## Fodder beet

Fodder beet is not in the Brassica family which is why its popularity is increasing. Fodder beet can have much higher dry matter yields and is high in energy, palatability and digestibility, which means if the crop is good this can lead to much higher yields from smaller areas.
With the increasing popularity of feeding fodder beet to dairy cows in Taranaki we are getting more calls to sick cows associated with it.
DairyNZ has a good website for how to go about feeding fodder beet:
https://www.dairynz.co.nz/feed/crops/fodder-beet/
The important points are **know your crop yield** and **take your time when transitioning cows onto the crop**. Most of the issues we see are during transition. It takes 14 days to properly transition cows onto eating fodderbeet. During this time the microorganisms in the rumen are changing to better cope with the large carbohydrate load of the diet. If transition happens too quickly or cows are given more fodder beet than they should be (or there is a breakout) the overload of carbohydrate is fermented in the rumen to cause acidosis. This results in cows with milk fever like symptoms in mild cases through to dead cows in more extreme cases. An excellent way to transition the cows is to feed 2kg of beet for the first 2 days (making up the dry matter total with balage and hay) and then every second day increase the beet allowance by 1kg. By the end of the 14 days they will be transitioned properly. Feed the fibre in the morning and then in the afternoon feed the crop. Make sure all the cows can get their fair share of the fibre.

For beet it is important to have at least 2 hours between feeding the supplement and the crop. It is important to have a second 'safety' fence as cows escaping through the first wire will gorge and get acidosis.

The cows need to eat the tops and bulbs together as the bulbs tend to be low in crude protein and the leaves are high. Tops by themselves fed to lactating cows will cause milk fever. A long feeding face is the best as this encourages less bossing and the cows tend to all get a fair chance at the crop. Ideally, feed under the wire for the correct crop allocation. Be aware how far cows reach under the wire! This can change their uptake significantly. Be aware of what is left behind. As the cows get used to the crop, they will come and clean up what was left behind from the previous break and this can cause issues.

It is important to get your crop tested for its yield and dry matter content so you know exactly what you are feeding the cows. The crop can be deceiving, and levels that are in books are only a guide.

Keep a careful eye on all cows in the group throughout the fodderbeet feeding period. You are looking out for cows that separate themselves from the mob, are not eating, are scouring and maybe dehydrated, not doing well, have bloating or milk fever like symptoms, "downer cows" or in the worst cases dead cows.
In the worst case scenario a herd breakout can result in large numbers of dead and very sick cows requiring ongoing treatment and management. If this happens immediately call us but move all mobile stock onto a fresh break with plenty of hay dusted in causmag in the meantime. Treat any downer cows with metabolic solutions. Treatment will generally require drenching the entire mob with large amounts of causmag and sodium bicarbonate to offset the acid produced in the rumen.

***Key points:-***

- Transition period from grass to crop needs to be 2 weeks, gradually increasing the amount of crop.
- Ideal diet is 7kg fodder beet, 3kg bailage, 2kg straw/hay. (Never feed > 10kg of beet 35% fibre ideal).
- Need long feeding face. Safety fence is important - breakouts can be dangerous.
- Feed supplement in morning and beet in afternoon.
- Don't do time transition, cows can eat too much beet in an hour – quantity allocation only.
- Have crop measured and tested so you know exactly what you are feeding.
- Need to feed tops and bulbs together.
- Rumen acidosis can be an important issue – why fibre is so important. Signs – depression, dehydration, scouring, bloating, milk fever, sudden death.
- Any cow "not doing" – take off crop straight away (subclinical acidosis).
- Never feed frosted crops – potential for bloat.
- Nitrate poisoning can be an issue.

### *The Humble Ham Sandwich*

*A priest and a rabbi were sitting next to each other on an airplane.*
*After a while, the priest turned to the rabbi and asked: "Is it still a requirement of your faith that you not eat pork?"*
*The rabbi responded: "Yes, that is still one of our beliefs." The priest then asked: "Have you ever eaten pork?"*
*To which the rabbi replied: "Yes, on one occasion I did succumb to temptation and tasted a ham sandwich." The priest nodded in understanding and went on with his reading.*
*A while later, the rabbi spoke up and asked the priest: "Father, is it still a requirement of your church that you remain celibate?"*
*The priest replied: "Yes, that is still very much a part of our faith."*
*The rabbi then asked him: "Father, have you ever fallen to the temptations of the flesh?"*
*The priest replied: "Yes, rabbi, on one occasion I was weak and broke with my faith."*
*The rabbi nodded understandingly and remained silently thinking for about five minutes.*
*Finally, the rabbi said: "Beats a ham sandwich, doesn't it?"*

