



Our Day at Rhubarb Cafe

A couple of weeks ago an LPG tanker fell over right outside the clinic. You may have seen the photos in the paper. We first knew something was up when a fireman ran into the clinic & told us to all get out immediately due to the risk of explosion (we later learned, if it had gone up most of Eltham would have gone with it). Most vets were out on farm but all of us still inside beat a hasty retreat into town and eventually set up camp at the Rhubarb cafe on High St, where we co-ordinated the day using mobile phones, hand held RT's and copious cups of coffee & a delicious lunch. After 4½ hours we were let back into the clinic and normal service was resumed. It was timely because we are in the process of reviewing our Health & Safety procedures and now in the chapter on what to do in an emergency we are simply going to put "down tools and bugger off to Rhubarb Cafe for the day".



Chris Craig won a portable stainless steel Kiwi Sizzler barbeque after purchasing Exodus LA (pre-lamb injection)



Cam & Sarah Collier and **Tim & Sue Hardwick-Smith** each won a Vetmarker Docking Chute after purchasing Nilvax pre-lamb injection. *Only 8 won nationwide - John was chuffed to have two winners from this practice*

Promotion Extended
EPRINEX 3 + 1 FREE
3 x 5 litre + 1 x 5 litre FREE
(20 litres @ 15 litre price)
NO WITHHOLDINGS
Promotion ends 30 September



September 2012 When a local boy gets picked in the All Blacks we all are thrilled & feel a sense of provincial pride. While we were all thrilled for Beauden Barrett when he made the All Blacks, when you heard that Dan Carter was out injured before the Hawkes Bay game & then again before the Canterbury defence, did you give a little groan and think "but the shield..."? I did. Luckily these Naki boys are made of stern stuff & now we just have to get through Manawatu & Waikato and then we can keep the shield for another summer.

I just received a newsletter e-mail from Fonterra giving updates to vets on relevant matters relating to our profession. Included was talk on inductions (still no word as to whether we can continue next season), mastitis, the importance of keeping records of drug use, animals treated & disposing of expired drugs. It also mentioned welfare and reinforced the law about tail docking:

"Tail docking: The Animal Welfare (Painful Husbandry Procedures) Code of Welfare 2005 prohibits the docking of tails, apart from the switch. The switch includes the last 2 or 3 vertebrae and associated hair. Fonterra is committed to ensuring all suppliers are tail docking correctly. Please reinforce the importance of correct tail docking to your clients."

Two weeks ago I was alerted to a case where a now-departed farm manager decided he would dock about 110 cows "the old fashioned way" with rubber rings just below the level of the vulva. The owners discovered this when they milked one weekend. They were able to remove some rubber rings but the majority cannot be reversed and will, or already have, lost their tails. While you may have your own opinion as to whether tail docking is cruel, etc, as of 2005 it became an offence to dock tails. After reporting this to me the owner then rung the animal welfare hotline to report it and was told "it's not really very high on our list of priorities." Really? An illegal event has occurred and been reported on the hotline as we are advised to do and they aren't interested? What's the point then? If they aren't going to do anything about it hasn't MAF just given tacit approval to anyone who disagrees with this law to go ahead and dock anyway because they won't prosecute or even investigate? Having been involved with three welfare cases now where the field officers do their best on limited resources and even less support from above nothing surprises me anymore. Looks like a classic case of lip service to me ...

Over spring yet? I imagine if you've been battling with calf scours this season you're definitely over it. You can take some comfort in the knowledge that you're not alone. As a result of things we've seen this spring we've put a few reminders in this newsletter because it seems to us that many of you start with good intentions but fall into bad habits & take shortcuts when dealing with scours. That's not surprising because we all start the spring with enthusiasm and get that knocked out of us by weather, lack of sleep and things going wrong (like calf scours). While it's tempting to go looking for that "silver bullet" that you can simply add to the milk, frankly it doesn't exist and when it comes to treating scours irrespective of the cause the fundamental treatment is fluid replacement. Before you set yourself up for calf rearing next season take a long critical look at both your methods and your set up. Five years ago you may have reared the same number of calves over the spring but I bet you didn't get most of them in your sheds by the end of the 1st month. Remember that early calves end up in the sheds a lot longer than late calves simply due to the weather so it's natural to expect levels of contamination will build quicker as a result. For many of you I think it's probably time to add another shed to the system and overhaul your calf rearing program in recognition of the changes in calving spread in the last 5 years.

