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See the in-clinic display to learn more about this brilliant new product!

Bobby Calf Best Practice Guidelines



Fit for transport

Four days old / dry navel / hard hooves / no disease
Active and alert / no injuries / fed and watered.

On the Farm

Feed colostrum to all calves
Give calves access to good quality water at all times
Protect calves from the wind, rain and cold at all times
Handle calves gently and with care at all times
Only select fit and healthy calves for transport

Why care about your bobby calves?

They aren't replacements; they aren't worth much and they aren't going to be around for long, so why care about them?

Well, for a start, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 places a 'duty of care' on all those involved with livestock. Failure to meet the needs of a bobby calf may lead to prosecution. At the very least, calves require a warm, sheltered environment & regular feeding in order to meet their welfare needs while in your care.

Meat processing Inspectors take an active interest in bobby calf welfare and follow up on all cases where problems are identified. This year MAF welfare group will be taking a particular interest in bobby calf welfare as well. While it's possible that you won't get caught if you don't look after your bobby calves, is it really worth it not to care about them?



Buy **Bionic Hi-Mineral Sheep Capsules** with 100 day lockdown of all major parasites & go in the draw for a powerful **Lightforce Spotlight**

- World first technology dry flow granules
- Rumenox contains Monensin, the same as in Rumensin
- Disperses rapidly in water
- For use through in-line water dispensers or for oral drenching
- Available from your vet in 20L (12kg) pail, 12,000 doses

The benefits of dry flow granules

- Less time consuming (no pre-dilution required)
- Less wastage (all product easily removed from pail)
- More accurate dosing (compatible with other products, no blocked dispenser)
- Convenient handling (20L pail)



Bloat control
Reduced Ketosis
Increased milk protein



JULY 2015

Welcome to a new season. In the last couple of years that statement has been greeted with optimism by our dairy clients who make up around 90% of our client base. This year that statement is no doubt met with some trepidation as we clearly have a couple of challenging seasons ahead of us. As mentioned in previous newsletters we understand the issues & stresses many of you will be faced with this season in particular and, as stated before, if you have problems please talk to us. We are always willing, & nearly always able, to come to suitable arrangements with the vast majority of our clients but only if they talk to us first so don't be afraid to talk to me or our Accounts Manager, Joan Hughes, if there are issues that need to be addressed. You'll find we're a pretty friendly bunch. We are more than happy to defer payment of accounts on request.

A warm welcome to new clients to the area. We should have met most of you by now & set up your RVM drug authority for the new season. If not please pop in & say giddyay & we'll sort you out.

To those of you who braved the elements & attended our golf day thanks for coming & despite the weather I'm pretty confident you enjoyed yourself & I know for a fact you all thoroughly enjoyed our inspirational guest speaker, 1974 Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist, Dick Tayler.

To those of you who chickened out; you missed a treat. Your RVM authorities will have arrived by now; if not please let us know & we'll track it down. We've made changes to a few of the drugs we put on the shelves this season - some by choice as we try & find cheaper alternatives & others due to supply issues with certain drug companies. For those of you who used & loved Lactapen we apologise that it is no longer available & we've done our best to replace it with the nearest compatible alternative. Please be aware some of the replacement products have different withholding periods than your old favourites so be sure you take note; the payout is low enough this season without being penalised for a silly mistake.

So chin up, keep positive & remember we're here to help.

We go into this spring one vet down as Polly has just had major shoulder surgery courtesy of a difficult calving last season. The recovery period means you won't see her back on farm until mid-October.

Given it could be a quiet season I'm sure we'll cope & Teresa & Linley are both going to do extra hours to help make up the deficit. We send all our best wishes to Polly for a successful & speedy recovery.

There's plenty in this newsletter with spring in mind; mostly just to remind you of what to expect & how to deal with it plus the annual plea for hot water, soap & a clean towel when we visit for calvings & so on. It really is appreciated & does make it easier to do our job.

Hopefully you won't need us but if you do try & remember we will do a better job if we can keep ourselves & our gear clean.

