

WINTER SEMINAR

This winter we will be running a **Spring First Aid seminar on Wednesday, 30th June.**

Spring First Aid topics include:

- Calving and related conditions
- Metabolics e.g. milk fever and grass staggers – treatment and prevention
- Downer cows
- Sick cows
- Calf care and sick calves
- General procedures including injections, stomach tubing and drenching

This seminar is targeted at new entrants to dairy farming and anyone wishing to brush up on their knowledge.

The course is limited to 15 people. All participants receive a comprehensive set of notes, practical instruction and a certificate of attendance. Lunch is provided. The course costs \$175 (incl.GST) per person. If more than 1 person is attending from a farm there will be a 10% discount per person excluding the first registration.

If you are interested please ring the clinic to register ASAP.

We are considering running a **Mastitis Management** seminar at a later date but need an indication of numbers of people who may be interested. This one day seminar would run between 10am-3pm and would cover the following topics

- **Quality Milk.** What it is, why it is important
- **Mastitis** – Cause and effects, cost of mastitis
- **Diagnosis of Mastitis** The different diagnostic tools, their strengths and weaknesses,
- **Treatment of Mastitis.** Treatment principles, and what to realistically expect from treatment.
- **Prevention of Mastitis.** Preventing contagious and environmental causes of mastitis, teat spraying, milking machine checks, culling, Dry cow therapy.
- **Key control times during the season**

This course is likely to cost \$150 (incl. GST) including notes and lunch. Please ring the clinic to put your name down if you are interested.

GOLF DAY PICTURES



June 2010

Welcome to a new season and a special welcome to all new arrivals in our district.

If we haven't been around to say giddyay we will soon; or drop into the clinic to introduce yourself and get set up before spring arrives.

Congratulations to Andrew & Kath Weir who added to their brood recently with the arrival of 9lbs14oz Daniel Ian, a little brother for Sarah & Esther (not so little!). Well done to you both.

Our newest vet, James (Jimmy, Bruce) hasn't been well lately. We look forward to having him back soon ready to tackle his first spring.

Enjoy your winter break and we'll see you much sooner than you would probably like.



Thanks Mr Chairman!

As reported at our recent golf day, our July AGM will mark the final meeting presided over by our chairman, Alistair Abbott. "Abbo" joined the board 20 years ago and before he knew what had happened found himself the Chairman.

Whoever decided he would make a good chairman could hardly have believed just how inspired that decision would turn out to be. Alistair re-defined the role of chairman in our organisation and was the first chairman to genuinely embrace and enforce the concept of Governance vs. Management, whereby the board set policy, provided guidance and let the practice management run the organisation. Together with previous CEO Dave Higham, they turned the practice from a sleepy 3-4 vet clinic to a thriving 10 vet practice that has established a strong and envied reputation within the veterinary industry as well as some envy from members of other Vet Clubs, where perhaps their Chairmen and directors aren't so "enlightened". Thank you Alistair for your wonderful service as our chairman, your integrity, honesty and good humour when dealing with the management and vets at Eltham Vet Services. A new chairman will be elected by the board after our next AGM.

This isn't farewell because he will be staying on as a director until his term ends next year, but we couldn't let his final AGM escape un-noticed or un-recognised. Thanks again Abbo!

P.S. - By pure coincidence (honestly) Alistair won the picnic table & chairs in the Merial Ancare draw this week.

It couldn't have gone to a more deserving servant of this Vet Club.

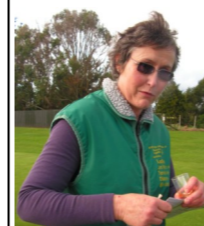
P.P.S. - Sorry about the photo but it was too good to miss!



Wait until he finds out he's won the Merial Ancare Draw!

Polly - a big hit at Massey

Polly is back from her 2 month 'sabbatical' at Massey University and we are delighted to have her home. As expected she was a big hit down there with students and lecturers alike. In fact I received a letter from Jenny Weston at Massey a week after she returned that stated "Polly is probably the best Practitioner in Residence we have had since my return to Massey and the students really enjoyed her input into undergraduate teaching. I am sure you will see increased demand from students wanting to see practice with your clinic now that they have seen the high calibre of one of your veterinarians". That's what I call high praise! Well done Polly.



Prescriptions on their Way

Most of you should have received your annual prescriptions for the coming season by now. If you want to discuss changes to them feel free to give me a call. If you haven't received one please give us a call. If you're an existing client who has recently moved it is likely we have a new prescription for you on computer but are awaiting your new address details before sending it so please get in touch.

