

## MORE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER MULTIMIN

We've seen the benefits of Multimin given to new born calves.

We've also heard how a shot of Multimin given 2-4 weeks before calving can reduce clinical and sub-clinical mastitis in the first month after calving (trial involving 1,700 cows across 4 herds). Do you want to hear more? Further research of this product in New Zealand conditions has revealed that another shot of Multimin given at or around the time of weaning continued to reduce rates of disease and death in calves by up to 50% (971 calves across 4 herds)

And we're also learning that in a New Zealand field trial (2,168 cows across 6 herds), a 5ml shot of Multimin given to heifers and cows (dairy & beef) approximately 4 weeks prior to mating lowered the empty rate by 3.3%, halved pregnancy losses in the treated group and resulted in cows conceiving on average 3.4 days earlier than untreated cows. In these studies all cows had adequate trace element status & the farms involved had long standing trace element supplementation programs in place.

This demonstrates the benefits of targeted "top-up" injections of Multimin in healthy animals during times of stress and high demand periods where the extra needs may not be met by normal supplementation.

The dose rate is 1ml/50kg in young cattle, 1ml/75kg in yearlings and 1ml/100kg in adult cattle.

**Injection Site - Latest label advice from the maker is subcut (under skin) only. Not in the muscle as previously. Note - Prolaject B12 and B12+Se are under the skin only as well.**



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## TREATING YOUR CALVES FOR WORMS THIS SEASON

It's getting to that time when you empty the calf pens, wean them, and turn them out onto pasture. Then you start thinking about worms.

Before doing what you've always done, take a moment to make sure what you've always done is still the correct thing.

Here are some basic rules that all farmers should go by:

- **Use combination drenches.**

We used to say rotate drenches, but now we say use combinations as research has shown this is best for production and preventing resistance. You should always use combination products (double or triple) in cattle under 15 months of age. The only exception to this is very young calves where safety margins may be an issue due to their size. That is why we still offer Dectomax injection in calves before Xmas because it has a very wide safety margin. After Xmas when all your calves should be comfortably over 120kg you should use combinations.

- **Give the drench properly.**

Dose accurately for weight, take your time and do it right. Pour-on, injectable and oral drenches can all be given poorly so make sure you do it correctly.

- **Take care with young calves.**

Don't mix drench in with the milk. It can be fatal. A few seasons ago we had a tragic case of mass poisoning as a result of this, so it does happen. We know that some of you still subscribe to this method as an easy way to drench calves as they are transitioned onto grass. Believe us - you are playing Russian Roulette & eventually you will kill calves.

Avoid products containing abamectin in calves under 120kg.

- **Take care with yourself.**

Choose a drenching method that works for you and doesn't unnecessarily put you at risk of injury.

There has been a lot of research published in recent years that has changed the advice given around drenching.

Unfortunately, that can make it confusing for the farmer who has been told one thing, only now to be told another. If you are in any doubt, talk to us to discuss your particular requirements.

Dan & John have all the info you need to make the right choice.

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

This year's recipient of the Michael Higham Memorial Scholarship is Saskia Johns from Piopio.

The award is given every year to a 4<sup>th</sup> year vet student for the final two years of study.

Saskia saw practice with us in August & we hope to see her back next year.



## EXECUTIVE FOR 2023/24

Your executive remains the same following this year's AGM in July. Board members are:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Phil Muir
<u>Deputy Chairman:</u>	Simon O'Sullivan
<u>Drystock representative:</u>	Jo Bielski
Gordon Glentworth	Daryl Johnson
Shawn Matthews	Jeanette Rowlands

## SEPTEMBER 2023

I'm writing this a few days after our first up loss to France and I'm trying desperately to find some positives from the match. So far all I have come up with was that Beauty's hair looked nice and that the national anthems sung by the choirs were terrific. And perhaps if I were Razor, I would be quietly thanking my lucky stars that I won't be taking over a world champion team from the out-going coach. So, as you can see, I'm struggling. Although I did at least pick France to win this game in the office sweepstake (but of course I got the margin wrong).