Clinic & Farm Supplies
Railway Street, Eltham
Ph. (06) 764 8196
www.elthamvetservice.co.nz
Trading Depot
Hollard Engineering,
Victoria Street, Kaponga
Ph. (06) 764 6686
J Larkin 0274 482 585

Veterinarians

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Giles Gilling BVSc BSc MRCVS
Andrew Weir BVSc, PGDip (Epi)
Jim Robins BVSc, BSc, DipPharm
Polly Otterson BVSc, MSc,
Teresa Carr BVSc
Adrian Clark BVSc
Linley Gilling BVSc
Lindsay Lash BVSc
James Bruce BVSc
Leon Christensen BVSc

Office

Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS
Jill Watson CVN/RAT
Sue Morresey Nicola Childs CVN
Frank Suter

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at the Vet Clinic, Railway Street, Eltham on **Tuesday 21st July 2015** commencing at 1.30pm. **The agenda includes a proposal to change the rules - to update wording in line with the current commercial environment.**

Happy 20th Giles

Recently we marked the 20th year of service for one of our long standing & most popular vets. Giles Gilling came to Eltham in winter 1995 after a few different jobs in practices in the UK; in particular the Orkney Islands which meant the weather in Eltham was positively tropical in comparison.

He must have liked it because he's been here ever since, which is their loss & our gain. Although he did say that he tried to escape a few times but each time the airport was closed.

Congratulations & many thanks Giles on 20 years' service to Eltham Vet Services.



BASIC APPROACH TO DOWNER COWS

I don't know about the rest of the people who work here, but I'm a pretty basic kind of guy who likes to keep things simple. When I am called to a downer cow, the first thing I do is try and stop the cockie who is revving his bike wanting to tear off down the farm with me behind him. If I can stop him I ask a few questions before we set off:

1. How long has she been down?
2. How old is she?
3. Has she calved?
4. Have you given her anything?

Once I have established whether we are dealing with a cow that has or hasn't calved and has been down for a few hours rather than 3 days I then request about 1/3 of a bucket of piping hot water from the vat or house, into which I deposit 3 bags of metabolic solution - Glucalpos, Mag Sulphate and Calcium 25%. Other vets have different preferences but these happen to be my favourite three.

The vast majority of downer cows we see these days are what I call 'mixed metabolic' cows. They have a bit of milk fever, a bit of staggers and reasonable degree of ketosis/low blood sugar. Sometimes I might be lucky and it's an obvious milk fever (down with head around seemingly asleep or flat out on side not moving with barely discernable heart beat) or a classic staggers (on side thrashing legs, watch out you don't get kicked kind of a cow). If it's a classic milk fever then a Calcium or Glucalpos in the vein and calcium under the skin will do the trick (followed up perhaps by a Calol or something similar when you get her back to the shed).

If it's staggers then hopefully the farmer's description before we left the shed will have enticed me to warm up a Glucalmag (mostly Calcium with about 8% Magnesium), which I will attempt to get into the vein without killing the cow or getting knocked out, followed by a Magnesium under the skin - in your case try and get a magnesium under the skin and stand back and wait! In extreme cases I might need to actually knock the cow out to stop the convulsions killing her before the Magnesium has done its thing.

However, as I said the vast majority are 'combo' metabolics where to be honest it's bloody hard to work out which one it is, when it's probably a bit of all three. Those cows get Glucalpos in the vein (mostly calcium and glucose for energy plus a tiny bit of magnesium, but not enough to kill) and calcium under the skin on one side and magnesium on the other. Once she's sitting up we might then give her a **Starter Plus** or **Headstart** down the throat for the extra energy she will need to get up.

Why the bucket of hot water? That's to warm the fluids up to body temperature by the time we get to the cow. They go in a heck of a lot easier if warm and are less likely to cause abscesses under the skin because they will be absorbed a lot quicker as well. A cold bottle of calcium in the vein can take so long to get in there that you wonder if it will do any good by the time it is delivered. That's why I always try and stop the farmer from taking off as soon as he sees my Ute turning up his track. An extra 5 minutes at the start can save 30 minutes or more at the other end waiting for ice cold solutions to go in a vein.