Many of you will also have noticed that, due to the withdrawal of a number of products containing streptomycin, your PAR list has a few changes to it this year. For most of you in that situation I have included a note or letter explaining those changes. If by any chance I have neglected to tell you of an obvious change please feel free to give me a call and I'll talk you through it. Also, technically we shouldn't be calling them PAR's any more. Officially "Prescription Animal Remedies" are now known as "Restricted Veterinary Medicines" or RVM's, but I was halfway through the job before I remembered so please forgive the use of the incorrect term. By next year I promise to be calling them RVM's!

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

Alistair McDougall BVSc - CEO
 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

Office

Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS
 Lisa Goldsworthy Jill Watson
 Sue Morresey Frank Suter

BVD Risk Management

Through Andrew Weir, in 2007 EDVS obtained funding to test bulk tank milk samples for BVD antibodies at no cost to our clients. Every client who took part in those surveys has been informed of their results annually and we now have results for the past three years. This has allowed us to gain some understanding of the role of BVD in dairy herds in our area. Clients whose bulk tanks have little or no antibodies to BVD are at greatest risk of a serious outbreak. These clients have been offered a free consultation to plan how best to manage their risk. If you have not received an offer of a free BVD risk management consult, but would like one, please contact the clinic to make an appointment *before mid July*. After mid-July these consults will be charged at our normal rate.

Lice - Treat Everything!

It's that time of year when you think about treating your herd & calves for lice. The louse is a secretive little fella, who lives his whole life on the animal and spreads from cow-to-cow or calf-to-calf by direct contact between animals. He doesn't live on the ground or hide behind fence posts waiting to leap on his next victim, so why do we often get reports of lice returning 6-8 weeks after treatment? The answer lies in when & how we treat. It is vital that every animal on the farm is treated at the same time. If a beefie is left down the back of the farm or a couple of calves escape treatment, or an animal arrives on the farm and isn't treated, then lice will remain to re-infect and that can happen quite quickly after treatment. Make sure all cattle on the farm are treated. Any heifers or leased cows returning to the farm should be treated on arrival. Watch for contact between your stock and stock on neighbouring farms that may not have been treated. This doesn't guarantee that you won't see lice later in the spring because sometimes you can't avoid unwanted contact between treated & untreated stock, but if you are sure everything has been done it shouldn't matter whether you treat now or later in the winter. Timing is less important than getting everything treated.



Heating Up Dry Cow Tubes

“Good practice reminder for farmers – a recent outbreak of severe mastitis following dry cow administration provided an opportunity to remind farmers that treatment tubes must not be put in buckets of water to warm before infusion. This practice seems to be widespread amongst farmers but is contrary to SAMP plan recommendations.” This note in an e-mail from NZVA recently got me thinking that my effort to come up with something new in newsletters is probably a waste of time. It's probably better that we repeat the same topical stuff every year, because despite what we may think, many people repeat the same mistakes year after year. Putting DCT tubes in warm water to ‘soften them up’ before use is a classic example. If you put DCT tubes directly into warm water before use, they swell and allow water into the tubes along with whatever is floating in that water (remember that every time you put your hand back in to grab another tube it is getting dirtier and dirtier). So, along with the dry cow antibiotic you are now at risk of placing infected material directly into the udder. These bugs tend not to be the ones that DCT was invented for either. That's a recipe for severe mastitis and/or worse. There are ways to warm your DCT tubes up, but this is not one of them. *A bit late to tell you this now, I know. But be sure that next season when Dry Cow comes around we will be reminding you yet again...*

Inductions Reminder

The Induction Code of Practice has been in place for a number of seasons now so you should all have a reasonable grasp of your responsibilities under the code if you plan to induce cows this season. 2010 is officially the last year of the current code before it is reviewed and possibly banned. Personally I would be surprised if it is but I do expect any new code to have tighter restrictions on it than the present one. We will let you know what's happening when we are told.

In the meantime, to summarise, farmer responsibilities include:

- Sufficient feed available to feed animals well
- Magnesium supplementation in place well before cows are induced
- All cows are tagged and recorded
- Trace element status is appropriate
- You have a management plan in place for these cows after induction
- Cow criteria are followed

Criteria include:

- Stage of pregnancy. No more than 12 weeks from due calving date and no closer than 6 weeks from that date
- Aged between 3 and 8 years old
- Good state of health - cows with scouring, facial eczema, lameness or mastitis cannot be induced

- Body condition score no less than 4.5, preferably around 5 and no more than 6.5.
- If you have no recorded calving dates for cows presented and they are clearly going to calve within 6 weeks or are showing signs of bagging up, we will not induce them. Please don't present cows for induction at the end of September when you have four weeks left to go; by definition they will not fit the criteria stated. Ideally you should have a clear idea which cows you will need to induce and planning to induce them should start now. Because of a longer mating period last season you may need to do inductions in batches to fit them all into the above criteria. That will require planning for feed requirements, magnesium and how you will manage them after they have calved. Also, please don't breach that special trust we have with you with regard to this practice. A few farmers seemed to take great delight in ‘catching us out’ last season by putting up cows that were older than we were told. Given that some of you have been clients for 20 years or more, we trusted you to give us the correct information. It seems that trust was abused last year by a few. Don't be surprised when this year we inspect each cow individually on those properties before we get any needles out.
- Talk to us now about when to induce your cows this season.

