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I need to start with the magnificent ITM Cup win by Taranaki. Outstanding! Anything disparaging or critical I've ever said or written about the team I take back & hereby nominate Leo Crowley as the next All Blacks coach. And, because I'm superstitious, having not been to a single game this season I decided going to a semi or final would bring bad luck so stayed away and it worked. With regard to that, if Mark Muller even thinks about going to next year's World Cup I'm putting his fees up because we all know what happened last time Mark!

On a more serious note, since spring we've dealt with 5 or 6 outbreaks of Theileria in local herds. On most farms it was just one or two cows but on at least 2 it has affected a significant number of cows resulting in lost production, a few deaths & plenty of stress for farmers & vets alike.

With young stock going away grazing very soon we have tried to come up with a few strategies for reducing risk of infection while away. It's fair to say that none of them are particularly helpful & from talking to vets up north who have dealt with this

disease 2 or 3 years longer than anyone else, very little you do will prevent spread of the disease if it's there.

To quote a vet from the Bay of Islands "identifying anaemic animals in a mob is not easy, treating them can be challenging and preventing the disease is beyond me at this stage". Not very encouraging words.

Anyway Leon has gone through the literature, spoken to some vets up north & looked at our experience this spring & written an article for this newsletter. If nothing else it will show how difficult it is to predict an infection & to prevent it. Advice is changing all the time & advice given 2 or 3 months ago could already be out of date as we learn more.

You may have noticed our Trading Manager, John, has been wandering around in a sling recently. Just to be clear; this is not a case of workplace bullying & abuse - he actually fell from his bike in a road race & broke his collarbone when apparently someone tried to pass him on the inside & jostling ensued. The word is that once he's back on his bike there will be swift & severe retribution meted out to the offending cyclist so if I were that guy I would leave the district. John should be back operating with both wings in a few more weeks & we wish him a speedy recovery.

That's about it for the year; it's been a challenge in many ways & promises to be even more of a challenge over the next year or so with all the global uncertainty. Hang in there & remember you're in it for the long term & long term prospects for dairy remain good. Keep doing what you do well & wait for the good times to return; if you've been in this industry long enough you'll know that these cycles occur on a pretty predictable basis so good times are never that far away.

If you're farming sheep or beef then make the most of the good prices now because you also know that nothing stays the

same length time in industry. We ward to you at Xmas barbe-



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Join us at the clinic for an end of year celebration

Thursday 18th December late afternoon/evening




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When is the best time to Pregnancy Test?



Your Fertility Focus Report (FFR) on Minda is a great place to find answers to questions like ‘**What went right with mating last year?**’ or ‘**What went wrong with mating last year?**’ or ‘**Why are there so many empties?**’ It also allows you to compare your performance to previous years and to other herds. However, not all FFR’s are created equal!

An *intermediate* FFR gives information about the calving pattern and 3 week submission rate of your cows and heifers, their non return rate, their 6 week incalf rate and their not incalf rate. It also gives an estimate of your heat

detection skills.

A *detailed* FFR has all this and it also has information about *when* your cows conceived. In a Minda FFR it is shown as the ‘bouncing balls’; on Mindaweb it is a graph - the ‘cumulative % of herd in calf by week of mating’ graph. This information is a huge help because if things went wrong, it allows you to see *when* they went wrong and that helps you to pin point *why* they went wrong. Was it during the first 3 weeks of AB, or perhaps after you took all those paddocks out for silage, or was it during the bull mating period, etc, etc?

In order to get a *detailed* FFR, at least 80% of the herd must be pregnancy tested before PSM + 17 weeks. For most of you that’s going to be 5-8 weeks after you take the bull out. If you mated for more than 12 weeks there may be some late mated cows whose pregnancies cannot be confirmed at 17 weeks after PSM but the inconvenience of coming back to recheck those few cows is well worth it for the better information you get from a *detailed* FFR.

If you are already on Mindapro, you can get Mindaweb for no extra charge. I thoroughly recommend it! On Mindaweb the ‘cumulative % of herd in calf by week of mating’ graph which replaces the ‘bouncing balls’ on Minda can be used to give much more detailed information. Many of you already use Minda to generate graphic reports to compare *submission* rates for different age groups or calving dates. Mindaweb’s ‘cumulative % of herd in calf by week of mating’ graph allows you to compare *conception* rates for different age groups and for different calving dates.