Overfat Cows and Ketosis

Primary ketosis is a disease that affects cows which lose too much weight in early lactation. Holdovers are particularly at risk because they tend to be both high BW and overfat so they break down lots of body fat to fuel good early production. Unfortunately body fat does not break down perfectly and it makes by-products called 'ketone bodies'. In high levels these ketone bodies depress appetite. So your lovely, shiny, fat holdover starts off milking with a hiss and a roar but after a month or so she goes off her feed, her milk drops dramatically and she turns to skin and bone. Does this sound familiar to you?

An excellent aid in prevention is to dose any overfat cows with a **Rumensin bloat bullet** a couple of weeks before they are due to calve. The Rumensin changes the population of bugs in the rumen and reduces the risk of ketosis by over 90%. At \$19.50 a bullet it's a very good investment.

Smart Dog

As a butcher is shoeing a dog from his shop, he sees \$20 and a note in his mouth, reading: "10 lamb chops, please."

Amazed, he takes the money, puts a bag of chops in the dog's mouth, and quickly closes the shop.

He follows the dog and watches him wait for a green light, look both ways, and trot across the road to a bus-stop. The dog checks the timetable and sits on the bench. When a bus arrives, he walks around to the front and looks at the number, then boards the bus. The butcher follows, dumbstruck.

As the bus travels out into the suburbs the dog takes in the scenery.

After a while he stands on his back paws to push the "stop" bell, and then the butcher follows him off.

The dog runs up to a house and drops his bag on the step.

He goes back down the path, takes a big run, and throws himself -Whap!- against the door. He does this again and again. No answer. So he jumps on a wall, walks around the garden, beats his head against a window, jumps off, and waits at the front door.

A big guy opens it and starts cursing and shouting at the dog.

The butcher runs up screams at the guy: "What the hell do you think are you doing? This dog's a genius!"

The owner responds, "Genius? He's an idiot! It's the second time this week he's forgotten his key!"



Avoid Early Season Grades - Take No Short Cuts!!

If you've ever been unfortunate enough to be hit with an IS grade at the start of a new season or know someone who has, it is a pretty sure bet that you don't want to be in that position ever again. With that unpleasant thought in mind here are some reminders of things that can increase the risk of getting an IS grade this season:

Risky practices:

- Treating cows with DCT during dry period e.g. for dry cow mastitis
- Very low volume supplied at first pick up
- Cows on once-a-day milking
- Bought in cows with unclear DCT treatment history.
- Re-using filter socks
- Cold washing the plant



Things you can do to reduce the risk:

Remember that cows need to be withheld for the first 8 milkings after calving and heifers the first 10. Don't take short cuts such as sneaking cows in after 3 days or 6 milkings and heifers a day early - it isn't worth it. You should note that the pre-collection tests are notoriously temperamental and even more so in the presence of colostrum so by sneaking a few cows in early you could be putting yourself at unnecessary risk. Change your filter sock after every milking, especially if you have had problems with IS grades before. I know it seems like a hassle, but re-using the filter sock, even with a low number of cows, will increase your risk. Hot wash after every milking at the start of the season, especially if you have had problems before.

Milk volume is very important!! In Farmlink Fonterra says "to ensure the highest quality milk, the first milking into the vat must be agitated. Depending on your vat size, as much as 400 litres may be required to achieve full agitation, so you should be aiming to supply at least 1000 litres of milk at the first collection of the season. Supplying this volume will significantly reduce the chance of grading for bacteria, SCC and added water. It will also reduce the chance of grading due to the presence of DCT residues."

I'm always amazed (& a bit demoralised) when people tell me at dry off consults about the short cuts they take at the start of the season (and then smile & declare "and we haven't been caught yet!"). Those people (thankfully not very many) are playing Russian roulette with Fonterra & sooner or later will be caught.

If it turns out it's one of the clients we know who take short cuts despite our advice to the contrary please don't be surprised if we're not particularly sympathetic to your plight when it happens.

MASTITIS VACCINES

DO THEY WORK?

While they are not yet available in NZ, mastitis vaccines are starting to be used overseas. In the UK there is a commercially available vaccine that is used for two nasty mastitis bugs, staph aureus (which we have here) & E.coli (which is here but not very common).