Mating Starts in Just over a Month.
Tail Painting starts Now!!!

Experienced relief milker requiring work.
0278267457 Nicole Watson or Jill at the clinic.

Scholarship Winner Found for 2012

Eltham Vets provide scholarships to 4th & 5th year vet students. The scholarship is granted for the last 2 years of study. The winner is then expected to see practice with us over their last 2 years & hopefully end up working here if things work out. Previous winners Rachel Miller & our current new boy Leon Christensen both started their careers at Eltham Vets. This year's winner is Rachel Oliver from the Thames/Coromandel area. Here she is receiving her award from CEO, Al McDougall



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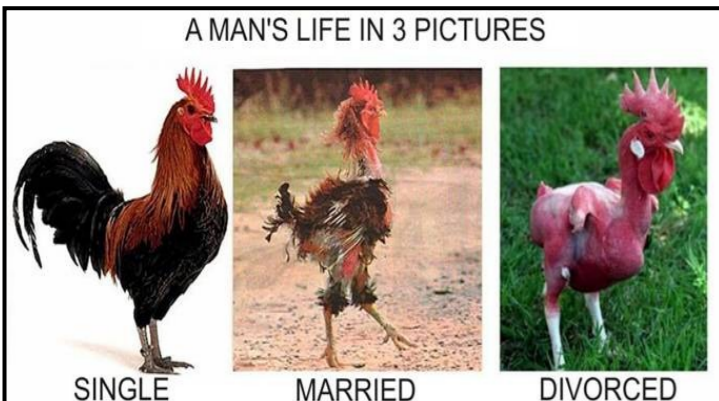
Veterinarians

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
 Jill Watson Sue Morresey
 Nicola Duthie Frank Suter

Buy selected
Merial Ancare
 products and
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Men's or Ladies Tech Top





CALF SCOUR REMINDERS

I can't help but notice a few of you take big shortcuts when it comes to dealing with scouring calves. While it's tempting to think that addition of a tablet, powder or injection will sort your problem there are a few basics that really should be non-negotiable when dealing with calf scours and calf rearing in general:

- **Isolate scouring calves from healthy ones**

I note that an article in the paper recently suggested taking infected calves out of pens causes problems with socialisation later on. Personally I would rather you isolated infected calves whenever possible not only to make individual care & treatment easier for the poor person who has to nurse them but also to lessen the chance of spread to more calves. In a big pen this becomes even more important. I'm sure they will all get to know each other later on.

- Don't add new born calves to an infected mob (it happens).
- Treat scouring calves with electrolytes to replace lost fluids & salts. If it's nutritional scours often removal of milk for one feed and replacement with electrolytes will be enough
- If it's an infectious cause you can't withdraw milk for too long because of the lost energy that results. If the calf is really sick withdraw milk & feed electrolytes only then either add electrolytes to subsequent milk feeds (making sure fresh water is always available) or alternate during the day between milk/milk replacer and electrolytes.
- **Always make fresh water available to all calves.** We are constantly amazed to find calves with no access to fresh water.
- Warm milk before feeding- feeding cold milk means calves need to use their own energy & reserves to warm the milk before they can digest it- (a good way to cause nutritional or 'milk' scours).
- 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 and provides an ideal source of future contamination to other calves.
- All new entrants to the pens should receive 2 litres of fresh warm 1st or 2nd milking colostrum as a matter of course.
- Pick calves up twice a day wherever possible.
- Transport calves in clean trailers. We've seen some shockers. They may have been clean on the 1st day but now are ideal vehicles for spread of navel infections. Clean & disinfect your trailer regularly throughout the season.
- Deliver newborn calves to the pen they are going to be reared in rather than a central distribution point. If scours develop this central point becomes a 'disease distribution centre' and almost guarantees continued problems with infection.

Not on a Friday

After 35 years of marriage, a husband and wife came for counseling. When asked what the problem was, the wife went into a tirade listing every problem they had ever had in the years they had been married. On and on and on: neglect, lack of intimacy, emptiness, loneliness, feeling unloved and unlovable, an entire laundry list of unmet needs she had endured.

Finally, after allowing this for a sufficient length of time, the therapist got up, walked around the desk and after asking the wife to stand, he embraced and kissed her long and passionately as her husband watched - with a raised eyebrow. The woman shut up and quietly sat down as though in a daze.

The therapist turned to the husband and said, "This is what your wife needs at least 3 times a week. Can you do this?"

"Well, I can drop her off here on Mondays and Wednesdays, but on Fridays, I fish."

