most loved vets as she says goodbye to veterinary practice. See you there.



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Hannah Martin BVSc

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Joan Hughes Helen Snook
Jill Watson CVN/RAT
Michelle Mcleod Amber Smith
Karen Bellamy Erin Bryant
Alex Rowlands (maternity leave)

RVM Consult Time Again

It's getting nearer to the time we need to have another consult regarding your restricted veterinary medications (RVMs) for the coming new season. Because of the new requirements to have a formal consultation, we will need to start these from early March to get them all done before the 1st of June. That means on farm, in-clinic and/or over the phone as required. The actual policy says they all need to be done on farm, but realistically that would be hard to get done.

So, from the start of March, when you book in a vet call the girls may ask if they can tack on an extra 30 minutes or so afterwards for your RVM consult. Probably not after the vet has just scanned 450 cows, is covered in shite and you're keen to get home for breakfast, but after we've been out to see a sick or lame cow or something a bit more routine. If you have booked in a Dry Cow Consult at the clinic, we may look to add the RVM consult onto that. Whatever works. Phone consults worked pretty well a couple of years ago but that was during lockdown when vets were all either at home or in the clinic and had time to call. We can still do that, but it will require a bit of forward planning to fit around other jobs. We'll have to play it by ear a bit. If you want to pre-empt this feel free to ring & book your RVM consult at a time that suits you before we get into the late May rush.

In the meantime, your Dry Cow consult forms are included with this newsletter. Nothing much has changed with respect to that other than the industry is pushing more and more towards justified individual treatment so you will need good documentation to justify your wish for whole herd treatment. Ryan has made a few changes to the form, which should make it more user friendly for you. The more information we have, the better so please do your best to fill it in and return to us well before you wish to dry off so we can make a recommendation before you come into the clinic.

3rd Party Access request to Farm Source and MINDA

When doing things like your Dry Cow consult, Animal Health Plan and Mastitis and Repro review, some of the things that help us the most are 3rd party access to your production & quality records on Farm Source and access to your herd records (read only) on MINDA.

For Farmsource access you have a couple of ways of doing this.

You can either do it yourself as set out below:

Login to your account at nzfarmsource.co.nz
Click on the Farm Business tab & then the settings tab on the far right.

The drop-down menu will then give you the option of assigning 3rd party access so click on that. Our user name is **Elthamvets** & should come up when you type it into the existing user box.

Click continue & then grant us access to Production & Quality - that's all we need to see.

Or, you can simply sign & date beside the "x's" on the form that we've enclosed in this newsletter. How easy is that!

On the back of that enclosed form you will find another form granting us permission to access your herd records through **MINDA (read only)**.

This gives us access to your repro information, fertility focus reports & so on. Again, please fill in the bits marked X and return to us also.

Many thanks



Lame Cows and Antibiotics - Give pain relief a go

It's very tempting when you see a lame cow to simply "give her a jab" of penicillin & move on. If it happens to be Footrot then you'll be spot on. Footrot though is pretty easy to spot, namely sudden lameness & obvious swelling around or between the toes. Generally, if you lift the foot it looks like someone has taken a breadknife & cut swollen tissue between the toes. So, in that case a course of penicillin is certainly justified. With most other cases of lameness, especially early on, use of antibiotics can be delayed or may not be needed at all. A day or two of rest close to the shed, trimming of the hoof & so on is often all that's needed.

However, some of you (you know who you are) throw antibiotics at every lame cow that walks past. When they come right you of course point to the use of antibiotic but in reality, many of them would have come right with rest or proper hoof trimming & didn't need any antibiotic. With the on-going scrutiny on overuse of antibiotics it's time you re-thought your reflex use of antibiotics on every cow.

If you feel the need to give the cow something then how about instead of reaching for a bottle of penicillin, you reach for a bottle of anti-inflammatory? Treat the pain, give her a spell & unless there is an obvious infection present, give the antibiotics a rest. Recent field studies showed a clear correlation between the use of pain relief (anti-inflammatories) & an earlier return to the herd for cows with lameness that didn't require antibiotics.



THEILERIA

Many of you would have already heard about Theileria and how it affects cattle. Thankfully due to better natural immunity we are seeing fewer cases than several years ago where many more cattle were being affected, and more severely too. The disease tends to occur within a couple of weeks following calving, when cows are most stressed, and their immune system can't cope. Oddly in the last month or so we have seen a small increase in cases for this time of year. We assume that was due to the stress brought on by the extreme weather events we experienced in late December.

The parasite responsible is a very hardy bug that is carried in the bloodstream, and it is naturally transmitted to cows through the cattle tick. This bug destroys red blood cells and when a cow has lost enough of these, her gums and vulva begin to appear pale/yellow and may even die if badly enough affected.

Thankfully, most infected cows cope with the infection reasonably well. They don't lose a significant amount of blood cells and recover quickly. They'll then retain some natural immunity for the rest of their lives and are unlikely to become sick with the disease again. It's the cows/heifers which become infected a couple of months before their calving due date that are most at risk of severe disease.

Signs of the disease on farm is the mentioned pale gums, or even pale udders. A drop in milk production may be noticed before this. Contact the clinic if you suspect you have affected animals as we can confirm this with a simple blood sample.

There are no antibiotic treatments that will rid a cow of her parasitic Theileria infection.