Maybe by the time you read this things will have improved but realistically I can't see this team getting much further than the quarterfinals. Hopefully my ability to predict the winner will match my ability to predict bad eczema seasons over the years. In other words, woeful. Things look a little more hopeful with the Black Caps though as we've got Kane and Boult back and we have a local lad, William Young in the squad so go the Black Caps!

With the bulk of calvings now out the way, more sunny days on the horizon & calves outside getting to grips with eating grass, our attention starts to turn towards mating, which is just around the corner. Unsurprisingly this newsletter is largely devoted to putting back in the calves that we've just pulled out of your cows. Remember that even in a difficult year like this one, with a lower-than-expected payout, decisions you make now will impact your profitability next season when, hopefully, the payout is back where it should be. You may be able to tighten your belt on lots of farm spending, but taking no action or even delaying intervention in your non-cycling cows will impact your calving spread next season, which in turn pushes out your milk curve, which in turn affects your income and profitability. At the end of the day your job is all about getting milk into the vat and days in milk. So, think carefully before deciding to do nothing or waiting until the second round before intervening because that will have long-term ramifications on future income. Hopefully there will be enough in this newsletter to convince you to keep the faith & intervene early.

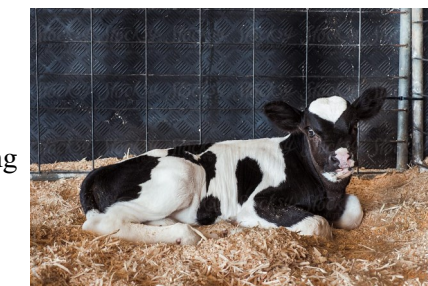
Finally, depending on when our Xmas newsletter comes out, this will probably be the last time you have to put up with my nonsense in these newsletters. I can hear some of you crying "hallelujah!" as I write. I'll have some input into the Xmas edition but by then our new glorious leader, Leon, will have taken the helm & it will be his job to come up with something interesting to put on the front page. I wish him the best of luck. I'll write some long-winded, emotional farewell instead. There will be no big public farewell function. Instead, Joan & I will be having a private, combined retirement do with past & present colleagues, board members & family. We will have a lunchtime barbeque like we did for Polly a week or so before we hand in our keys so we'll let you know & hope to see a few of you there so we can say goodbye in person & thank you for your support, trust & friendship over the last 35-odd years.

## VACCINATION REMINDER

We are making a few changes to our lepto vaccination programme this year, the most significant of which is we will **NOT BE HANDING OUT LEPTO VACCINE TO FARMERS TO VACCINATE THEIR OWN ANIMALS.**

We are also bringing lepto vaccination forward in calves, recommending vaccinating early (from 4 weeks of age) to prevent calves potentially contracting lepto and shedding it in urine for life.

This year we are offering **half price visit fees when calves are vaccinated as part of a vaccination run.** Ring Helen to book in your calves for their lepto shots.



*What happens when you get promoted as a senior director at Old MacDonald's Farm? You are the new CIEIO.*

*What do you call it when you move the modem to the barn due to poor network on the farm? Now you have stable Wi-Fi.*

## JOHNE'S DISEASE.

Johne's disease (JD) is a common problem in cattle in Taranaki. Johnes is caused by the bacteria mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis invading the cells lining the small intestine. There is no cure, no vaccine in NZ and it is always fatal. Clinical Johnes disease is characterised by ill-thrift, progressive weight loss and profuse diarrhoea. The major source of infection in a herd is infected animals shedding bacteria in their faeces. Calves are most susceptible to infection and most at risk under 6 months of age, although older stock can also become infected. If a clinical case of Johnes disease occurs it is very likely that other animals in the herd will be infected even though they may appear healthy.