Vaccinations

Included with this newsletter is the form requesting your vaccination requirements for the season.

Please complete and return the form to enable us to schedule appropriate visits.

Note - blackleg vaccination for your calves can be done from two weeks of age and the younger it is done the better to prevent losses. We can do this or you can pick up the vaccine to do yourself.

Bovillis booster vaccination for BVD is due now for heifers pre-mating to cover them through pregnancy.

REMEMER! Vaccines need to be kept under refrigeration.

"When I die, I want to die like my grandmother who died peacefully in her sleep. Not screaming like all the passengers in her car."

"Advice for the day: If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: "Take two aspirin" and "Keep away from children".

How to do a Rapid Mastitis Test/Tackling High Bulk Counts

Getting on top of a cell count problem is easiest when you have fewer cows to deal with. In other words, the earlier you make the effort the quicker you will be able to identify and deal with problem cows. So, if your bulk count is climbing you should act now before all your cows are in and before you grade, which you inevitably will if you are heading into the 300's in September. The Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT), also known as the Californian Mastitis Test, is often recommended to farmers as a simple 'cowside' test they can do to quickly identify cows with high somatic cell counts that may be contributing to a grading problem. It is a simple test to do, but many people are unsure or scared of this test and therefore shy away from it or turn to more expensive options such as electronic testers, which may not be as good as we originally thought at picking up genuine high SCC cows.

Inflammation of the udder causes massive numbers of white blood cells to move into the milk to fight the infection. These white blood cells, together with a smaller number of damaged udder cells make up the 'somatic' cells of the milk, thus the SCC increases in cows with mastitis. It is these cells that react with the RMT reagent and cause the formation of a thickened slime or gel. This makes the RMT test very specific to somatic cells and therefore probably more reliable than other cowside tests out there. So, how do you do it?

1. Get hold of an RMT paddle and reagent. The newer blue ones are easier to read than the older ones so use them. (*If you own an older white paddle, consider painting the inside of the wells black to make interpretation easier*) Never make up your own reagent; always use a proper commercially prepared RMT reagent for consistent results. Old washing liquids or shed detergents do not work and will handicap your efforts to find problem cows.
2. Discard the first few squirts of milk and then squirt 2-5mls of milk from each quarter into a separate well on the RMT tray. (*A little bit of cow dung won't affect your results; a lot might - if this happens start again*).
3. Get out from under the cow before she knocks that paddle out of your hand forcing you to do it again!
4. Mix each milk sample with an equal amount of reagent.
5. Swirl the mixture vigorously for 10 or 20 seconds then assess the degree of gelling in each sample
6. Rinse the RMT paddle in clean water and move to the next cow to repeat the test.

The reagent ruptures the somatic cells and causes them to thicken into a gel. The degree of gelling or thickening will give you an indication of how severe the infection is or how high the SCC is in that quarter.

Detection and interpretation is subjective, but with practice you can get pretty good at deciding what is important and what isn't. Here is a scoring system guide to help you interpret what you see:

Score	Gelling	approximate SCC	appearance
Negative	none	100,000 or less	normal milk, no thickening
Trace	slight	100-300,000	slight thickening then disappears
1	slight to moderate	300-900,000	distinct thickening but no gel forms
2	moderate	around 3,000,000	thickens immediately and gel forms
3	heavy	around 8,000,000	obvious gel forms with "fried egg" appearance

Remember that this relates to SCC for an individual quarter when deciding what cows need to come out:

A slight gel in one quarter represents a count in that quarter of maybe 300,000. If the other quarters are negative then her total SCC would be say 500,000 ÷ 4, which is 125,000. She is unlikely to be the cow causing you grading problems. You are generally looking for cows with strong reactions in a single quarter or moderate reactions in multiple quarters that are the ones you need to remove from supply and sample i.e. the 2's & 3's.

You will find the first time you sample a large number of cows with the RMT to sort out a SCC problem that you will pull out a lot of cows. Don't panic. Pull them out and then bring them back in after milking and resample them to sort out the real problems from the others, which for now should be monitored and examined more closely after your next herd test. Generally there are only a handful of cows causing you to grade and they are ones you need to find and remove.

Time of year is also important:

In spring, colostrum contains very high numbers of somatic cells, which can cause mild gel reactions, whereas milk from an infected quarter will create a very thick, almost solid gel. Look for very definite reactions when testing cows within a few days of calving. In very late lactation, low milk volumes and the natural drying off process can also increase the cow's SCC; once again, only interpret the very definite gel reactions as sub-clinical mastitis.

