

CALF ULCERATIVE STOMATITIS (CUS)



Many of you will be aware of a new syndrome causing ulcers in the mouth of weaned calves. Clinical signs include weight loss, salivation and scouring. These signs can also be caused by BVD so usually we will test to rule this out first. Often these calves will have secondary infections including Yersinia or pneumonia. Farms country wide with suspect cases are having samples collected and tested to try and determine an



underlying cause. Please call us out to look at any sick calves or calves that are not doing as well as expected.

TURNIP PHOTSENSITIVITY

Many farms are utilizing turnip crops to supplement the diet through the summer, and you're probably already well into feeding these by now. B.A.L.D (brassica associated liver disease) is a fancy general description for what causes turnip scald/photosensitivity in cattle after feeding turnips for about a week. This can coincide with rising facial eczema spore counts and possibly be confused with facial eczema but feeding more zinc to your cows won't prevent BALD!

So, if your farm spore counting has shown very low counts, but you've had photosensitivity in your cows and you're feeding turnips, then BALD is the most likely cause. Cattle can be severely affected, with swelling/oedema over all 4 feet and under their belly too, progressing to skin peeling over the udder. Compounds called glucosinolates in the crop are responsible and actually cause liver damage in the affected cows (unlike brassica scald in lambs). Affected cows should be taken off the turnip crop and managed in a similar way to facial eczema-affected cows (plenty of access to shade, zinc creams, B vitamins, anti-inflammatories, Manderson's mix, Antimine, etc). Even with excellent crop feeding practices, you may still get occasional cases of BALD.

Some known risk factors for BALD:

- Paddocks with high soil sulphate levels, and crops that receive sulphur containing fertilisers are more at risk.
- Grazing immature turnips increases the risk. Different varieties have different maturity dates, so following recommended minimum days from sowing to grazing is important.
- Poor transitioning onto the crop. Potential for the glucosinolate to cause damage seems to be worse with an acidic rumen environment; turnips have plenty of potential to cause acidosis if not transitioned correctly.
- More of the glucosinolates are found in the bulb of turnips than the leaf. If you're not giving you cows even access/time on the crop, some animals may end up eating more of the bulb and are put more at risk. Allowing cows to have a staggered access to the turnip crop after morning milking means some cows end up consuming a lot more turnip than others. Allowing whole herd access before afternoon milking tends to work better.
- Diseased or drought-stressed turnips tend to accumulate more glucosinolates so are likely to be more dangerous to stock.



Hello, I'm **Holly** and I'm returning to clinical practice after 3 years of focusing on raising 2 wonderful wee boys and a few hundred calves.

I'm originally from the Bay of Islands but started working in Taranaki as a new grad in 2011 and haven't left yet! My husband Tony and I contract milk 450 cows and in my spare time I enjoy social netball and fishing.

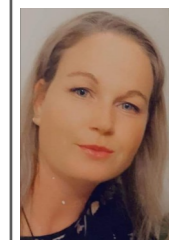
Looking forward to meeting you all this year and getting back into being a mixed animal vet.



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**oilskin vest with any
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Purchase a 2.5L &
receive a mid-weight
zip up jersey**



Hi everyone I'm **Amber Smith**. I am joining the team as the new Lab Tech. I grew up in Taranaki on dairy farms and have always had a love of animals. I've been dairy farming for the last 19 years, so I hope I get to continue working with large animals as well as domestic pets. I also worked part time for Qconz so may have met some of you on your farm. I am the proud mother of 2 cats and 2 bunnies, oh and 2 beautiful daughters - Ashley, 18 and Reagan, 14. I'm super excited to join the fun, talented team at the Eltham Vets and look forward meeting you all and your gorgeous pets.



Purchase qualifying Boehringer Ingelheim cattle drench products this season and you'll receive either a FREE* DeWalt 18V Cordless Drill Set, Lockable Tool Box or a 35-piece Screwdriver Set.



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FEBRUARY 2022

Well, I won't miss 2021 much. Mind you I'm not that sold on 2202 yet either. Fingers crossed that this is the year we see the tail end of this pandemic & we can get back to something close to normality. I'm not holding my breath though as we stock up on Rapid Antigen Tests & think about getting hold of N-95 face masks.

Anyway, we've got other things to talk about rather than Covid. Facial Eczema for example. The season kicked off with a bang when we found spores in our first samples of the season. Normally we don't find anything until mid-February, so everyone should be on full alert by now and have protective measures in place.

