

THIN COWS PRE-CALVING – IGNORING THEM WONT MAKE THEM GO AWAY

The consequences of a long and persistent facial eczema season continues to haunt us in the form of a skinny cow identified in the dry period. If you have cows that have not gained condition, despite your best efforts, taking action now will help ensure the longevity of that cow. After all, she needs to milk for one season to pay for her rearing costs so ensuring her productivity is continued is pivotal for your profitability.

- Younger cows have more capability for liver repair following a F.E insult
- Skinny cows have a weaker immune system response so are more likely to have trouble calving, retain their membranes or get sick
- The liver is the powerhouse for glucose production which is needed to produce milk, and get in calf.
- The liver has amazing capability for repair; so ignoring her is not in your best interest. Proactive treatment may mean she could remain in the herd for years to come.

One approach

- Ring and book a vet or your farm consultant to help with body condition scoring. Our body condition scoring accredited vets here are Adrian and Teresa. This means they are calibrated by Dairy NZ which a lot of farm consultants are not. We will provide supportive and accurate advice
- Draft these cows out of the main mob, to feed extra supplement or grass of high MJ/ME. Avoid large amounts of hay, straw or low quality silage.
- If you have a springer mob, you can put later calving cows in there earlier for condition gain.
- Once a day milking thin cows once calved. Studies show no impact on a season's milk production if milked OAD for 3 weeks once calved. If you don't want to run a OAD mob, then put leg bands on her and milk OAD but feed like a TAD cow.
- Rumensin bullet (ideally now, but can do once calved). This is to maximise feed conversion efficiency.
- Consider if these cows have concurrent disease such as Johnes, and organise a blood test. A blood test can also give you an indication of F.E damage by measuring GGT, a liver enzyme.
- Prolact B12 or Prolact B12 plus Selenium can be given at calving for energy support



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JULY 2022

So what's the deal with this Monkeypox? Not only do we have to keep wearing masks to limit Covid transmission, but now if one of you come into the clinic covered in festering sores, we have been advised to give you a banana and ask you to wait outside until the authorities arrive. I can't help thinking that as long as you don't get intimate with a monkey or with someone who has been intimate with a monkey, you are probably going to be okay. Let's just worry about Covid (and flu) for now since that is still impacting lives and seems destined to continue to disrupt our lives for a while longer.

I know we're all sick of it but given we are still losing staff members to Covid (either directly or family cases) and it's nearly spring, we would appreciate it if you continued to wear a mask when you come into the clinic and stay away if you are sick. Otherwise we are going to find ourselves with reduced numbers trying to get to you during the spring calving rush. And we don't want that if we can avoid it. With regard to staffing & waiting times this spring, we're one vet down on what we expected with Ash leaving when he did. But on the positive side all our remaining vets have plenty of experience and should be able to cope as long as we don't get injuries or illness disrupting things. We try at all times to get a vet out to you within an hour, but that's not always possible when things get busy. If you are unfortunate enough to need a doctor on a weekend or (heaven forbid) need to go to A&E then a 2 hour wait for a vet should not be that much to deal with given you could spend all weekend at the hospital waiting to be seen. Please understand we are trying our best to get to you in a timely fashion, but if you have chosen to use our services and farm on the very edge of our area (south of Hawera or in the Inglewood area) then you may need to wait a lot longer if all our vets are tied up locally. That's the deal we made when you signed up.

On a different topic, if you have got a shed audit coming up remember to ask us for a printout of your latest RVM if it has been changed since it was sent out. You will also want to ask us for a printout of your RVM prescription for last season's Dry Cow because it won't be on this season's record. Always better to think of these things before the auditor turns up.

This is our annual spring newsletter so is unashamedly focused on spring related matters. Much of it you have seen before, but a yearly reminder on the basics is always welcome when calving season starts. Spring seems to come around faster every year, so I hope you have managed to get some sort of break before the rush starts again.

Please remember we are always very grateful for a clean bucket of warm water and a clean towel when called upon during spring.

Best of luck & we will be there to help if you need us.