Remember cows in the UK are housed indoors for large periods of the year so their mastitis cases are often far more severe & potentially fatal (esp. E.coli) compared to our most common causes here (strep uberis & staph aureus).

All companies are trying to develop a vaccine that will prevent mastitis & my guess is whoever develops it first is going to do extremely well.

Studies with the UK vaccine have shown that while it hasn't reduced the number of cases of mastitis it did reduce the severity of those cases & interestingly herds that were vaccinated had greater milk production as a whole than herds that weren't vaccinated. That result has raised a few eyebrows & no doubt more studies will follow.

So from our point of view we are still a while away from having a vaccine that will prevent mastitis but it seems it is getting closer. And that's got to be encouraging.

Latest mastitis research timely for spring

Treating mastitis post-calving with an anti-inflammatory and an antibiotic can have a big impact on herd reproductive performance.

Recently released results from a large international study (The FERTILE study) found that cows treated for post-calving mastitis with the anti-inflammatory Metacam®20 in addition to an intramammary antibiotic:

- Were 10% more likely to conceive to the first service than cows receiving antibiotics alone.
- Had an increased cure rate of 16%.
- The effects of mastitis on udder health and milk production are well understood. It is now clear that mastitis can have an influence on the long term future of dairy cattle by affecting their ability to become pregnant and remain in the milking herd.
- Cows with a clinical case of mastitis or a high cell count have lower conception rates. It is thought that inflammation caused by mastitis affects:
 - ◊ The ovary and its ability to produce high quality eggs for fertilisation and;
 - ◊ The ability of the cow to maintain an early pregnancy.

Using an anti-inflammatory like Metacam®20 in combination with your standard post calving mastitis treatment not only helps in recovery at the time but also has the potential to provide significant long term benefits for your herd.

To find out more about how Metacam®20 might fit in to your mastitis treatment plan, or to add it to your RVM drug authority this season give the clinic a call.

Prevention and Treatment of Cryptosporidiosis Is Now Possible

Cryptosporidiosis is often thought of as being a less severe cause of scours than the other major causes (rotavirus, coronavirus and *E. coli*), but many of those who have had a major outbreak would tell you otherwise. And cryptosporidiosis appears to be a growing problem, with more cases than usual seen last season. The problem is, when cryptosporidia strikes, a high proportion of calves can be infected and often for a long time. Treatment can be difficult, as electrolytes may be needed for so long that calves can become weak. So even though a lower proportion of calves usually die, the hassle and stress involved is often just as major as it is for other outbreaks. When you add in that cryptosporidia is often tied in with rotavirus, which can make a bad outbreak of scours worse, therefore it makes sense to reduce the effects before it gets out of control. Halocur is a recent arrival to the New Zealand market, and is the only pharmaceutical treatment available for crypto. It can be used as both a prevention and treatment, and in combination with good management practices, will reduce the severity of scours. Importantly, it will also reduce contamination of the environment, helping to break the cycle of infection of other calves. For the prevention of diarrhoea caused by *Cryptosporidium parvum* in at risk calves, treatment should start within 24 hours of birth. Halocur comes in a 490ml container with a special bottle mounted applicator. Treatment is given orally at a dose of 2mL/10kg, once daily for 7 days, directly after feeding. Halocur is expensive (around \$24 per calf treatment) and there are other non-pharmaceutical products with claims to assist treatment, in particular Kryptade (electrolyte replacer) and a new product from the makers of Rotagen Combo (also expensive) so before you rush in to buy some for your scouring calves make sure you get faecal samples tested to see what the cause actually is. If you are concerned about cryptosporidiosis in your calves, please contact us to discuss how Halocur may help you to control this disease. Halocur is only available from your veterinarian.