In this issue we'll introduce two new staff members. Holly & Amber both started in late January so you may have already met them. Ryan Carr starts in March so will be introduced in our next newsletter. We welcome all three of our new team Members. We are very confident they'll find this an enjoyable, stimulating place to work and expand their careers.

In this issue you will also find the dreaded Dry Cow Consult form as we prepare (already??) for the end of another season. It's amazing how quickly drying off creeps up on people. It is best you get your forms now and have plenty of time to fill them in and get back to us before you come in to pick up your requirements. Please give us as much useful information as you can so we can do our best to help you set your cows up for a successful new season. As well as Dry Cow, we're also getting closer to the time where we'll be bugging you for your annual RVM consult. Yes I know; we hate them as much as you do but in these days of increasing compliance, we don't have a choice if we're going to prescribe you drugs to have on hand for the new season. These probably won't start until mid-late March but if you wanted to avoid the rush & get in early feel free to book a consult from March onwards. Otherwise we'll be in touch to start booking you in from then.

Facial Eczema and Zinc Testing

After a dry January and with some rain in the forecast, many farmers will begin to watch the spore counts with apprehension. And rightly so as with a La-Nina weather pattern we are more likely to see higher than normal spore counts this summer/autumn period. Now we all know what clinical facial eczema looks like and how horrible it is to go through but fewer people know that sub clinical facial eczema (liver damage caused by spores but without skin lesions) can cost a farmer up to 0.35kgMS/cow/day! At a \$9 payout that is serious money lost!

There is no effective treatment for facial eczema so prevention is our only tool. Zinc supplementation is the most common method used by farmers. Zinc binds to the spore reducing its toxicity on the liver. It's not important how you get the zinc into your animal (drench or in feed), but how much is very important. If your zinc level is too low, you will not get any protection from the zinc and if it's too high zinc can be toxic. Trial work done in 2014 examining zinc concentrations in the blood of 1200 cattle from over 100 farms in the North Island showed that around 70 percent of cattle did not have enough zinc to protect against facial eczema.

Therefore, testing your cows once you have started your zinc supplementation is vital to knowing if you are giving the correct amount.

This is as simple as bleeding 10 mixed age cows 2 weeks after you have started your full rate of zinc supplementation. Testing costs around \$12 a cow so it is very cost-effective way to make sure you are doing everything you can to avoid facial eczema in your herd.



FOR YOUR DIARY: Tuesday Feb 15th

LIC and Eltham Vets are holding a Johne's Disease information meeting for farmers at the TET in Stratford on Tuesday February 15th.

Topics will be a review of the Johne's disease situation in New Zealand, the different tests available, on-farm management to reduce Johne's and a local farmer's own experience with the milk test. If you are seeing cases of Johne's in your herd or you want to know more about the milk test, this evening is for you. It will be short and sweet, starting at 6pm with snacks and a free drink from the bar. The talks begin at 6.30 and finish about 7.30. Presenters will be available to answer your questions afterwards. **Look forward to seeing you there.** Vaccine passes are required for entry to the TET.

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Alex Rowlands

3RD PARTY ACCESS REQUEST - FARM SOURCE & MINDA LIVE

This is an oldie, but with more and more focus coming on things like access to prescription medicines (so-called RVMs) and dry cow therapy, the more we need access to good records from you. With respect to Dry Cow Therapy in particular, one of the things that helps considerably is 3rd party access to your production & quality records on Farmsource. Some of you will be considering drying a proportion of the herd off over the next few months if it goes dry and for that it helps greatly if you fill in your Dry Cow Therapy consultation form before coming to ask for some DCT.

Over the years, a number of you have ticked the box on the Dry Cow form claiming to have already granted us access but when we go searching, you're not there. It's easy to check if you have by going into your account. If you haven't & want to speed up the process, then please follow the instructions below & grant us access ahead of time. Then you can tick "already have" with a clear conscience!

- Login to your account at www.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 username 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.

It would also be very helpful for dry cow recommendations if you could please grant us access to your herd test results via Minda Live. Below are the instructions from the LIC website on how to complete this.

<https://www.lic.co.nz/products-and-services/minda/minda-help/setting/grant-minda-live-access-and-set-permissions/>. Our email address to enter is info@elthamvetservice.co.nz.

CALF POLIO ALERT!