Where we have helped a client get on top of a SCC problem we generally get them to grant us 3rd party access to their production details in Fencepost.com This enables us to keep an eye on their count through the rest of the season and be ready to respond if a problem appears to be re-surfacing.

Of the 45 clients who have granted us 3rd party access this season, just one had an SCC alert on her page last week and that was due to the power cuts, so well done to you all. My only problem with using the Fonterra site is how appallingly slow it is; or is that just my computer?

To get third party access we need your username & password or you can grant it to us from your end using our username "prolapse". We particularly want access to your 10-day production & quality records, SCC graph, production & quality summary and historical production records because these can help us when investigating trends in grading problems. Remember everyone who grants us 3rd party access qualifies for the Mamazyn Milk Quality Award later in the season.

Contact the clinic for more details if you need help.

BVD testing of bulls – this is a no brainer

Avoid disasters – make sure all your service bulls are BVD free

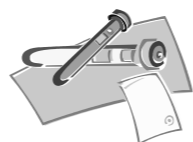
BVD is a widespread viral infection of NZ cattle and has a wide ranging impact on cattle performance and hence productivity, including growth of young stock, pregnancy rates, susceptibility to disease and milk production. A proportion of cattle that get exposed to the virus become carriers for life. These are the animals that become infected whilst still a foetus. These ‘persistently infected’ animals are the major cause of spread of infection and should be detected and culled.

Persistently infected bulls are a great way to spread the virus as their semen contains large amounts of virus. They are also introduced to the herd at a time of greatest potential impact – at mating and first 3 months of pregnancy. The virus affects conception rates and causes increased early embryonic loss. The semen quality of these bulls may also be inferior. If this isn’t sufficient, there are likely to be persistently infected calves born the following spring. These can be hard to rear and may well die before reaching two years of life.

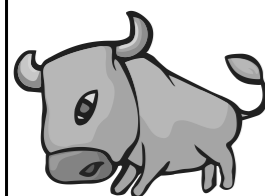
To avoid such disasters, it is essential that all bulls brought in for mating are tested free of BVD virus. It is preferable that they are also BVD vaccinated prior to their use. When purchasing bulls that are advertised as BVD tested, ask to see a veterinary certificate of proof, or the actual laboratory results. Make sure the result says ‘BVD Ag negative’ or ‘BVD PCR negative.’ If they haven’t been BVD tested, purchase them conditional on a free test. Many suppliers don’t currently get a certificate even if they do test so if you know where the bulls will come from it’s best to let the supplier know you’re going to need a certificate.

Purchase bulls early enough to allow the test to occur and give time for 2 vaccinations one month apart prior to their use – i.e. purchase at least 6 weeks prior to putting them into the herd, but having the vaccination course complete 2 months before use is ideal.

Given the devastating economic impact a BVD persistently infected bull can have on a herd, it is a no brainer to insist all bulls are BVD free at the time of purchase, even if you have to pay slightly more for such assurance.



For more information on BVD, refer to www.controlbvd.org.nz



Bull Power - Don't Economise!

A reminder that cutting costs on bulls can cost you more in the long run if you are left short on bull power just when they are needed.

The table below gives recommendations for the number of bulls which should be **with the herd at any one time**. More are needed to allow for rotation and rest. You will see that the actual number recommended depends upon the size of the herd and the % which are pregnant

when the bulls go in. The % pregnant will depend upon the length of AB, the submission rate and the 3 week non return rate. The 6 week in-calf rate from your last Fertility Focus Report can give some indication but if you are in any doubt about how well AB has gone, you should assume a low percentage - about 40-50% - are pregnant when the bulls go in.

I know that bull hire is expensive but \$650 for a 2 year old bull is less than one empty cow. Don't economise on bulls, it will cost you more in the long run.

Likely % of herd pregnant at start of bull mating and Bulls needed

No. cows in milking herd	Very low (less than 40%)	Low (40-50%)	Moderate (50-70%)	High (more than 70%)
100	2-4	2-3	2	2
200	5-6	4-5	3	2
300	7-8	6	4-5	3
400	9-11	7-8	5-6	3-4
500	12-13	9-10	7	4-5
600	14-15	11-12	8-9	5-6

Appreciate that life is a journey and direction of travel is one-way.

Worry restricts your ability to think and act effectively.

