

## “Our Shed” at Rotokare Scenic Reserve Officially Opened



You will by now be aware that Eltham Vets entered into a sponsorship agreement with the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust a couple of years ago. Part of that agreement was a significant donation towards the building of a new shed on the lawn in front of the main buildings to cater for ever increasing gear, pest traps, lawnmowers & so on. The project took longer than expected but was finally completed late last year and the management & board of Eltham Vets were invited to a BBQ & ribbon-cutting in mid-December to open the shed & see where our money had been put to use.

Board Chairman Phil Muir is congratulated by Trust Chairperson Stephen Kane prior to cutting the ribbon on “our shed”.

If you haven't been out to Rotokare lately, do yourself a favour & go take a look. It is magnificent & a real credit to the trust & all the people who work & volunteer there. We are very proud to be associated with this outstanding local treasure.



### Heaven

Obama, Hillary and Trump are standing at the throne of heaven. God looks at them and says, "Before granting you a place at my side, I must ask you what you have learned, what you believe in."

God asks Obama first, "What do you believe in?"

He thinks long and hard, looks God in the eye and says, "I believe in hard work and staying true to family and friends. I believe in giving. I was lucky, but I always tried to do right by my countrymen."

God can't help but see the essential goodness of Obama and offers him a seat to his left.

Then God turns to Hillary and say, "What do you believe?"

Hillary says "I believe passion and discipline, courage and honor are the fundamentals of life. Like Obama, I believe in hard work. I too, have been lucky, but win or lose, I've always tried to be a true patriot and a loyal American."

God is greatly moved by Hillary's high-pitched eloquence and he offers her a seat to his right.

Finally, God turns to Trump and says, "And you Donald, what do you believe?"

Trump replies.... "I believe you're in my seat."

My mate Paddy told me he robbed a shop last night.  
"What did you get?" I asked.  
"26 pictures," he smiled, showing me. "The cheapest one is worth over \$280,000."  
I said, "Paddy, these are from a bleeding estate agents."

## TRY TEAT X FOR FREE



**TEAT X** is New Zealand's leading dairy cow teat spray. **FREE** two week trial for new users. **Contact Daniel to discuss further.**

My wife said she's leaving me because of my obsession with 'Who wants to be a millionaire' I said 'Is that your final answer?'

## Buy Face-Guard and be in to win a \$500



**Voucher**  
One voucher must be won from this clinic



## FEBRUARY 2017

So, how are you enjoying summer?! Is it just me or does it still feel like November weather?

I guess that the only silver lining to this cloud is that as yet, Facial Eczema doesn't look like making much of an impact this season unless things dramatically change climactically.

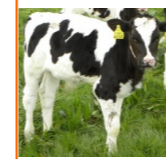
Having said that, after last year we shouldn't take anything for granted and as a result this edition focuses fairly heavily on eczema. So be aware, be ready to act and most importantly, don't forget about your young stock grazing away- they are probably your most vulnerable group. Talk to John & Daniel about options & prices for all your animals this season.

With all this rain, it's unlikely too many of you will be drying off cows anytime soon, but there's are always a few cows that demand to be dried off early so we've included the Dry Cow Form in this newsletter to get you off to the proper start.

As this is the first newsletter of the year I've made a real effort to get as many jokes in it as I can. This is because I know that many of you (most?) actually only read the jokes so I'm trying to start the year off on a positive note. It's always a struggle to get jokes in because vets keep writing bloody articles they think you should read & bump the jokes off. Anyway, enjoy the ones that are there; there was another one about Robbie Burns I liked but the editor couldn't fit it in ... I'll keep trying.

## Calf vaccinations due!

Give Nicola a call to book Lepto & BVD vaccinations



Herd can be vaccinated at scanning; heifers out grazing or upon return.

## Have you booked your pregnancy scanning yet?

Many of you use the Fertility Focus Report in Minda to pinpoint what went wrong, or what went right, during mating. So this is to remind you that if you want a detailed FFR, rather than an intermediate one, you need to scan your herd less than 17 weeks after the start of mating. If you mated for 12 weeks or more this may mean there are a few late pregnancies we have to come back to confirm but it is well worth doing that for the extra information a detailed FFR provides.

## Mastalone is Back!

Earlier than expected, Mastalone is back on our shelves. You will remember we were told it was unavailable until next season so we had to remove it from your RVM authorities for this season.

Well now it's back so if you were one of those people who had to change & would like to get it back onto your scripts for the remainder of this season & into next please let us know & we will be happy to reinstate Mastalone on your RVM.



