

## 2011 Golf Day



### Leon's Big Day Out



Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May turned out to be a bigger day than expected for our 'newbie' Leon. All was well when he got up, showered and had breakfast but he started to experience sharp stabbing pains in his lower abdomen that got worse and by the time he

got to work he was looking pale and in considerable pain. Sue took one look at him, put on her Mum's badge and called an ambulance. To cut a very long story short, at 11.30 that night Leon had surgery to remove an inflamed, infected appendix that if left a day or two longer would have burst.

He's well on the road to recovery now and back at work on light duties but he had us worried there for a while.

See John at the clinic or give him a call for all your pre-lamb requirements —



- Ewegard + B12 + Se
- Exodus LA
- Drench Capsules
- Ultravac 5 in 1



Promotion finishes 31st August 2011



### Giles' Shoulder finally packs it in

Some of you may have noticed recently that Giles isn't looking as muscular as he usually does. Sometime last year he injured his shoulder in the course of performing one of his many veterinary tasks. Actually he ripped a muscle off the bone and damaged his rotator cuff. Since then he has effectively been running on one wing and lots of Voltaren.

Even for a hulk like Giles, eventually something had to be done and by the time you read this he will already have been in for an operation to fix bits and re-attach other bits so that eventually he will be able to re-enter Mr Universe contests. The downside of this (or upside if you're Giles) is that he now has an enforced recovery period of up to 12 weeks before he can resume normal (light initially) duties. That means he won't be around this spring and because he is such an appalling patient, Linley has threatened to pack him off to the UK to recover rather than put up with him moping about the house for 3 months. Good luck for your recovery Giles; repair well and we will see you back at work sometime in October.



## JUNE 2011

Another season comes and goes and now we get set for another round of calvings, retained membranes and misplaced optimism on how Taranaki will go in the rugby (I'm not even going to mention the World Cup due to superstition - bugger I just mentioned it!)

Welcome to new clients; we hope you have a successful season at your new property. One of our vets will be calling on you in the next week or so to say hello or feel free to drop into the clinic to say hello and set up your account and RVM details.

David Lloyd has arrived and started scanning already. Congratulations to David who recently got engaged so sorry ladies, this year he's off the menu. Some of you will have noted a few articles in the Daily News regarding difficulties we had getting approval for David to come and scan this year. Don't believe everything you read in the Daily News; we did get help from our local MP's and we did get what we were after with regards approval and there's plenty of work for everyone, so no-one need worry.

Nitrate poisoning has been in the news a bit lately. It's not surprising given the weather conditions we have had - see article in this newsletter. However, either because you are all such outstanding farmers or simply due to good luck (take your pick), we haven't had any cases reported here (yet).

We also introduce our latest recruit at the front desk and give you all the gossip on who is away, who had to be rushed to hospital and show the more photogenic of you from our recent golf day. We were incredibly lucky with the weather and a great day was had by all (some more than others...). It was also great to see people dressing up; maybe this could become Eltham's version of the Wellington 7's?

Rotavirus vaccinations will start soon on many farms and there's an article on that inside as well as articles from Polly on PKE and copper.

Dry Cow therapy consults are all done and cows have been treated and dried off by now on most farms. Thanks again to the vast majority of you who went to the trouble of filling in the form ahead of time; your response and our records reveal a lot of useful information that is of help in the on-going battle against mastitis and bulk counts.

Throwing in a few obvious guesses at the counter really isn't helping you in the long run, and often it's the people who need the most help going to the least effort (perhaps that is a clue in itself?). So thanks for your co-operation and also to those of you who have got in early on induction consults and planning for this season. I'm sure there will be a couple of last minute 'Charlies' who will say they didn't know and miss out as a result but for most of you, you have heeded the messages and got in well ahead of time; thanks again for that - there's still time for those of you who haven't.

Enjoy your winter break and we will see you in the spring.

*Congratulations Mr & Mrs Bartley*



## INDUCTIONS

**A reminder that if you want to induce cows the regulations require that you meet with a vet to make an Induction Management Plan at least 60 days before induction begins. So if you have not yet made your Induction Management Plan you are running out of time to do so. Please phone the clinic to make an appointment.**

Hi, I'm **Nicola**, and I'm the new replacement for Lisa, as she is going to be a farmer's wife. I'm a local girl, daughter of Kevin and Olwyn Duthie. I enjoy my sports such as indoor and outdoor netball, basketball and volleyball. I've played for Taranaki since I was a wee one, just recently coming 3<sup>rd</sup> in national for under 21, indoor mixed netball. Last year I was studying design and now I'm happy to return to the Naki and am enjoying my job here at the vets. Look forward to meeting you all.