In Johnes disease milk yield is affected before fertility or body condition. Milk production is reduced by about 25% in the lactation before the cow becomes clinical so for each sick cow there are probably several more infected cows which have reduced milk yield but are not yet scouring. JD isn't going away, as farming intensifies it is likely to increase. Higher stocking rates, effluent discharge on to land instead of into waterways and housing cows all make it easier for JD to spread.

Johne's disease is not a problem for every herd but don't be too quick to decide it is not a problem for yours. At Eltham Vets we look after about 226 herds. Last season 45 herds found infected cows through the milk test. Another 22 herds found infected cows through blood testing. That's 67 herds so **30% of our herds had a positive Johnes Disease test in just one year.**

Testing and culling infected cows is one way to decrease JD in your herd. LIC offer a Johnes Disease milk test which is done on samples taken at a routine herd test. The cost is \$5.99 ex gst per cow. Blood testing will always have its place for individual skinny scouring cows, but the milk test offers you an opportunity to detect and cull infected cows while they are still in good enough condition to go to the works. Johnes disease affected cows pass on the infection in their diarrhoea so removing cows from the herd before they start scouring removes the biggest source of infection for the next generation of calves. Johnes milk testing and culling is the best tool we have to greatly reduce spread of Johnes disease and the losses associated with clinical Johnes disease.

If you have any questions please contact Teresa at the clinic to discuss.

## MATING IS ON THE WAY. THINGS TO THINK ABOUT.

This is a crucial month with mating coming up in October. There are a few things you need to get in place well in advance of a successful mating season. Body condition is a no-brainer. If your cows have lost a lot of condition since calving (or started in lower condition than you would have liked) then you've got work to do to try & have them in a good state by the time mating begins. Aside from that, what else should you be sorting out this month?

Well, **metrichecking** is probably the first thing. If you're looking for "dirty cows" you need to identify them & have them treated well before mating begins. There's no point leaving your metrichecking until Cidr time; they should have been checked and treated ideally at least 4 weeks before mating begins. If you're trying to treat dirty cows when you're putting cidrs in your non-cyclers, those cows are already 2 to 3 cycles away from conceiving. So get it done this month. See Ryan's article in this edition giving more detail.

What about **pre-mating bloods**? If you already have a trace element supplementation program in place, then this probably isn't as important. But if you don't, now is the time to check everything is okay & address any deficiencies if it's not. Book a blood test from 10 representative cows this month.

Do you have **bulls** coming? Have they been tested and vaccinated for BVD? What about your heifers? Do they need a BVD booster prior to mating? And if so, are they out grazing somewhere?

And of course, **tail-paint**. Or whatever heat indicator you use. That should be in place a good 4 weeks prior to mating so you can identify any non-cyclers in the lead-in to mating.

And speaking of non-cyclers; don't forget that you get the best return on investment if you treat your non-cyclers 7-10 days before your planned start of mating. Waiting a week into mating reduces your return to a fraction of what it was a week before (& if you're a 50/50 sharemilker you're breaking even at best a week into mating). If you wait until the end of the first round, you're breaking even at best if you are the farm owner. If you're 50/50 you're now losing money on your investment. It's all about days in milk. You've heard all this before I know, but it's always worth repeating.

If you're worried about treating too many cows then just concentrate on your 2,3 & 4-year-olds.

Treat them early and don't worry about the older girls; they normally sort themselves out over the first few weeks.

And a reminder that we no longer examine non-cycling cows by palpating their

ovaries. That is a waste of everyone's time and money. Any vet who honestly thinks he or she can predict what a cow will do in the next week or so by palpating ovaries is kidding him or herself. Which is why you won't find a single vet in any Taranaki practice that still offers this service. Put them up early, treat them early and get your return on investment the following year through more days in milk.

That's where the value is and why, especially in tough times, this is one investment you shouldn't discard in the mistaken belief that by doing so you're saving money.



## TREATING COCCIDIA BEFORE IT CAUSES LASTING PROBLEMS.

As every farmer and calf-rearer knows, raising replacements can be a challenge.

Diarrhoea is one of the costliest problems, so sorting out the cause is key to calf welfare and profitability.