Please watch out for cases of calf polio. This is NOT the same as human polio which is caused by a virus. Calf polio's full name is polioencephalomalacia or cerebrocortical necrosis (CCN) and it's caused by lack of thiamine (vitamin B1). Often, we just call it Thiamine deficiency because it's easier to say (although technically it's an induced deficiency but now we're splitting hairs). We see calf polio in the sort of warm muggy weather we are having now. Affected calves are usually well grown and may have recently moved on to better, lush pasture. In the old days we often saw it after a mob had been recently drenched with levamisole. Something happens in their rumens which affects their ability to absorb (or make) thiamine. We usually see only 1-3 calves in the mob affected. Fortunately, big outbreaks are rare in Taranaki.

Lack of thiamine affects the brain, starting with the eyes. The calf walks slowly, picking its feet up higher than usual and putting them down cautiously because it can't see where it is going. They are blind and don't respond normally to you; they are 'away with the fairies'.

Progression can be staggery aimless wandering, circling and convulsions to death within 24 hours. Sometimes they are found down with their heads stretched back in a position referred to as opisthotonos or "star-gazing". Calf 'polio' is an emergency. Early treatment with high doses of intravenous B1 is often successful (although affected animals may be left with damaged vision) but once the calf is down and convulsing the outlook is poor whatever we do.

Even though you see your calves daily please make them get up and move so you can assess their gait. Any that appear odd or are by themselves need a closer look to make sure that they can see.

I went to see a doctor about my short-term memory problems. He made me pay in advance.

My first experience with culture shock? Probably when I peed on an electric fence.

I always take life with a grain of salt. Plus, a slice of lemon. And a shot of Tequila.

HEIFERS FOR EXPORT

While this trade continues to exist, here is a reminder about vaccinating calves against BVD.

One of the two BVD vaccines we use in calves (**Hiprabovis**) also contains an IBR (Catarrh) vaccine. Heifers are tested for Catarrh antibodies before they can be exported, and the test is unable to distinguish between prior infection and antibodies to the vaccine so everything that tests positive is removed from the group.

Some of you will have used Hiprabovis in the past due to having Catarrh issues in your herd while others will have used it because it is slightly cheaper than the alternative BVD vaccine Bovillis).

If you have any potential future plans to export heifers please make sure you tell us when booking calf vaccinations in so we can bring the right vaccine.



Returning Products - No

With Dry Cow Therapy season not that far away, please be aware we no longer accept returned product due to concerns about how that product has been stored and handled since it left the clinic.

For the same reasons we can't in all conscience on-sell that returned product to another client so this year please be accurate with your numbers because once DCT or Teatseal has left the clinic it is yours and we will not accept it back.

For the same reasons we also do not accept back vaccines, antibiotics, or intra-mammary products. They need to be stored under certain conditions and we can't be certain what condition it is in if it is returned. We certainly can't put it back on the shelf or in the fridge and re-sell it to someone else.

So, if you're thinking of stock-piling products in-case you need them and think you can return them if you don't, please be aware that once you've left the clinic with one of these products it is yours and cannot be returned for a refund.

FACIAL ECZEMA PREVENTION STRATEGIES



It's that time of year again - hot, humid weather and an increasing spore count. So, it's time for a reminder about Facial Eczema prevention.

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. Boluses take at least a week 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've learned in recent years, 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. That is a major job; both physically demanding and time consuming so if you're going to do this plan ahead, make sure your head bale is working (don't even try if it isn't) and have plenty of help on hand.

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 two 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.

EMPTY RATES

Its pregnancy testing time again, when dairy farmers all start talking about their empty rates with their neighbour's and comparing notes. Empty rates are a pretty hard thing to compare as your rate depends on how long your herd was mated for. Herds in our area are generally mated for 9-13 weeks with most farmers trying to aim for shorter calving. So, what is good? When should you be concerned?

Length of mating	Seek help	Top farms achieve about
6 weeks	32%	22%
9 weeks	20%	13%
10 weeks	17%	12%
11 weeks	15%	11%
12 weeks	14%	10%
15 weeks	11%	8%

As mating periods are decreased, we should expect increasing empty rates with it becoming very hard to achieve an empty rate under 10% which is what we all used to aspire to.

The 6 week in-calf rate is a much easier measure to compare between farms as it is unaffected by mating length. This is the money maker as it takes the percentage of the cows that got in calf in the 1st 6 weeks of mating. An accurate result can be calculated if your whole herd is dated at pregnancy testing time, or an estimated percentage will be calculated from mating data. Check out your Fertility Focus Report to see how your herd went.

The top 25% of farmers in NZ achieve a 6-week in calf rate of about 78%. If your herd's result is 68% or below you should seek help.

To discuss your herd's reproductive results and get help for next season, start early. Please contact us to arrange a consult before the end of the season.