## Clinic & Farm Supplies

Railway Street, Eltham  
Ph. (06) 764 8196

[www.elthamvetservice.co.nz](http://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

Leon Christensen BVSc

## Office

Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS

Lisa Goldsworthy Jill Watson

Sue Morresey Frank Suter

Nicola Duthie

## PARs now RVMs

Actually this happened last year but we had already printed the forms. For reasons known only to themselves the ACVM group has changed the term "Prescription Animal Remedies" to "Restricted Veterinary Medicines". So your old PARs are now RVMs. The more observant of you would have noticed the change on your RVM Authorities, which arrived recently.

Why the change? Who knows but from now on when you think PAR you are actually talking RVMs



## BVD testing 2011

This year we will not have the free testing that we've had for the last few years. The good news is that it's only \$39<sup>1</sup> for the same test and we'd strongly recommend that you keep up the monitoring.

There are two types of test you can do on bulk milk. The **antibody test** tells you about your recent history because antibodies stay around for up to 5 years after exposure. If you had a "moderate" or lower antibody level last year, you probably only need an antibody test<sup>2</sup>. If it has increased since last year, you'll then need to arrange a PCR test which looks for virus & tells you about the current infection status of your milking cows. The **PCR test** is more expensive at \$169.50<sup>1</sup>. **LIC also have a package deal** with 2 samples a couple of weeks apart tested by both methods and an Autumn antibody test for a total \$325<sup>1</sup>.

The monitor pack is the one many of you will have signed up for already, and others may have heard about from your LIC reps. A quarter of all herds in New Zealand signed up for this pack last season. There are several advantages of the monitor pack. You don't have to arrange additional testing at short notice, a "false negative" PCR test can occur if a virus shedding cow happens to not be in the vat on the day of the sample but will usually be picked up at the next test, and suspect results can be confirmed with the second test that is already booked. If you have high or very high antibody levels this year (or no history), the monitor pack is the best option, but you can get away with a single antibody and PCR test if you individually test any cows not in the vat on the day of sampling.

Testing all replacement calves is recommended for most herds, and their status will hopefully be tagged for life in the database – if the system is up and running for this year.

Attached is a copy of the LIC form so you can fax it in yourself to **0800 329 436**. Just assign the preferred sampling date to 2 or 3 weeks before the start of mating, and the "Autumn" one for late February. Don't worry about the vet signature (not required if you sign). If you don't have a fax machine, drop the completed form off to us and we'll fax it from here. If you have a problem with LIC, feel free to contact us and we can arrange alternative testing. There's lots you can do about BVD control, much of which is fairly low cost, and we'd be happy to talk you through the options.

<sup>1</sup> Prices are set by LIC and may be subject to change.

<sup>2</sup> The antibody test is difficult to interpret in herds that vaccinate milking cows because vaccination produces antibodies.

## Nitrate poisoning

### New grass, nitrate poisoning and sudden death.

It's that time of the year again! It even made the front page of The Daily News recently so here is a refresher on Nitrate poisoning.

#### Signs of Nitrate Poisoning:

Cattle usually show signs of poisoning 4 to 8 hours after grazing toxic pasture as the nitrate needs to be metabolised into its toxic form nitrite in the rumen before toxicity occurs. We usually get calls to see affected stock around lunchtime, cattle having been put onto toxic pasture that morning. Affected animals are drunken, weak and staggy and deteriorate rapidly leading to death. They may gasp for breath and have very dirty blue coloured gums and conjunctiva. If you take a blood sample, it is distinctly chocolate coloured instead of the normal dark red. However most animals are found dead. Animals that have apparently recovered may abort - usually within a week after exposure to high nitrate feeds.

#### Reducing the risk

Management factors that can help reduce deaths due to nitrate poisoning include:

- Testing new pasture and suspect crops prior to the first grazing. Take a pasture sample in the morning and deliver it to us prior to 10am. We should be able to report the result to you within 24 hours
- Introducing cattle to suspect crops in the late morning or early afternoon. Pastures accumulate nitrate during the night and in dull weather. Sunlight reduces the accumulated nitrate.
- Making sure cattle are not hungry when you put them onto suspect pasture. Provide supplementary dry matter (hay, silage, etc) before cattle go onto the break.
- Reducing the time period cattle are grazed on suspect pasture. Allow cattle no more than 1 to 2 hours grazing on the suspect feed.
- Check cattle regularly for signs of poisoning. The toxic metabolite peaks in the blood about five hours after ingestion of nitrate.

Contact us immediately if any signs are noticed. Cows die rapidly from nitrate poisoning and require intravenous treatment with an antidote A.S.A.P.



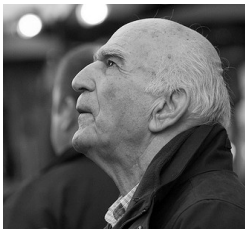
## Three old men

Three old men are talking about their aches, pains and bodily dysfunctions.