One of the most common but easily treatable causes of diarrhoea is coccidiosis. The parasite is a major problem for young calves and can spread quickly through a mob with devastating short and long-term effects.

Coccidiosis can be clinical, showing some or all of the following symptoms:

- Dark green to blackish diarrhoea
- Presence of blood and threads of fibre in stool
- Abdominal pain and straining
- Fever and lack of appetite

However not all calves will show symptoms of infection. A subclinical case can be invisible, but the damage is still being done. Plus the continued shedding of coccidia 'eggs' (oocysts) and escalating environmental contamination may then lead to clinical coccidiosis in the mob.

It's important to remember that when clinical signs are seen, serious damage to the calf's gut has already occurred, reducing her ability to absorb feed and liquids, and opening a way for other bugs to cause infection.

Even when the disease is treated, the gut does not fully recover for several weeks, and appetite may be suppressed.

Longer term effects include poorer milk production at first lactation.

The good news is that studies have shown that early, preventative treatment with Baycox®C not only stops coccidia, it can result in earlier first service and higher conception rates. In other words, treating calves well before they display clinical symptoms is vital to your farm's prosperity.

Nearly all calves have been exposed to coccidia by the time they get to 4 or 5 weeks old. So it makes sense that all calves between 4-10 weeks of age should have the opportunity to be protected against coccidia before it causes them trouble.

The good news is that you have 3 options now. Either **Baycox®C** or **Catalyst Mini dose** for young calves still in the shed (it only treats coccidia) or in the face of an early outbreak.

For older calves that are now outside most of the time you can use **Turbo Initial**, which as well as treating them for coccidia, also treats them for worms. So it makes an ideal first or initial drench around the time of weaning.

To discuss your options give Daniel or John a call.



## IT'S TIME TO METRICHECK.

Studies show that around 17% of cows in New Zealand herds will have endometritis (be a "dirty" cow). Some herds will be higher than this. In these cows the bacteria, pus, and inflammation associated with the infection can have a major impact on their reproductive performance come mating time. Cows with endometritis will take longer to cycle, longer to conceive and ultimately will have a higher empty rate.

How do you tell which cows are dirty and how many of them there are in your herd? You metricheck.

**Metrichecking** can be approached in a few different ways.

- 1) Metricheck at-risk cows (assisted calving's, twins, retained fetal membranes, skinny cows, sick cows, down cows) around a month prior mating. While this is better than not metrichecking at all it risks missing 30% of the total number of dirty cows in the herd.
- 2) Metricheck the whole herd around a month before mating starts.
- 3) Do multiple metrichecks beginning around three weeks after the first cow calves and then repeating them around every three weeks so that the herd is checked around three times (referred to as batch metrichecking).

A New Zealand study showed that cows that were metricheck positive (had pus in the cup when metrichecked), at a single whole herd check a month before the planned start of mating, had a 15-20% lower six week in calf rate than the cows in the same herd who were metricheck negative. That has a big impact on fertility!

Another large NZ study involving 15,500 cows on 29 dairy farms compared doing one whole herd check with the batched metricheck approach, as above. This study found that the metricheck positive cows identified and treated in the batched approach had a 10% higher six week in calf rate and a 3% higher twelve week in calf rate (or a 3% lower empty rate) than the cows identified and treated using the one whole herd metricheck approach! This study showed that many cows that may appear to have "cleaned up" on their own were actually still infected, their cervixes had just closed.

So, from New Zealand research, it is clear that:

- dirty cows left untreated have significantly lower fertility and will impact your herd's overall in-calf rates.
- herd metrichecking is more effective than trying to pick at-risk cows to check and treat.
- doing one whole herd metricheck a month before mating is more effective than either no check or checking at risk cows but is less effective than batch metrichecking.

**Can you afford to leave your dirty cows untreated this mating season? You could gain a lot of extra days in milk and reduce cow wastage simply by metrichecking!**

Call the clinic to organise your metrichecking and/or your metricuring.