NON CYCLERS - TREAT THEM EARLY

This season you were able to induce a maximum of 4% of your herd to tighten up your calving spread.

Next season - who knows? Perhaps none at all; perhaps 2%?

The changes to the Induction code and the invariably poor response we get to inductions done in July means using alternative methods to tighten the calving pattern becomes more important each season.

Bringing late calving cows forward and avoiding late calving cows in future seasons will continue to be a priority on farm this year as we work towards the day when inductions are finally banned. One way to tighten calving pattern is to treat non-cyclers early instead of waiting for them to start cycling on their own, often many weeks later.

By tail painting your herd 35 days before mating and recording heats, you can have a very good idea of the anoestrous cows in your herd before mating starts. This allows us to develop a plan to deal with them early and get maximum benefit from the intervention.



Research throughout NZ has highlighted the value of anoestrus treatment at the planned start of mating (PSM). Studies have shown that treating with a CIDR programme at PSM advances conception date (and subsequent calving date) by 10 – 16 days. This means cows calve earlier and the extra days in milk more than cover the cost of treatment.

An early conversation around the subject now will prove ultimately far more valuable, and constructive, than a reflective one in autumn at scanning time, or next spring when calving drags out. Once late September/early October arrives, much of the scene on the farm is set for how mating (and next season's calving) will play out – body condition score can't be changed much and feed levels are at the mercy of the weather.

Early anoestrous intervention provides an opportunity to impact herd reproductive outcomes before mating starts.

This in turn maximises the farm's production in the following season.

Talk to us about treatment options this mating season.

MORE MILK, MORE CALVES = MORE \$\$\$

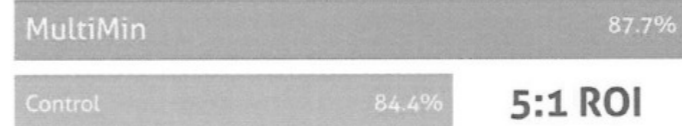
MultiMin – topping up your cows before mating

MultiMin is the only multiple trace-element injectable for improving reproduction, immunity, growth and production that has been proven in NZ and in worldwide trials.

The MultiMin concept of trace element supplementation entails that cattle are “topped up” with injectable trace elements 3-4 weeks before economically critical events like the planned start of mating. Topping-up is not about correcting long-term deficiency, rather it aims to optimise the trace mineral status of the animal with the four most important trace elements for immune function, reproduction and production – selenium, zinc, copper and manganese. When these trace minerals are administered in combination they complement each other.

Recent trial work done in NZ showed a significant improvement in reproductive performance from cows ‘topped up’ before PSM with MultiMin:

New Zealand dairy trial overall in-calf rate



Lost pregnancies from 4 weeks of age



Median conception day (days from start of mating until 50% of the herd is in-calf)



This study was performed on six herds across NZ, totaling around 2000 cows, including two autumn calving herds. Treated animals in the trials were injected four weeks prior to planned start of calving and four weeks prior to planned start of mating, while control animals received a saline injection. It is important to note that the trial was conducted on well managed, above average producing farms, ie. not on cows under significant mineral stresses.

MultiMin now comes with or without copper depending on your requirements.

So get in touch with one of our vets about a strategic top-up with MultiMin for your herd 4 weeks before the planned start of mating.

NON-CYCLERS - CIDRS OR OVSYNCH?

How and when are you going to treat your non-cyclers this year? Actually a better word for these cows is “non-visible oestrus” or NVO’s because most of them will cycle, it’s just a question of when. Advice from all professionals should be the same when talking about NVO’s; **the earlier you do it the greater cost benefit you will get.** Remember we are talking about a treatment plan that will result in more days in milk the following season and therefore greater return 12 months down the line. While it’s always tempting to leave your NVO’s “a bit longer” to reduce the up front cost you should bear in mind that leaving non or late cyclers until the end of AB will hit you harder in the pocket in terms of milk production the following season and probably result in you needing to treat even more cows the following year as well. NVO cows are a natural occurrence in the seasonal dairy system. The average number of cows not seen cycling prior to mating is about 20% nationwide so unless you are one of the lucky ones who gets very few the only question you should be asking yourself is how will I treat them. If you decide to be proactive and deal with these cows you have two options: OvSynch on its own or with the addition of a Cidr. We will call the programs “**OvSynch**” and if we add a Cidr we will call it “**CidrSynch**”. There is a third twist with the CidrSynch option that I will get to in due course.