Coccidiosis in calves

We seem to be seeing more clinical coccidiosis each year, maybe because calf mobs are getting bigger? Last year we had several big outbreaks. I suspect other farms had mild outbreaks which got better without treatment but the calves didn't grow and bloom as they should have done. With coccidiosis, the calves which get bloody scour are only the tip of the iceberg. Most of the rest of the mob are infected although some will only show watery diarrhoea for a few days with little or no blood. However, all infected calves will suffer damage to the lining of their gut. Repairing this damage takes weeks and it is actually this period of reduced feed intake and weight gain that costs you the most. A convenient way to prevent coccidiosis in milk fed calves is to add Deccox Premix to their milk once daily for 4 weeks, beginning at about 3 weeks of age. The cost is about \$4.70 per calf but should be more than repaid in improved growth rates. *Don't add Deccox if you are feeding milk powder, all good milk powders have a coccidiostat added to them.*

Calving Period Mastitis - Control Activities

As we head into spring again here is a revision of the important bits from the SAMM plan in regards to helping reduce the likelihood of mastitis.

Calve cows in a clean environment

- Reduce exposure to environmental mastitis
- Calve onto clean pasture
- Do not calve cows on standoff areas

Minimise Mastitis

- Remove the calf from the cow as soon as possible after it has had a good drink of colostrum (within 12 hours of calving - it is a very good idea to stomach tube all new arrivals with 2L of warmed colostrum even if you have seen them drink)
- Completely milk the cow out by machine. Milk twice daily from first milking onwards
Be aware that this milking out practice may increase the risk of milk fever in high-conditioned, older cows and any others with a previous history of milk fever

Teat Sanitation

- Post-milking teat spraying throughout the entire lactation is proven to reduce the incidence of new mastitis by up to 50%

Minimise Teat Damage

- Minimise damage to teats as this is a major cause of new infections
- Make sure the machine is functioning correctly with a full machine test



Newly Calved Cows

- Run as a separate colostrum mob
- Withhold milk for 8 milkings (cows) or 10 milkings (heifers)
- Extend this period if cows do not milk out properly

Fast Efficient Milking

- Ensure milk letdown, especially in heifers
- Milk out all quarters of all cows twice a day
- Avoid over-milking and under-milking

Leaking Cows

- Milk prior to calving to ease pressure
- Teat spray every time through the shed at spring concentration

- Do not put milk into bulk tank

Teat Spray

- Spray teats with an effective sanitiser after every milking throughout the entire lactation
- Maintain teat condition - up to 15% emollient in cold muddy conditions
- If teat condition is a problem consider teat spraying with added emollient for a week before calving
- Ensure whole surface of teat is sprayed. Use at least 20ml/cow/milking
- Use a teat spray which has "Passed Protocol A 1997"
- Use according to label instructions including mixing at higher concentrations during periods of high challenge (muddy conditions)

Take advantage of all that good advice and use it.

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 3-4 hours 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 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 needs 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.



The Case for Penicillin

A few years ago Giles did a cost benefit exercise to show how it was cheaper to use a non-withholding cephalosporin antibiotic like Exccenel or Exceed than good old fashioned penicillin (Intracillin) in a high payout year. Milk stayed in the vat & there were no worries about IS grades.

I can't remember what the cut-off was for payout when it became cheaper to use penicillin & throw the milk away but I'm willing to bet everything I own that it was considerably higher than a \$4.50 payout. While non-withholding antibiotics are convenient because you don't have to worry about accidentally contaminating a vat, and they are definitely the best products for treating uterine infections, they are no more effective than Intracillin when it comes to treating lame cows and cost a heck of a lot more.

A bottle of Excede costs \$425 compared to a pillow pack of Intracillin at \$54. Drop a bottle of Excede & it's going to hurt. Drop a pillow pack of Intracillin & it will bounce.

We've recently replaced Exccenel with a generic product Kelacef to save you close to \$100 a bottle but even then this season it will be cheaper & just as effective to use Intracillin for your lame cows. Unless you have valid concerns about staff accidentally milking a penicillin cow into your vat our recommendation is that you go back to good old fashioned penicillin for the next season or two & back your record keeping systems & safeguards.

On top of that we are being told by the powers that be that ideally we should be restricting the use of these newer non-withholding cephalosporins (Excede, Kelacef, and Exccenel) because we may be promoting antibiotic resistance to a class of antibiotic widely used in human medicine. While I wonder sometimes whether that motivation is real or political, in a low payout year that's another reason to suggest you go back to Intracillin for your lame & sick cows.