# Eltham Vet Services


**Clinic & Farm Supplies**
Railway Street, Eltham
Ph . (06) 764 8196
**Trading Depot**
Hollard Engineering,
Victoria Street, Kaponga
Ph. (06) 764 6686
**J Larkin** 0274 482 585
**D Kidd** 0275 479 261

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


## JULY 2017

I was recently at Massey with board members interviewing 4th year vet students for our annual Michael Higham Memorial Scholarship. Other than the outstanding quality of the candidates the other thing that stood out was the fact that these guys are being drilled relentlessly about antimicrobial resistance & judicious use of antibiotics. As one of the candidates said, "it feels like by the time we graduate we will almost be scared to prescribe antibiotics".

I'm sure you've seen recent articles in the press & more than one report on TV about antibiotic resistance, critically important antibiotics & judicious use. It's not going to stop I'm afraid folks & this newsletter is no different.
By now you will probably have received your prescription for the coming season; your RVM (Authority to Supply). It came with a cover letter explaining why we had removed certain antibiotics from prescriptions; i.e. Excede LA & Kelacef to be exact. It also then told you that the only replacement we were allowed to use for Kelacef was out of stock until the end of the year so for now we have put Kelacef back on your RVM. Once Cephalexin is available again it will come off. Excede will be 'veterinary use only' from now on. Sorry about that.
I also talked about the pressure we are coming under to stop prescribing & using Tylan & Tylofen. I have resisted for the time being, figuring that we all need time to get used to the idea but I have asked you to try & be more selective with Tylan & Tylofen. Unfortunately, too many of you have fallen into the habit of using them for every case of mastitis rather than just for multiple quarter cases or hard swollen quarters. If you carry on using these drugs indiscriminately then they will be taken away from us so please, this season when you get a case of mastitis, save your Tylan or Tylofen for the types of mastitis described above & reach for an intramammary for everything else. To encourage you to do that we have reduced the amount of each product on your RVM this season and the price of both products has gone up as well. Overuse it and you will lose it.

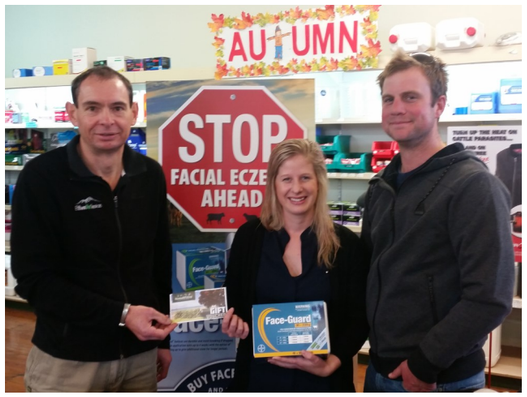
Welcome to new clients in the area; we look forward to meeting you soon & working with you in the years to come. If we haven't already visited to set up your prescription for the coming year, please feel free to call in & say gidday.

**Have you seen Escapees?**
Seven in-calf heifers from Mahoe area. Last seen 7th June. Please contact the clinic if you have any information

***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 |

Leaving recently born calves out in cold, windy, wet weather for any longer than necessary is basically a death sentence.




Marc & Tanya Jackson receiving the $500 Hunting & Fishing voucher from John Larkin which they won after purchasing Face-Gaurd Zinc Bolus

## Rotavirus
## – Still Trying To Break Your Spirit

Make sure you have vaccinated – ideally three weeks prior to the start of calving, and please batch up the later calvers (to vaccinate later) so that the drop-off in colostrum antibodies doesn't coincide with the later peak challenge in the sheds.
You can freeze excess first milking colostrum to use later in the season – frozen colostrum lasts at least a year, and must only be thawed and warmed in a hot water bath (not microwaved – this destroys the antibodies).
Another advantage to vaccination is that farmers tend to tighten up on their colostrum management, the incentive being to ensure that all calves get a good first feed. The resulting protection not only helps prevent Rotavirus, but also a myriad of other diseases relevant to the farm that will result in better calves, healthier shed environment, and (most importantly!) a happy calf rearer who has time to look after all aspects of calf care.
Despite this, rotavirus hasn't gone away, so don't be surprised if you get a few older calves with a mild scour that will be rotavirus positive if tested. These bigger calves are stronger and find it easier to deal with the scours with electrolytes, etc.
A few years back Waikato farmers cut back on vaccination to cut costs, and ended up paying more on treatment costs, and the concomitant losses of both calves and morale.