G'Day I'm **Erin**. I have been employed as a technician, new to the full-time team here at Eltham Vets. Previously some may have seen me around the teatsealing and disbudding camps over the last three years. I am Taranaki born and bred hailing from the eastern hill country of Whangamomona. I come from a drystock background and have done many roles from farming & shearing to rural supplies, vet tech, marriage celebrant and a deep tissue styled massage therapist over the last 15 years.

My husband Hayden and I purchased the old Ngaere Gardens and intend to eventually get her open to the public again after some much needed maintenance and renovations. I look forward to getting to know and work with you this coming season. All the best for spring.



DAIRY HEIFERS AND GROWTH

We all know its hard to get a poorly grown heifer to do well. Dairy heifers are expected to produce milk, continue to grow and get back in calf. These are pretty high expectations, particularly if she hasn't grown enough in her 1st 2 years. Dairy heifers do not have the advantage of being able to do "catch up" or compensatory growth. They need to grow well right from day one to enable them to reach targets and meet their potential. A recent NZ study of 140,000 dairy heifers found that Friesian heifers that were 450kg at 21 months produced 168kg/MS more in their 1st lactation and 509kg/MS more over three seasons than Friesian heifers that were 425kg at 21 months. Heifer calves need to grow well right from the start. This means colostrum management and disease prevention are very important. Calves obtain all their antibodies from colostrum, and this helps protect them from disease until they start to make their own around three months old. Calves must receive antibodies in the first 12-24 hours of life. Failure to absorb adequate levels of antibodies results in increased levels of disease, poorer growth rates, higher mortality rates, poorer reproduction and production when they enter the herd. Colostrum also contains multiple hormones and growth factors necessary for a healthy, well grown calf.

Fonterra's Animal Health plan now require more discussion on calf rearing. New recording requirements for calves in 2022-2023 AHP include targets such as calves should receive 10% of bodyweight of gold colostrum (quality >Brix 22%) in 1st 12 hours of life. They should be fed ad lib water and high quality hard feed and weaned to breed weights.

Jerseys should be weaned at 80kg, Crossbreds 90kg and Friesians 100kg at weaning, depending on the rearing system. Monitoring R1 and R2 weights to ensure they are meeting targets is a useful tool to identify problem animals so they can be preferentially fed or managed and problem times of the year where animals may be falling behind target. We are offering a **new weighing service** this season with Erin Bryant our new vet tech.

If you are interested contact the clinic for more information.

NIL-MILK WITHHOLDING WITHDRAWN FOR POUR-ON ABAMECTINS

Just recently we were informed via manufacturers that the Ministry of Primary Industries has now mandated a new 35-day milk withholding period to be applied to all single active abamectin pour-on products.

This includes REFLEX Pour-on and Genesis Pour-On plus all pour-on Abamectins sold by OTC outlets.

As a result, there are two changes that will be made to the REFLEX Pour-on label:

1. Milk WHP: The '0 day' claim will be removed and the new milk WHP statement will be 'Milk intended for sale for human consumption must be discarded during treatment and for 35 days following the last treatment'

2. As REFLEX Pour-on will no longer be able to be used in the treatment of lactating cows the milk production enhancement statement will be removed. Boehringer had already deregistered Genesis Pour-On and it is no longer available for purchase.

So if you have any Reflex or old containers of Genesis Pour-On, or any generic Abamectin Pour-On purchased elsewhere please be aware you can no longer use it on lactating cattle.

If you still wish to apply a pour-on to your dairy cows to start the season please talk to Daniel & John about your options. Eprinex & Eprisure are still available and have no milk WHP.



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LOCAL ANAESTHETIC AUTHORISATION FOR CALF DISBUDDING

Remember that following the law changes in October 2019, every calf being disbudded, or dehorned **MUST** be under the influence of an appropriate and effective local anesthetic.

For those who have already been trained and signed off previously, you will need your annual reaccreditation visit to sign off your records from last year and check your technique. Anybody that has not been signed off before will need a training session which can be done on your farm before we check your technique and can then sign you off. Please phone the clinic to book an appointment at least a week before you plan to do your first calves so we can fit you in.