Rotavec Corona Vaccination Time Again

*Calf scours will be costly today, and may affect productivity in the future.
Plan for a solution that helps ensure piece of mind now, and optimal returns tomorrow.*

Outbreaks of infectious scours seem to be more prevalent these days and are an ever present threat to any dairy or beef farm raising calves. Bigger herds, more calves reared and more intensive rearing systems with calves kept in high-density housing will all be factors in this increase. Rotavirus, found on about 70% of farms, is consistently the biggest cause each season. However infections are commonly of mixed origin, often a combination of rotavirus with other pathogens including *Cryptosporidia* and coronavirus virus shed in the faeces of healthy animals, especially at times of high stress such as at calving. This makes newborn calves especially at risk. Outbreaks often occur at the same time as calving peaks.

Infected animals shed vast amounts of virus, contaminating the environment and infecting healthy calves. Scours can cause high mortality and is costly and highly stressful to all involved.

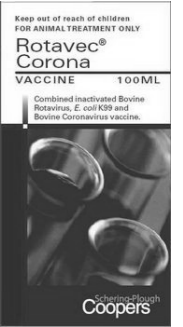
Treatment with electrolytes and labour intensive nursing is time consuming, expensive, stressful and often not successful. Even if you do save sick calves, those that recover may never perform as well as non-affected animals. Long-term consequences of neonatal diarrhoea can include calves not reaching the target liveweights that are important to ensure subsequent productivity. Failure to reach target liveweights at 15 and 22 months can result in reduced fertility and reduced 1st lactation in dairy heifers. Less than optimal productivity means reduced income. Because calf scours will affect virtually every calf rearing unit at some time – it makes economic sense to have a simple and effective risk management plan.

Vaccination is the economic solution that helps ensure piece of mind today and optimal productivity in the future. A single 2ml dose of Rotavec Corona to the pregnant cow massively boosts protective antibody levels in colostrum, which are then passed on to the newborn calf either by suckling or by being fed colostrum.

It is recommended the whole herd is vaccinated 3 weeks before planned-start-of-calving as this timing maximises the coverage of all cows calving in the first 9 weeks.

To get the best value from vaccination, good colostrum feeding is critical. Calves must get 2 – 3.5 litres of first day colostrum within 6 – 12 hours of birth while colostrum antibodies are at their highest. They then need 2.5 - 3 litres of stored or fresh colostrum daily during the first high risk 2–3 weeks, longer if possible, to provide the vital localised protection at gut level.

As with many animal health issues, vaccination is just one part of the picture and must be supported by good hygiene and sound management practices. This is especially so in intensive calf rearing facilities. Talk to us about setting up a programme that will ensure the best protection for your calves during those crucial early weeks.



Nitrate Poisoning

Nitrate poisoning is probably the most spectacular and widespread toxicity associated with grazing animals. Poisoning causes the blood haemoglobin to be converted to a form which is unable to carry oxygen to the tissues, causing death by asphyxiation. There are several plant, animal and management factors which predispose to nitrate poisoning. These include:

- Particular crops are known to accumulate nitrate more than others. These include green feed maize and oats, regrowth brassicas, annual ryegrasses and even perennial ryegrass can accumulate toxic levels.
- Nitrate poisoning is most common when plants are growing rapidly and when photosynthesis is reduced (cloudy days). These conditions are most likely to occur in the autumn or early winter.
- Newly sown grass accumulates more nitrate than older established pastures.
- Plant stems accumulate more nitrate than leaves.
- Nitrogenous fertilisers increase the levels of plant nitrate when other factors are favourable.
- Nitrate poisoning is not so much due to the actual quantity eaten as to the rate at which it is consumed. It's possible that a hungry cow can ingest a lethal dose in 1 hour. Fill cows up on “safe” feed before allowing short periods of grazing the high nitrate feed.

Sudden death without signs of a struggle is the most common finding. The effects of eating toxic crops or pasture may not be evident until up to six hours after grazing. If signs are noticed they include abdominal pain, ataxia, incoordination, muscle tremor, weakness, laboured breathing, blue/brown gums and collapse. Abortions often follow in the surviving animals.

When signs are noticed, call us immediately, move stock which are mobile off the affected pasture onto stubble and feed them hay.

If it is your intention to feed crops when weather conditions favour nitrate accumulation then nitrate levels should be checked before feeding by bringing a sample into the clinic for testing.

Nitrate levels can change quite quickly so repeated monitoring of levels may be necessary.