Our treatment options are very limited for affected cows. Multivitamins and mineral injections can help but the most effective treatments are reducing stress by reducing milking frequency, distance to walk on farm and providing plenty of feed. Cows in body condition score of 5 or 5.5 and transitioned well tend to recover from an infection much better than thinner ones.

Prevention is a much better option than treatment with this condition. Most of the risk is around sending cattle without any immunity to graze in areas known to have high tick populations. We have a natural population of ticks in central Taranaki, but it is much lower than other areas commonly used to graze dairy cattle. If you do send cattle away grazing and haven't had any issues yet, you may just have been lucky so far! Discuss with your grazier about what the suspected tick risk on their property is. There is no treatment for cattle to guarantee protection from ticks. Some special pour on treatments are licensed to rid cattle of ticks to an extent, but ticks can still bite/infect cattle after being treated with the pour on.



Facial Eczema Prevention Strategies

With Facial Eczema becoming pretty much an annual occurrence around here now is a good time to consider what prevention strategies you should consider on your farm for the summer.

Here are a few options for you to think about and discuss with us before spore counts start to rise:

1. Feed less spores

Feed alternate feeds and pastures such as turnips, chicory, fodder beet, plantain, maize silage, PKE, meal and silage or hay made more than 6 weeks previously.

Spores are thickest low down in the sward so keeping post grazing residuals above 4cms will reduce the number eaten.

2. Spray pasture with fungicides

Fungicides only work when the pasture is green and growing. Do a spore count before spraying, it should be less than 20,000 immediately before application. Be sure the spray goes right to the edges of the paddocks, under the hedges and beneath any trees. Helicopter spraying won't achieve this. The spray lasts 4-6 weeks so you should start doing spore counts after 4 weeks and respray as soon as they start to rise.

3. Feed zinc

The gold standard is **daily drenching of zinc oxide** and some farmers still do this.

The difference between a full dose of zinc and a toxic dose is small. Most NZ dairy herds have about 150kg difference between their lightest and heaviest cows so it is a good idea to weigh a few cows to ensure your dosing is accurate.

Next best is to **feed zinc oxide in a pelletised feed or from a mixer wagon**. Poor mixing and unpelleted feeds risk underdosing the shy feeders and overdosing the gutsy ones. The difference between a full dose of zinc and a toxic dose is small.

Zinc boluses are more convenient for young or dry stock. Young and dry stock don't drink enough water to get protective levels of zinc from water treatment. Boluses take two weeks to reach full protection and last for 6 weeks so a crystal ball is helpful in deciding when to put them in. If spore counts are dangerously high when the boluses are coming to the end of their protection period it is a good idea to do a faecal zinc test to make sure zinc levels are still high enough to give protection.

Add **zinc sulphate or zinc sulphate hepta hydrate** to the water supply - milkers only. Young and dry stock don't drink enough water to get protective levels of zinc.

As we have learned in the past, water treatment doesn't prevent Facial Eczema when the spore challenge is very high. In bad eczema years it will protect at the beginning and end of the season but not at the peak. If you only do water treatment you need to have a backup plan to use if spore counts go through the roof again this year. That backup plan may be to put zinc boluses down your cows to cover them through the worst 6 weeks of the Facial Eczema season.

Putting zinc salts straight into the trough is never good enough. The difference between a full dose of zinc and a toxic dose is small. You need a Dosatron or Peta dispensers. Wonder's Zinc Soxx are the next best option. The recommended dose varies between products so be sure to follow the instructions carefully.

Whatever method you use, ideally you need to **check if it is delivering a protective dose** of zinc to your stock. Wait 3-6 weeks after you reach full dose rates and do a blood or faecal zinc test on 10 animals.

A GGT test on the same blood samples will tell us if sub clinical eczema damage is already happening.



Cancer Eye

The commonest bovine cancer that we see and can actually do something about is cancer eye, otherwise known as squamous cell carcinoma. It usually begins as a benign smooth growth anywhere on the white surfaces of the eyelids, but is most often seen on the margin of the third eyelid (the flap in the corner of the eye that comes across when they blink.) It can progress to a knobbly wart like lesion which then breaks open and ulcerates, leading to bleeding and/or infected discharges – this is often the stage we are called.

Cancer eye is a malignant cancer and can spread into the eyeball itself (treating this may mean removal of the whole eyeball and most of the tissues in the eye socket), the eyelids, the bones of the eye socket and to the lymph glands of the head and neck. Any spread into these deeper structures means condemnation of the whole animal at the works.

Call us early – when you see the first signs on the third eyelid. At this stage it is a simple head bale job to remove it, and most times, that's a cure. Metastatic spread can occur even in the early stages, but as a rule delaying treatment increases the chance that your cow is only fit for dog tucker, not hamburgers; let alone having a further lactation or two. The other important point is welfare – it is not acceptable to leave these until they are a real mess, when early intervention could prevent unnecessary pain and discomfort.



After marrying a young woman, a 90-year-old man told his doctor that they were expecting a baby.

"Let me tell you a story," said the doctor.

"An absent-minded fellow went hunting, but instead of a gun, he brought an umbrella. Suddenly a bear charged at him. Pointing his umbrella at the bear, he shot and killed it on the spot."

"Impossible!" the Old Man said "Somebody else must have shot that bear."

"Exactly," replied the doctor.