How to save money AND the environment

Many farmers use footbaths to combat lameness in their cows. Copper sulphate and formalin are the most commonly used products because they are effective against the new disease Digital Dermatitis as well as Footrot and other conditions. Formalin is potentially carcinogenic, extremely irritant and increasingly expensive. Copper sulphate is nicer to use but more expensive than formalin and when used long term accumulates in the environment as a heavy metal pollutant.



These issues mean that footbathing is often done less frequently than it should be and more cows go through the footbath than should.

A good rule of thumb is that the footbath should contain 1 litre of solution per cow. So a 300 cow herd needs a 300 litre footbath, or a 150 litre footbath which is emptied and refilled after half the herd have gone through.

The normally recommended concentration of copper sulphate is 5% (5g per 100ml water). Less than this is less effective. A 300 litre bath needs 15kg of copper sulphate to make a 5% solution and that costs \$89.40. (\$149 per 25kg) Ouch!

That cost can be reduced by acidifying the water in the footbath. At pH 7 (neutral) only 15% of the copper sulphate is in its active, ionised form but at pH 5 more than 60% is ionised. Acetic acid (vinegar) and sodium bisulphate (a commonly used hot tub chemical) have been used to acidify footbath solutions on farm. The aim is to produce a solution of pH 4, low enough to optimise the effectiveness of the copper **but not low enough to be irritant to skin and teats.**

The first time you do this you will need a pH meter but once the amount required has been established, the same amount can be added each time the footbath is used. This is best done in stages with the footbath being stirred and the pH measured after each addition. Using vinegar (pH 2.4) add 50ml at each stage, using sodium bisulphate add 50g at each stage.

At pH 4 a 2.5% copper sulphate solution provides as much control as an unacidified 5% solution and the cost of copper sulphate for a 300L footbath comes down from \$89.40 to \$44.70.

Theileria Management for Stock off Farm

Most of you will be aware of Theileria and the risk it poses to your stock and to your productivity. There was an article in the last newsletter about what Theileria is and how to recognise it. We have not seen the same spread of clinical cases as they have in Northland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty but we have not been immune to it. Several local farms have lost cows and also production due to the blood parasite affecting cows at calving.

The majority of the cases in Taranaki have started when stock were exposed to infected ticks while away grazing.

So I want to touch on farm management policies for stock transport on and off farm, including heifers away grazing.



It is important to remember that the cattle tick is the vector required to spread Theileria between cows; there is no direct spread of the parasite from cow to cow without ticks so prevention

is by controlling the ticks.

There are several products on the market which can be used to kill ticks that come into contact with stock including pour-ons like Flumethrin or Bayticol and pyrethrin ear tags. It was first thought that if the pour-on was done every month (or the ear tags used) the ticks would be killed before infecting cows. Vets in Northland, where the tick numbers and therefore cases of Theileria, are highest, advise this is not the case. Even with rigid prevention in place the chance of your stock being exposed to the parasite is not eliminated if there is a big infected tick population in the area.

So what do you do? The answer is to find grazing where there are no ticks or Theileria! A lot easier said than done though so here are a few points to consider:

- Have a frank and open discussion with your grazier about his own and his other clients' Theileria status and if he has seen ticks on animals on his property.
- Refer to the DairyNZ website to establish the risk of Theileria in the area they are travelling to. We know from Northland right down to South Waikato is high risk and so is Patea-Waverley down to Wanganui.
- The higher the risk for ticks and Theileria the more attention needs to be paid to your stock to make sure they don't come under any unnecessary stress which would increase the chance of them becoming sick with the disease. This would require more attention from you and your grazier to monitor for ticks and/or more frequent use of tickicides.
- Make sure any stock returning to the farm are treated with Flumethrin/Bayticol Pour-on a week prior to returning home or when they arrive home and then isolated from the herd for a week to ensure all ticks have been killed prior to reintroduction.
- Graziers should also insist that the stock they receive are treated with a tickicide before going on the truck to reduce the chance of bringing an infected tick onto their farm, especially if they are grazing stock from more than one property.
- Keep good records of stock grazed off farm so these animals can be kept an eye on once they return. It can take up to 8 weeks after exposure for Theileria to cause a problem, often once the first bit of pressure comes on, eg. calving!
- Treat bulls before they go out with heifers and also the ones coming to the home farm with a tickicide.
- The best weapon against Theileria and its spread is good communication with your grazier and gathering