One 75-year-old man says: "I have this problem. I wake up every morning at 7 a.m. and it takes me 20 minutes to pee."

An 80-year-old man says: "My case is worse. I get up at 8 a.m. and I sit there and grunt and groan for half an hour before I finally have a bowel movement."

The 90-year-old man says: "Not me. At 7 a.m. I pee like a horse and at 8 a.m. I crap like a cow." "So what's your problem?" asked the others. "I don't wake up until 9:00."



## PKE and Springers

Many of you already know that PKE is not a suitable feed for springing cows. It has a high level of phosphorus which can interfere with calcium metabolism and increase the risk of milk fever at calving. For this reason PKE should not be fed in the last 4 weeks before calving.

If you are feeding PKE *after* calving you should be aware that it has a low calcium content and not much magnesium.



The calcium content of PKE is 0.21 – 0.34 % DM but milking cows need between 0.6 % and 0.8 %, depending on their production.

The magnesium content can be too low for high yielding cows too. Milkers need 0.16 – 0.28% DM, depending on production, and PKE is 0.16 – 0.33%. If you drench magnesium this probably doesn't matter because your cows are getting their magnesium anyway but if you are dusting on pasture then cows will be replacing relatively high magnesium pasture with relatively low magnesium PKE.

When PKE is fed in troughs in the paddock some cows eat more than others. It is these 'PKE pigs' which are likely to be affected most.

You may have been feeding PKE in early lactation for years without seeing lots of downer cows but going down is not the beginning of milk fever. Long before a cow's muscles collapse completely they have been working badly. A cow walking around can still have blood calcium levels which are below normal. The muscles of the gut and uterus are affected before the muscles of the skeleton. Poor gut function means poor digestion and poor appetite. Slack uterine muscles mean cows don't clean up and cycle as quickly as they should after calving. Modern cows can be compared to V12 engines: to work at their best they need high octane fuel. If the fuel you give them is barely good enough then the performance you get will be barely good enough.

So if you are feeding PKE to fresh calved or high yielding cows it is a good idea to mix in some causmag and lime flour.

Polly

## Copper poisoning?



Soils on the Taranaki ring plain tend to have adequate copper levels but are high in iron, sulphur and molybdenum and these elements interfere with absorption of the copper from the gut. In the 'Ngaere swamp' type soils levels are so high they can cause frank copper deficiency. To the east of the ring plain the 'papa' soils are naturally low in copper. Back in the old days before any of us had heard of palm kernel, liver samples from cull dairy cows sent to the works in autumn regularly had low copper levels. These days we still see low and marginal liver copper levels from farms which don't feed palm kernel and farms with papa type soils but it is a different story on farms where PKE has been fed. PKE is a good source of copper, it has about 20mg copper per kg DM, double the dietary requirement for cattle. Cows store copper in their livers and we are seeing some very high levels coming through this year. Many of you routinely feed mineral mixes to your milking cows and most of them contain copper. If you feed PKE at 2kg/cow/day for more than 100 days you may not need any copper supplementation at all. If you feed more PKE than this AND feed additional copper you may be in danger of giving your cows copper poisoning. Livers damaged by facial eczema are less able to process and store copper.

Please feel free to discuss copper on your farm with one of our vets.

Polly

## Pour-on not working? I'm not surprised

Pour-on drenches should be the best thing that ever happened to farming. Suddenly the days of wrestling stropky calves and yearlings was replaced by a leisurely application of a similar product along the animal's back. However pour-on drenches seem to have been getting a bit of bad press in recent years with talk of resistance and sometimes poor results. Well, having witnessed some of you applying those expensive products, frankly I'm not surprised.

While vaccinating calves this autumn I have watched a few of you 'drench' your calves with a pour-on. In more than a few cases I can see why those drenches may not be working as well for you as you would hope.

**First; the gun.** How many of you ever service your drench guns or check they are actually working before you take them to the yards?

**Second; the weight.** How many of you weigh or use a weigh band to estimate correct weight of your stock and then drench to the heaviest animal?

**Thirdly; your aim.** On one farm I swear that the rails and walls of the race were drenched more effectively than the calves. Drench was fired across the bows of calves, splattered onto their rumps as they ran out the exit gate or poured down a shoulder where it proceeded to drip off or rub onto a post rail. I think you will find in every case it is recommended that you apply a strip of drench down the middle of the back between the shoulders and the rump, on top, where it can't run off before it is absorbed.

Pour-ons work well but only if you make sure you have working equipment, give the correct dose as recommended and that you apply it correctly to the animal you are trying to drench.

Otherwise, why go to the trouble of paying more for an expensive form of anthelmintics? You may as well get back in there and wrestle the cheaper oral alternative down their throats.