ASSISTING AT CALVING

You should provide assistance to calving heifers and cows when any of the following occur:

- * Heifers not making progress within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- * Cows not calved within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- * Calving has not occurred within 3-4hrs after membranes have ruptured
- * Delivery has commenced; the calf's feet (and head) are visible and it is obvious the presentation is abnormal
- * Delivery has commenced; the calf's feet (and head) are visible and the calf is not delivered within 30 minutes for cows, 1 hour for heifers
- * If ONLY the head or tail of the calf can be seen outside of vulva
- * If you think that a cow may have calved (e.g. she may have placenta hanging from the vulva) but you have not found the calf, perform a vaginal exam to ensure that she has in fact calved.



If you cannot feel the calf's head, do not presume that the two legs presented are hind limbs. They may in fact be front legs and the head is twisted back (our most common presentation when called out). Check to make sure you can identify the hocks of both back legs and the calf's tail before attempting to pull a backwards calf.

If a cow shows signs of discomfort during the course of the day (e.g. getting up and down, licking or kicking flanks, etc) bring her in and examine her. If the cervix feels closed but things are 'tight' and 'not right' she may have a twisted uterus and need immediate veterinary attention.

At anytime, if you can not bring the calf into the correct position within 10 minutes, or if you are not sure what you are feeling or how to proceed, stop and seek immediate assistance.

Make sure you keep things as clean as possible by using plenty of warm water and disinfectant plus plenty of lubricant. This will help avoid infections post calving. Always have a clean bucket available to use when calving cows – a quick rinse of a bucket that has been used to carry milk or colostrum is not suitable.

Key Point: if it's calving season & you see a cow that looks "not quite right" the most likely reason for her looking like that is that she is trying to calve so get her in and check her out. If you don't know what you're feeling, get us out to take a look.

BOBBY CALVES AND RVMS

Reminder – 7-day rule no longer applies.

No antimicrobials to bobby calves.

Calves treated directly with antimicrobials must NOT be submitted for slaughter as bobby calves.

If bobby calves are fed milk from a cow treated with an RVM and that milk is still within the withholding period then those calves are no longer suitable to be bobby calves and the 91-day meat withholding applies. i.e. if they drink antibiotic milk they can not be bobbies.

The "7-day clean milk rule" no longer applies.

And if you inject a pregnant cow with an antibiotic, the unborn calf is considered to have the same meat WHP as the cow, so if it is born within the withholding period of that antibiotic, then it can not go to the works until that WHP has elapsed.

Medicated Feeds: Medicated milk replacers/meals, e.g. Coccidiostats, must not be fed to bobby calves at any time.



CHECKING THE QUALITY OF COLOSTRUM

We often get asked our opinion on the various products you can feed to your calves to make them grow better.

The number of these products seems to get longer every year. There are prebiotics, probiotics and every other kind of biotic you can imagine. Most of them claim to boost the calf's immune system, and therefore disease resistance.

None of them are cheap.

It is much, much better to give your calves a good immune system to start off with than to try and boost a poor immune system later. Calves are born with no immunity; they get all their immunity from colostrum drunk in the first 24 hours of life. The key to a good immune system is colostrum and the three Qs - QUALITY, QUANTITY and QUICKLY.

Quantity is easy, 10-15% of body weight.

Quick is before 24 hours old and better still, before 12 hours old.

Quality is Brix reading of 22 or above.

What's this?

A Brix refractometer is a handheld gadget which measures the concentration of aqueous solutions. The higher the reading, the more concentrated the solution.

With colostrum you are measuring the concentration of antibodies to disease. A measure of 22 or above is what we aim for. They are simple to use, robust and available from us for \$60.

You can not tell how good colostrum is by looking at it!

Less than half 'gold' colostrum actually meets this threshold so using a refractometer to find the best colostrum to give your keepers the best start in life is one of the best investments you can make in your calf rearing.



