

## LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINATION FOR CALVES



As you would have read in the last newsletter, we are making improvements to our leptospirosis vaccine protocols to reduce the chance of stock, farmers and contractors coming into contact with leptospirosis. Currently we are giving calves their first leptospirosis vaccination at around 5 months of age, if they are exposed to leptospirosis prior to being fully vaccinated they can become lifelong shedders, putting your stock, yourselves, and your staff (and us for that matter) at risk. To mitigate this risk, we are now advising calves get done twice pre-Christmas and then receive a booster in the autumn to bring them in line with the herd.

Due to the risk to human health, we are now no longer handing out leptospirosis vaccine to clients over the counter as we cannot guarantee the vaccine is being used or stored correctly which drastically reduces the chance of the vaccine working. This means all leptospirosis vaccinations must be done either by or in the presence of a vet or technician. For most of you this won't mean any changes as we do your vaccination for you anyway, the rest of you just think of it as decreasing your risk of leptospirosis and your liability under health and safety laws if someone was to contract leptospirosis from your stock. Our techs will be helping with implementing these changes and please contact us if you have any questions.

## COGLAVAX FOR "BLACKLEG" VACCINATION FOR THIS YEAR



This year we are recommending Coglavax as our vaccine of choice against clostridial infection in your calves. It offers protection against 3 more strains of clostridial bacteria than Ultravac 5 in 1 and doesn't cause the same vaccination site reaction as Covexin (the lumps!)

### TO PREVENT MASTITIS IN THE SPRINGERS AND COLOSTRUMS:

- Shift springers often to keep a clean break
- Don't graze springers on effluent paddocks
- Milk springers which are already leaking milk — mark these so you feed their calf colostrum from another cow
- Teat spray springers every time they come through the shed

### TO PREVENT MASTITIS IN THE MILKING MOB, AND ENSURE HIGH-QUALITY MILK FOR SUPPLY:

- Strip the colostrum cows at every milking and check for clots, flakes or watery milk
- Mark, Record, Separate, then Treat (MRS. T) any cows with clinical mastitis
- Keep cows with blood in their milk in the colostrum mob until it resolves
- Only draft RMT negative colostrums with normal looking milk into the milkers. If a cow has a positive RMT at her eighth milking in the colostrum mob, keep her in the colostrums and continue to check her at each milking. If she continues to test RMT positive for several milkings (especially in a single quarter) this is probably subclinical mastitis. Talk with your vet about what to do next.

### TO PREVENT MASTITIS IN ALL GROUPS OF COWS:

- Only cup-up clean, dry teats. Use a dry paper towel to wipe teats that are wet or dirty
- Teat spray all cows after every milking — this is the most important step you can take to prevent mastitis
- Give all cows immediate access to feed after milking so they stay standing while their teat ends close

Monitor your mastitis case records. If you have:

- >8 clinical cases / 100 mixed-age cows over calving or
- >16 clinical cases / 100 heifers over calving

Seek help from your vet or milk quality consultant



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## JULY 2023

So much for the colder drier winter we were promised by those lovely people at Metservice. As far as I can make out they got the cold bit correct, but it seems pretty damn wet to me. Certainly, talking to you guys, you all report slow or little grass growth and plenty of mud as spring approaches. Let's just hope we get this out of our system before everyone is fully into calving because no-one enjoys a cold wet, muddy spring.

This edition is all to do with spring of course & we have lots of useful information, seasonal reminders, and helpful tips from the team.

Spring is a time of new life & a welcome change of seasons. And that's a clever way to introduce the concept of change and let you know that the board of directors have recently gone through an exhaustive process in identifying and appointing the person who will take over as CEO of this practice at the end of the year. I am delighted to inform you that they have appointed from within our existing team of very talented vets, and it is my pleasure to congratulate Leon Christensen as our incoming CEO.

Leon will officially take the reins on December 1<sup>st</sup> but between now and then we will begin a lengthy transition period as I begin to step back and help Leon get to grips with the expectations that come with his new position. He won't be able to do it without the support of his team, of course, and I am very confident that he will get that from all his colleagues and our board of directors. There is a lot of talent in this group and over the last year or two they have been steadily taking more responsibility and introducing new services & procedures to take the practice forward. Leon will lead this team, but senior vets like Adrian, Teresa, Ryan, Michaela & Holly will all be crucial to the long-term success of the practice. These guys are ready and are already bursting with ideas, so I have every confidence that exciting times are ahead for Eltham Vets under a new, young leadership group. I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating Leon on his appointment and wish him every success as he takes on a demanding new role. I'm very excited to see what his team does with the place over the next few years.

So that's the big news from our point of view. Roll on spring. Best of luck to all of you for a successful start to the season with plenty of replacement calves, healthy lambs, and lots of sunshine and warm weather. Well, we can dream can't we?



**Congratulations to Gordon Glentworth** who recently was awarded the Alan Leslie Medal for services to the NZ Vet Club Movement. The Vet Club movement started right here at Eltham in the 30's through the efforts of our very first veterinarian, Alan Leslie (in the photo behind Gordon) so it's appropriate that "one of our own" should receive national recognition for his 30 years of service to this club and the national body, of which he is currently the Chairman.

Congrats Gordon on a well-deserved award.