**So, if you haven't booked in your vaccination yet, don't leave it to chance, and talk to your area vet to book in this crucial vaccine.**

## Calf Rearers
## - Calf Selection is Critical to Success

When selecting calves to be reared it is important to select calves which have the potential to grown well.
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 different 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$^2$ per calf depending on breed.
- 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.

- Avoid overfeeding calves prior to transporting.
- Spray naval cord with iodine before and after transport.
- Spray barn with an anti-bacterial and anti-viral product twice a week & hospital pens daily.

## FPT TESTING

**Lots of scours and other calf diseases like naval ill, abscesses or pneumonia?**
**Calves don't grow as well as you expect?**
**Want to check your systems are working before trouble starts?**

Your calves may not be receiving enough antibodies from colostrum. This is called FPT or Failure of Passive Transfer.
This can result in higher levels of disease and poorer growth and can also result in poor production and re-production once calves enter the herd.
We can check levels with a simple blood test. We need 12 healthy calves between 1-7 days old. Bloods are processed at the vets so the testing is cheap and quick. Cost approximately $120 incl. GST for 12 blood tests (includes visit fee). Contact the clinic for more details or to book.

## Free Coccidia Testing This Spring

Coccidia is a problem faced by every farmer and calf-rearer.
We've all seen the signs - scungy, skinny calves, bloody diarrhea, and even deaths. But this is just what we can see.
While other calves in the mob may not be showing obvious signs of infection, they're unlikely to be performing as well as they should, and that lost productivity can extend right through until they are heifers.
And we all know low weight heifers take longer to get in calf.
So how do we stop this cycle of lost productivity? You might feed calf meal containing a coccidiostat, but you can't control how much or little they eat, and it stops working as soon as the calves go off the meal. This explains why observable cases of coccidiosis mostly show up post-weaning. What's needed is a coccidiocide – a drug that kills coccidia with a single dose, and boosts the calf's own immunity. This results in a healthier calf, stronger weight gain, and ultimately better reproductive performance.
The most effective and economic time to dose a mob with a coccidiocide is around one week before they face a high burden.
Every farm environment is different, so what we do is test for coccidia throughout the rearing period to uncover what can't be seen, and respond appropriately.
To help our farmers and calf-rearers pick this ideal time to treat, in association with Bayer Animal Health, the makers of Baycox, we are offering free coccidia testing. All we need is some poo samples and a bit of calf history, and together we can work out whether Coccidiosis is an issue on your farm & if so, work out the best way to fight it.
To find out more speak to Polly who had success doing this last year.

## Tips For Good Calf Rearing

- 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. Calves have no antibodies when they are born, it all comes from the colostrum they drink in the 1st 12-24 hours of life. Without this colostrum calves are more prone to diseases and death, their growth rates are slower and their production and reproduction may be reduced once they enter the herd.
- Feed 1st milking colostrum to new calves as this milk is highest in antibodies and nutrients. Milk cows as soon as possible after calving as cows only make colostrum before they calve. After this the colostrum becomes diluted by milk.
- 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 it via stomach tube.
- Collect 1st milking colostrum separately to give to newborn calves.
  Use it fresh (< 12 hours old) or freeze, refrigerate or preserve with potassium sorbate, then warm in a warm water bath. Warming too fast or using a microwave or directly adding hot water will damage the antibodies in the colostrum. Colostrum older than 12 hours has much lower levels of antibodies and much higher levels of bacteria than fresh colostrum making it much less effective.
- Refrigeration of 1st milk or preserving with potassium sorbate keeps it fresh for 48hours; potassium sorbate plus putting it in the fridge enables it to be used for 7 days. Freezing is effective for up to 12 mths.
- Collect clean 1st milking colostrum for your newborn calves into clean containers. After every use wash with hot water and scrub with dishwashing liquid all equipment that is used for collecting and feeding this 1st colostrum.
- Spray calf's 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 naval infections also spray twice daily until the naval is dry. If problems persist you can try Tincture of Iodine instead of the normal aqueous iodine.
- 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.
- Have clean fresh water, meal and long 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 draught will mean 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.
- 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 and disinfect it every day.
- Use disinfectants that kill Rotavirus and/or Crypto eg. Virkon or Farmsan. Calves can remain in the pens when using these disinfectants.



**Queen of Calves**
available at the clinic