TEST FOR YOUNG BOY

Like many young men, the boy doesn't know what he wants to do, nor does he seem too concerned. One day, while the boy is at school, his father, a preacher, decides to try an experiment and places on his desk four objects - a Bible, a dollar, a bottle of Jack Daniels and a Playboy magazine.

"If he picks up the Bible, he's going to be a preacher like me and if the dollar, he's going to be a businessman.

But if he picks up the bottle, he's going to be a drunkard and, worst of all, if he picks up that magazine he's going to be a skirt-chasing bum." The old man waits. The boy spots the objects on the table. He picks up the Bible and places it under his arm. He picks up the dollar and drops it into his pocket. Then he uncorks the bottle and takes a big drink while he admires Miss February.

NAG NAG NAG

An attorney arrived home late, after a very tough day trying to get a stay of execution. His last minute plea for clemency to the governor had failed and he was feeling worn out and depressed. As soon as he walked through the door at home, his wife started on him - 'What time of night to be getting home is this?

Where have you been? Dinner is cold and I'm not reheating it'. And on and on and on.

Too shattered to play his usual role in this familiar ritual he poured himself a shot of whiskey and headed off for a long hot soak in the bathtub pursued by the predictable sarcastic remarks as he dragged himself up the stairs.

While he was in the bath the phone rang. The wife answered and was told that her husband's client, James Wright, had been granted a stay of execution after all.

Wright would not be hanged tonight.

Finally realizing what a terrible day he must have had, she decided to go upstairs and give him the good news.

As she opened the bathroom door, she was greeted by the sight of her husband, bent over naked, drying his legs and feet.

'They're not hanging Wright tonight,' she said.

He whirled around and screamed, 'FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

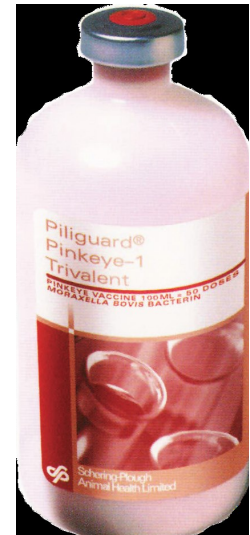
PINKEYE - REDUCE THE SUFFERING AND PRODUCTION LOSSES

An outbreak of pinkeye can be very frustrating, stressful and costly. It's most commonly seen in weaner calves, but can occur in dairy herds, bulls, beef cows and even in calf pens. The disease is very painful, and affected animals can be temporarily or sometimes permanently blinded, with reduced weight gains and milk production often the result.

In the dry, dusty and windy conditions we often experience in spring and summer, pinkeye can spread rapidly. Some herds can be severely affected.

Controlling pinkeye can be virtually impossible once an outbreak starts, so prevention by vaccination is often used in high risk situations. A single shot of Piliguard® 3-6 weeks before the pinkeye season starts will reduce the number and severity of cases, minimising suffering and production losses.

Talk to our vets about Piliguard if you have a history of pinkeye on your property, or if you are concerned about the risk of it being introduced into your herd.



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Two engineering students were biking across a university campus when one said, "Where did you get such a great bike?"

The second engineer replied, "Well, I was walking along yesterday, minding my own business, when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike, threw it to the ground, took off all her clothes and said, "Take what you want."

The first engineer nodded approvingly and said, "Good choice."

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An elderly couple had just learned how to send text messages on their cell phones.

The wife was a romantic type and the husband was more of a no-nonsense guy.

One afternoon the wife went out to meet a friend for coffee. She decided to send her husband a romantic text message and wrote:

If you are sleeping, send me your dreams. If you are laughing, send me your smile. If you are eating, send me a bite. If you are drinking, send me a sip. If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you."