Heart Attack on the Golf Course

A husband and wife are on the 9th green when suddenly she collapses from a heart attack! "Help me dear," she groans to her husband.

The husband calls 111 on his cell phone, talks for a few minutes, picks up his putter, and lines up his putt. His wife raises her head off the green and stares at him. "I'm dying here, and you're putting?"

"Don't worry dear," says the husband calmly," the emergency have found a doctor on the second hole, and he's coming to help you"

"Well, how long will it take for him to get here?" she asks feebly but with desperation.

"No time at all," says her husband. "Everybody's already agreed to let him play through."



Colostrum: As Important As Ever

A quote from a Canterbury calf rearer out of the latest "Inside Dairy" magazine pretty much sums it up as spring approaches - "it is essential that calves receive top quality colostrum within the first 6 hours of life. The best quality 'gold' colostrum comes from a cow's first milking. Calves that don't receive colostrum in the first 12 hours after birth are more likely to get scours or pneumonia and twice as likely to die within the first 2 months"

So, within the first 6 hours - 2L of gold colostrum (as soon as they are at the shed or sooner if possible). Within the first 12 hours - top up so each calf gets 10% of their body weight in colostrum.

- Jersey 25 kg= 2.5L
- Crossbred 35 kg=3.5L
- Friesian 45 kg= 4.5L

This season more than ever you will need to do things that save you money. Attention to detail with new born calves & colostrum will definitely do that.

BVD Screening

Screening replacement calves for BVD is one of the best ways to keep BVD out of your herd. It's cheaper than vaccinating the whole herd every year, and nearly all herds should either be vaccinating the milkers each year, or screening calves each year. Screening your calves each year guards the health and growth rate of your calves, the reproductive performance of your heifers and herd and the production of your cows. It also provides a lifetime "not PI" animal status in the MINDA database.

You can do it yourself using ear notch kits direct from LIC. The downside is you have to wait till the youngest calf is at least 35 days old using ear notches. There is a new testing option now that means you can test calves younger than 35 days old for the same test price as the skin test (plus collection costs) using blood samples. We can do the blood sampling for you at the same time as our premium calf disbudding, or at another time that suits. Make sure you book it in so you don't forget when things get spring crazy!

TIPS FOR GOOD CALF REARING

- The same person should be responsible for feeding & caring for the calves every day (ideally she should be female; sorry lads but it's a fact).
- Pick a good candidate to rear - no small, weak or sick calves.
- Pick up calves, ideally twice daily, in a clean, regularly disinfected trailer.
- Colostrum is vitally important - 5% of the calf's bodyweight in the 1st 6 hours of life then another 5% in the 1st 24 hours, preferably within the first 12 hours.
- Feed 1st milking colostrum to new calves as this milk is highest in antibodies and nutrients.
- Don't assume the calf has had enough colostrum if it won't feed when it first comes in. Feed warm 1st milk and if the calf won't suckle feed via stomach tube.
- Spray calves navels with iodine to prevent navel infections. Ideally spray before putting the calf in the trailer and again once the calf is put into the shed. If having problems with navel infections also spray twice daily until the navel is dry.
- Start the calf off in the pen it will remain in. Don't use a "starter" pen as these pens have so much calf traffic through them they become contaminated with disease causing bugs even if they look clean.
- Ideally have 10-20 calves per pen with space for 1.5m² per calf.
- Have clean fresh water, meal and fibre available from day 1.
- Have suitable bedding that drains well and remains dry. Top it up as necessary.
- Calves in pens should remain dry. Ventilation is important. Calves with weepy eyes or a strong ammonia smell in the pens means ventilation is poor. Too much draft means calves are cold and not growing as well as they could be.
- Feed warm milk especially when calves are small. Cold milk means calves need to use their own energy & reserves to warm the milk.
- Take milk to the calves not calves to the milk. Taking them out of their nice warm dry pens twice a day to a yard which may or may not be cold & wet & windy depending on the day adds unnecessary stress.
- Feed colostrum for as long as possible, a minimum of 4 days. Gradually change to whole milk. Get advice if using a CMR.
- Stir stored colostrum a minimum of twice daily. Never add bloody or antibiotic milk to colostrum. Natural fermentation is an excellent way to store colostrum. It must be handled in clean containers with lids (remember, bloat oil is lethal for calves). If stored below 20°C, natural fermentation will make the colostrum acid, stopping spoilage for up to 12 weeks. The fermentation process can be sped up by adding non-pasteurised yoghurt. Fresh colostrum should be cooled before being added. Calves will continue to drink stored colostrum long after you can't bear to get too close to it.
- Have a separate pen for bobby calves away from the keeper calves.
- Sick pens should be away from other calf pens. Have separate equipment used only in this pen which is disinfected daily.
- Use disinfectants that kill Rotavirus and/or Crypto, e.g. Virkon or Farmsan. Ideally disinfect pens twice weekly until calves are 2-3 weeks old. Calves can remain in the pens when using these disinfectants.