## Andrew is now officially “Dr Weir”

As you're probably aware Andrew Weir has been working part-time over the last 5 or 6 years as he studied for his PhD on BVD. Well, last September he successfully “defended” his thesis and was awarded his PhD.

The actually title is a bit wordy so let's just say that as of now you would be hard pressed to find anyone in NZ who was better qualified or knew more about BVD and all its complications. Congratulations “Dr Weir”, that's quite an achievement & we salute you for your dogged pursuit of this prestigious qualification. Andrew will be officially awarded his PhD at a graduation ceremony at Massey University in May.

If you want to know anything about BVD, don't waste your time talking to me; give Andrew a call!

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Hollard Engineering,  
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### Veterinarians

Alistair McDougall BVSc - CEO  
Giles Gilling BVSc BSc MRCVS  
Andrew Weir BVSc, PhD  
Jim Robins BVSc, BSc, DipPharm  
Polly Otterson BVSc, MSc,  
Teresa Carr BVSc  
Adrian Clark BVSc  
Linley Gilling BVSc  
Lindsay Lash BVSc  
Leon Christensen BVSc  
Erika Pieper BVSc  
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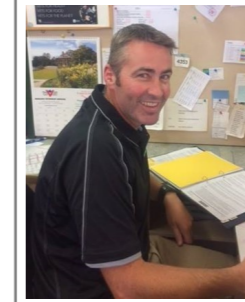
Joan Hughes Sue Morresey  
Jill Watson CVN/RAT  
Nicola Childs CVN/RAT  
John Larkin BBS  
Daniel Kidd Frank Suter

## Daniel Kidd - Farm Services Manager

Hi, I'm Daniel, a local lad, born and bred.

I have 2 children whom I spend a lot of time running around after but when I get a chance I enjoy playing basketball and attempting to run half marathons.

I have been involved in the animal health industry for the last 9.5 years - firstly 7 years with Stratford Vets on the road dealing with farmers then the last 2.5 years with Zoetis, an animal health company, servicing vet clinics. I look forward to having a chat in the near future. You can contact me at [Daniel.kidd@elthamvetservice](mailto:Daniel.kidd@elthamvetservice) or on my cellphone 0275 479 261





## FACIAL ECZEMA PREVENTION STRATEGIES

### 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 immediately 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. Zinc 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 learned last year, 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, 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.



## Scanning Safely this Season

In case you hadn't already noticed scanning is a dirty, physically demanding & potentially dangerous procedure, particularly in rotary sheds.

Thankfully the vast majority of you now have facilities that enable our vets to do the job efficiently & (most importantly) safely without risk of platforms collapsing or cows coming off the back of the platform & taking them and a \$20,000 scanner with them.

However, a small minority of you continue to provide facilities for scanning that are simply not up to standard & are not safe.

Our dairy caddies are designed for rolling up & down the pit in a herringbone shed, not to be a fixed platform in a rotary shed. For a start, they generally aren't high enough so aren't level with the platform. Empty bloat drums with a plank between them are also not suitable to provide a safe platform for a vet to scan and/or take evasive action if a cow slips back off the rotary platform (which happens every year).

Under the **Health & Safety Act** we are required to ensure safe working conditions for our vets & to mitigate risk as much as we can. By the same token, you as a farm owner or operator are required to provide facilities fit for purpose for your employees and, if required, contractors (in this case us).

If you aren't lucky enough to have a purpose-built platform for your rotary you should still be able to construct something that is solid, safe & stable for our vets to work from. This season we will not use our dairy caddies as fixed platforms because they move, they are too small & they aren't designed for that use.

The most rudimentary platform that is acceptable is one made from wooden pallets nailed or lashed together slightly higher than the level of the rotary platform so that if a cow slips back she feels the raised edge. Surely that's not too much to ask? After all our accuracy has to be compromised if we are worried about falling or having a cow land in our lap. Pallets are free if you ask nicely at umpteen places in the district so you can't use the payout as an excuse.

The worst offenders will be getting a reminder from us before this scanning season but if you know you're one of them why not just sort it out now & save us all the hassle?



## FACIAL ECZEMA TESTING – don't get caught out this year

When I ask farmers what their eczema was like last year a common reply is "We weren't too bad, we just dried off half a dozen" or "Not too bad we only lost 3." Facial Eczema is an iceberg disease, the cows with visible eczema are just the tip of the iceberg. If 3% of your cows showed visible signs, 70% had liver damage. That liver damage never repairs. Cows have some 'spare' liver capacity but if damage occurs each year the cow runs out of spare liver and her production declines – or she dies. Some herds this year have their 2 year olds milking better than their 3 year olds because the 3 year olds got eczema and the 2 year olds, grazing somewhere else, didn't.