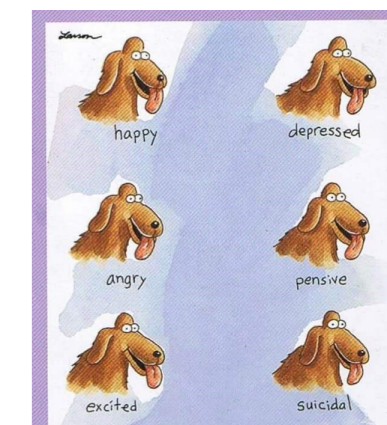
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Leon Christensen BVSc  
Michaela Abbott BVSc  
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Karen Bellamy Erin Bryant  
Alex Rowlands (maternity leave)  
Leigh Laurence BBus/PG Dip Ed



How to recognize the moods of an Irish setter

## 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 legs or head are (just) visible externally and it is obvious the presentation is abnormal
- Delivery has commenced; the calf's legs or head are (just) visible externally and the calf is not delivered within 30 minutes for cows, 1 hour for heifers
- If you see the calf's tongue hanging out

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 assist too early, the cervix and vagina may not be fully dilated and by pulling you risk severe damage to the cow and more difficulty in removing the calf.

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 positively 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.

If you cannot 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 hot water, disinfectant and soap plus plenty of lubricant. 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 CALF WELFARE

Bobby calf welfare is important and farmers, transport operators and processors all have a role to play. These guidelines will help you meet the welfare needs of animals in your care and comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the industry agreed standards detailed in the animal welfare codes. On the farm bobby calves must be given the same degree of care as every other calf on the farm.

- ◆ **Colostrum** – bobby calves must be fed colostrum (2-4 litres/calf) within the first 24 hours of life, preferably within 6 hours. To provide immunity, colostrum should be fed to them twice daily for the first four days of life.
- ◆ **Handling** – handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- ◆ **Weather protection** – bobby calves must be protected from extremes of weather, especially wind, rain, cold and heat. They should be moved to a sheltered, draught-free calf shed as soon as practicable after birth.
- ◆ **Housing** – a lying area that is well drained, covered with comfortable material that is regularly topped up to keep it dry and odour free. Exposed concrete and bare earth are not acceptable. There should be no hazards likely to cause injury to the animals e.g. sharp objects, slippery floors.
- ◆ **Water** – calves must have free access to clean drinking water at all times.
- ◆ **Age** – calves must be a minimum of four days old before being transported off farm.

In addition to being a minimum of four days old before transport, the following signs will indicate if a calf is fit for transport:

1. **Healthy** – eyes are bright, not dull or sunken. Ears are upright. No visible disease (e.g. scours), deformity, injury, blindness or disability.
2. **Strong** – able to bear weight on all four legs. Able to move freely around the pen.
3. **Hooves** – firm and worn, not rounded or soft.
4. **Navel** – dry and withered, not pink/red, raw or fleshy.

Feed – at least half the day's ration of colostrum (or colostrum substitute) should be given on the day of transport within 2 hours of pick up.

## CHECKING THE QUALITY OF YOUR 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; enough **quantity**, enough **quality** and **quick** enough.

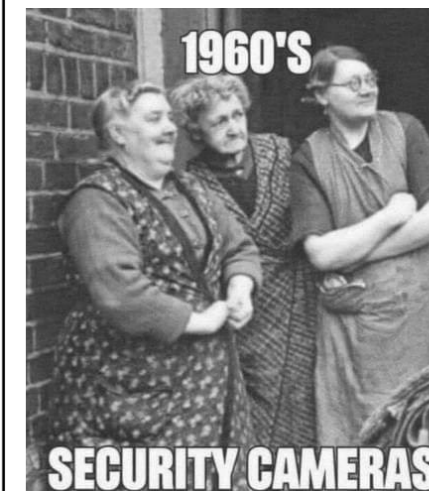
**Quantity is easy, 10% of body weight.**

**Quick enough 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. 22 or above is best. They are simple to use, robust and available online for \$60 – 100.

**Less than half of all first milking 'gold' colostrum has a Brix reading of 22 or above.** The variation between cows is astonishing. We thought we could tell good from poor colostrum just by eye. We were wrong. 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 REARERS: CALF SELECTION IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS

When selecting calves to be reared it is important to consider various factors, such as breeding – which will influence the potential of the calves and whether they are intended for dairy beef or as milkers.

Following these rules will avoid raising calves that are hindered from the start, as they will always tend to be poor doers and lag behind their age group.

Select strong calves:

- ◆ That are five days old and are a minimum of 40kg.
- ◆ That have been fed sufficient colostrum.
- ◆ With dry umbilical cords.
- ◆ That are bright and alert.
- ◆ That are not sick or lame.
- ◆ That are not twins.
- ◆ From as few sources as possible.

**On Arrival:**

- ◆ On entry into barn allow time for calves to de-stress by letting them rest.
- ◆ Feed electrolytes for first 12 hours after delivery

**Pens:**

- ◆ Allow at least 1.5 - 2m<sup>2</sup> per calf.
- ◆ No more than 10 - 12 calves per pen.
- ◆ No more than 100 calves per barn.
- ◆ Use more than one barn to control diseases and to separate age groups



## BENEFITS OF EPRINEX AT CALVING

The aim of a drench at calving time is to maximise production and reproductive performance for the whole season. This is the time when money is better spent on EPRINEX®. This is because EPRINEX is the only drench in New Zealand that has shown in independent scientific research by Vets at Massey University (2017) to significantly increase milk solids for the whole season following one treatment and to improve reproductive performance.

Milk solids will increase on average by 0.03kg/cow/day following an EPRINEX® Treatment. That's 8.22kg MS/cow/lactation (Days in milk - 274 days).

Another US study showed that EPRINEX® at calving reduced calving to conception in heifers by 12.9 days.

When just taking into consideration the increased milk production over one season following one drench with EPRINEX, the average farm could expect an extra \$57 per head. And that's based on a \$7 payout. Competitor drenches have only ever been able to show about half of this return and have no evidence that reproduction is improved.

EPRINEX is unique as it is the only endectocide specifically formulated for use in adult dairy cattle, has no milk or meat withholding, and is a smart animal health investment at the right time of year with returns over the whole season and into the next.