The Effect of Wet Weather

Just to reinforce my constant nagging about keeping animals warm here's some interesting facts about shivering calves:

Temperature at Which Calves Shiver:

	Friesian Calves	Jersey Calves
Dry coat, calm	3°C	9°C
Dry coat, wind	8°C	13°C
Wet coat, wind	13°C	17°C



So leaving recently born calves out in cold, windy, wet weather for any longer than necessary is basically a death sentence. Worth bearing in mind.

Calf Scour Reminders

I can't help but notice a few of you take big shortcuts when it comes to dealing with scouring calves. While it's 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
I note that an article in the paper recently suggested taking infected calves out of pens causes problems with socialisation later on. Personally I 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 spread to more calves. In a big pen this becomes even more important. I'm sure they will all get to know each other later on.
- 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 can't withdraw milk for too long because of the lost energy that results. If the calf is really sick withdraw milk & feed electrolytes only, then either add electrolytes to subsequent milk feeds (making sure fresh water is always available) or alternate during the day between milk/milk replacer and electrolytes
- **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's able to stand) so make sure it's always available.

Rotavirus doesn't go away

Even if you have vaccinated your herd & fed all your calves with super-charged colostrum to get them through the first critical weeks, Rotavirus is still hanging around and can be detected in samples from later season scours in older calves. Remember that vaccinated colostrum fed to new-born calves provides excellent protection against rotavirus for as long as you are feeding it. It also results in less virus building up in the sheds in those early stages of the season. But it's most likely still there lurking away ready to pounce, much like Winston Peters every time an election rolls around. Like Winston, it's an opportunistic pathogen so will take advantage & hop on board when a suitable candidate presents itself. Whether it's the primary cause in older calves or just a passenger is often hard to tell, but we do still find it in samples taken later in the season so don't be too shocked if you still get the odd case of Rotavirus even if you vaccinate. The good news is that rotavirus in an older calf (over 6 weeks old) is a much less dangerous beast than the brutal disease that can devastate new-born calves and given that these calves are older & stronger with a more developed immune system, most of them should respond to 1st principles, i.e. fluid replacement with electrolytes & TLC without having to resort to antibiotics & Rotagen combo. As always with calf scours, don't panic, stick to the basic rules of re-hydration and don't take short cuts.

Calf Disbudding



Following the successful continuation of our premium calf disbudding service last season we will be running the same system again this year.

We will be de-horning in teams of two - usually one of the vets (Adrian, Lindsay, Brucey or Leon) with the help of our large animal technicians/nurses Jill & Nicola. We will come and do all your calves between the ages of 2-6 weeks in one go. *This age range is important to ensure an efficient, quality service.* As part of the service we check for and remove extra teats. If you wish we can also give the first blackleg vaccination and this year we are offering to blood test calves for BVD at the same time (details elsewhere in this newsletter). Remember, this is a premium service and isn't designed to compete on price. If you want your calves sedated and dehorned in a stress and pain-free way, this is the method for you. There are plenty of people out there offering cheaper alternatives. The cost will be a visit fee + \$9.50 (incl.GST) per calf.