So it is very important to prevent liver damage occurring in the first place. Once cows have signs of eczema it is too late, the liver damage has already happened. Heaps of cows got liver damage last year and they cannot afford to get more this year.

Counting Facial Eczema spores gives an indication of the likelihood of disease but it's not a precise science.

**Grass spore counts vary enormously** between paddocks and between properties. At the height of a bad eczema season counts can vary by half a million between neighbouring farms. So the counts published in the Taranaki Daily News are only an indication of where counts are trending and that's not necessarily the same as what's happening on your farm.

**Dairy NZ recommends** that when published grass spore counts reach 20,000 in your district you start **weekly counts on each of four paddocks** on your own farm. These paddocks should be representative of different parts of the farm. For example, river flats have higher counts than north facing slopes. The sample is a handful of grass cut at the height the cows will be grazing down to from five sites spaced across each paddock. Mix the cuttings from each paddock and do one count for each paddock. When your farm's counts reach 30,000 the cows should be on a full dose of zinc. When the published counts fall in autumn begin your weekly counts again.

**Don't stop full dose zinc until your own counts have been less than 10,000 for 3 weeks running.**

We charge \$20 to do a spore count.

Another way to monitor spore counts is **faecal spore counts** - counting spores in dung. I like this because it's a sample from the whole paddock and it's what the cows are actually eating, not what I think they are eating. The disadvantage is that you can only monitor the paddocks the cows are grazing at the time. The sample is an equal quantity – one level teaspoon is enough - from each of 10 cowpats mixed well in a milk sample pottle.

**Faecal zinc** can be measured on the same dung sample to **check if your zinc treatment is actually getting to the levels your cows need**. You take the sample yourself so it's cheaper than doing bloods. Three weeks after going on to full dose zinc bring us an equal quantity – one level teaspoon is enough - from each of 10 cowpats mixed well in a milk sample pottle. The test costs about \$45.

If you want to check GGT to see if **liver damage is starting in spite of treatment** you do need blood samples. Zinc tests can be done on these samples too.

## BVD – bulk tank testing

BVD is a nasty infection. It costs the NZ dairy industry hundreds of millions of dollars every year. Without any BVD control measures the average herd loses \$18,000 per year (averaged over all herds including those without infection & zero cost). BVD can cause a lower 6 week in calf rate, a higher empty rate, an increase in other diseases (like mastitis), reduced milk production, small/weak poor-doing calves, deformed calves, and in a bad outbreak, loss of close to half of the calves.

We're lucky in Taranaki that we have less BVD than many other regions of NZ, but we still see newly infected herds every year. We have a lot of good information about BVD in New Zealand now, and lots of the research was done right here (you might even have contributed). One thing you might be interested in is herd BVD status change rate. The prevalence (proportion infected) in North Island herds was 8.6% in one study, but the rate of status change between seasons was very high - 67% of infected herds cleared infection between seasons, and were replaced with newly infected herds.

This high turnover rate is bad news if you're not currently infected since it means there is a higher risk of a new introduction into your herd. There wasn't any relationship between the risk of introduction and the previous antibody level either. Just because you have low antibody doesn't necessarily mean you have a lower risk of an outbreak, but it does mean the impact will be worse.

**The first step in protecting your herd is bulk tank testing.** Everyone should be testing the bulk tank for BVD every year. You can sometimes catch an outbreak early with bulk tank testing, and if you have an outbreak in the future, knowing your previous status can reduce the cost of dealing with it. **We're booking in bulk tank testing for next season now**, so if you're not signed up with us already, give us a ring now and book it in. Even if all you do is test the bulk tank, and clear infection when it comes in, you still reduce the average total cost (including disease cost, and control costs) of BVD by about 40%. You can do much better than that though.

The basics of BVD control are pretty simple. If you want to keep BVD out, you need to either vaccinate the milkers every year, or test replacement calves every year. Either way, you still need to test in-coming stock, and test and vaccinate the bulls. Protecting the boundary (double fencing or using out-riggers or temporary hotwires), is worthwhile too – especially if relying on calf testing. The optimal approach (minimising total cost) of 14 combinations tested was: bulk tank testing and clearing infection when needed, bull testing and vaccinating, calf screening, protecting the boundary, and testing all incoming stock – and saves an average of \$12,000 every year compared to doing nothing.

\*Cost estimates are unpublished preliminary results from simulation model