CALF SCOURS

You've got scouring calves. Welcome to the world of calf rearing. While it is tempting to think that addition of a tablet, powder or injection will sort your problem out there are a few basics that really should be non-negotiable when dealing with calf scours and calf rearing in general:

• Isolate scouring calves from healthy ones

You may have seen articles suggesting taking infected calves out of pens will cause problems with socialisation later on. From our viewpoint, we would rather you isolated infected calves whenever possible not only to make individual care & treatment easier for the poor person who has to nurse them but also to lessen the chance of spreading to more calves. In a big pen this becomes even more important. I am sure they will all get to know each other later

• Don't add new born calves to an infected mob (it happens)

• Treat scouring calves with electrolytes to replace lost fluids & salts

- ◆ If it's nutritional scours, often removal of milk for one feed and replacement with electrolytes will be enough.
- ◆ If it's an infectious cause you cannot withdraw milk for too long because of the lost energy that results. If the calf is really sick withdraw milk & feed electrolytes only for 12-24 hours then either alternate feeds between milk and electrolytes every 4-6 hours or feed milk with electrolytes added to it (can only be done with some electrolytes so check with your vet first) Aim for 8 –10L of total fluid per day. Yes, that much!
- ◆ Try and find out what the cause is. If we can identify the cause then we can use the correct treatment to sort the issue out quickly.

Always make fresh water available to all calves. We are constantly amazed to find calves with no access to fresh water. A dehydrated calf will actively seek water (if it is able to stand) so make sure it's always available.

MULTIMIN IN NEW-BORN CALVES

Trial work done here in NZ has shown that a single dose of MULTIMIN at birth can cut the chance of disease and death by **OVER 50%**! This means 50% less conditions like calf scours, navel ill and pneumonia in the first 35 days of life.

Over the last two years, many of our clients have taken up the challenge & the vast majority saw a reduction in calf disease and are very keen to continue using Multimin on new-born calves. There is also some new information suggesting targeted Multimin injections in adult cows about a month before mating can increase in-calf rates. We'll cover that in our September newsletter.

What is MULTIMIN?

Multimin is a subcutaneous injection which is given on day one when the calf reaches the shed. It contains several trace elements which help to boost the immune system, so the calf is able to fight off any challenges faster and more effectively! At around 80 cents per calf for an injection that seems like a pretty smart investment.



ROTAVIRUS SURVEY

Rotavirus is still the most common cause of calf scours in NZ. Rotavirus has subtypes and the most common subtype causing issues in NZ calves is G6 with the G10 subtype believed to cause 10% of rotavirus outbreaks. As rotavirus subtypes might be important in immunity and impact on the vaccination we use to help prevent outbreaks we need more information about subtypes present in NZ. Zoetis is involved in a survey where samples are taken from scouring calves and sent for subtyping. We are looking for calves that have had rotavirus diagnosed at the vet clinic. We need a minimum of 5 samples from freshly scouring calves which we will collect, then freeze. Samples will be subtype tested for free and results will be available in February 2023.

CALF IMMUNITY

Are your calves getting enough colostrum in the 1st 24 hours of life? Calves that fail to absorb enough antibodies from colostrum in the first 24 hours have Failure of Passive Transfer (FPT).

Calves with FPT have increased risk of scours, other disease, death, poorer growth rates and lower lifetime production and fertility than calves who receive adequate colostrum. Recent studies have shown about a third of calves in NZ suffer from FPT. **How do yours measure up?** We can test 12 calves between 1-7 days old early this season to see if your colostrum management needs tweaking. The test is a simple blood test and testing can be done in the clinic with results back to you the following day. Please contact the clinic if you are interested.



Cost is approximately \$12.50 per calf excluding GST and includes farm visit, blood testing, lab fees and reporting.

BODY CONDITION SCORING IN DAIRY COWS

It is recommended by Fonterra and is included in targets for the new 2022-2023 animal health plans that dairy herds are body condition scored at least twice yearly. Cows should be at a 5 pre-calving with R2s and R3s at a 5.5. Cows should lose less than 1BCS between calving and mating. Cows that do not reach pre-calving targets have reduced milk production, reduced reproductive performance and increased risk of infectious diseases such as metritis and mastitis. We have accredited body condition scorers at the clinic who can condition score your cows. Accreditation means they are assessed yearly so will give accurate results. To get an average, 70 cows should be scored. This can give you an idea of where your herd sits, and a plan can be made if necessary to improve BCS on any animals not at target. Please contact the clinic to arrange for your herd to be assessed.