How do the programs work? A refresher:

OvSynch: Day 0 - line up all non-cycling cows for their 1st injection of “**OvSynch 1**” by vet
Day 7 - give all cows an injection of PG “**OvSynch 2**” by vet (we will leave you 3rd shot at this visit)
Day 9 - all cows receive their final injection, “**OvSynch 3**”, generally at evening milking
Day 10 - fixed time insemination of all cows in the morning.

A couple of points:

We used to recommend that if a cow came on after the 1st injection you should pull her out and inseminate her thus removing her from the program. Recent findings would suggest that the conception rates to this insemination after the 1st shot is very low, perhaps only about 18%. The advice nowadays is that those cows should not be removed and stay in the program at least until after the 2nd shot.

The only exception to this advice regarding the 1st shot would be if you are using OvSynch later in the mating season, say after 3 or 4 weeks. In that case, it’s always possible she has cycled earlier and been missed in which case this heat could be a ‘real’ one and you can inseminate her if you wish (especially if she was an older cow in good condition). Cost of OvSynch is **\$23.70 per cow plus visit fees.**

CidrSynch:

Essentially do the OvSynch program but on day one put in a Cidr. If you want cows individually examined this does attract an extra cost of \$3.85 per cow. The advice these days is that unless a cow has obviously cycled (i.e. has a ‘CL’) examination is not cost effective (how many times have we examined a cow, thought she was going to come on and left her only to return 2-3 weeks later and put in a Cidr because she never came on? Not treating her the first time has just cost you 3 weeks potential milk production).

So the program is:

Day 0 - vet visit to **insert Cidr and inject with CidrSynch 1**
Day 7 - vet visit to **remove Cidrs and inject CidrSynch 2** (we will leave you 3rd shot at this visit)
Day 9 - farmer inject cows with **CidrSynch 3** at evening milking
Day 10 - Fixed time insemination of all cows, generally in the morning

Cost of CidrSynch is **\$39.70 per cow + visits** + examination fees if applicable.

There is a twist to this program. There is an option of an extra injection on day 7. For another \$6.60 we add an injection of PMSG as well as the PG at day 7. This has been shown to increase conception rates further, perhaps by as much as another 20%. Now, if you already get pregnancy rates of 45-55% with CidrSynch you are unlikely to get another 20% whatever you do. But if CidrSynch isn’t giving you the results you would like, adding PMSG to make it “**CidrSynch Plus**” could be what you need.

So which program should you use?

Obviously OvSynch is cheaper and less hassle so was very attractive especially in low payout years. In some herds we have found it to be very successful, in other herds less so. OvSynch will deliver lower conception rates on average than CidrSynch. If your cows are in good condition and have been calved more than 40 days, there is a chance it will deliver results comparable with Cidrs. On a few farms we have achieved 50% conception to the fixed-time insemination with OvSynch. However I believe those cows were not truly anoestrus, rather what I would term ‘sub-oestrus’ and just needed a “kick” to get them going, which is why OvSynch worked so well for them.

In truly anoestrus cows the evidence is overwhelming that added use of a Cidr will consistently deliver better conception rates than OvSynch on its own and would certainly be our recommended treatment option in thinner and/or younger cows that are likely to have very little activity on their ovaries. There is obviously a greater up front cost to this but the return on investment will outweigh the cost of treatment especially early in the mating season. The extra \$6.60 to turn CidrSynch into CidrSynch Plus is less than one day’s milk so it doesn’t need to get many extra cows in calf before it pays for itself.

The earlier you treat non-cycling cows the greater the initial cost obviously, but also the greater the return in terms of increased days in milk the following season which translates to more money.

Note: TREATMENT PRICES REMAIN THE SAME AS LAST YEAR. No increase for the 3rd year running

Have a chat with your vet to decide what is the best option for you and when is the best time to treat.

Please note that due to a general malaise when it comes to returning injection guns and unused drugs (3rd shot non-cycler programmes), there is a 7 day amnesty for their return. If you haven’t returned the left over 3rd shots within 7 days of giving that injection you will be charged for what we left behind and \$30 for the missing injection guns. They are of no use to us returned 2 months later because in the meantime we have had to buy more guns to replace the ones you haven’t returned!!

Synchronising Heifers - Your Options

If you want to synchronise heifers this season you basically have two options and what option you choose will depend on where they are, how easily you can get an AB technician out there and how much you want to spend.

Option 1. Two Prostaglandin (PG) Injections 11 days apart (10-12)

This is the lowest cost option, but comes with a few provisos:

We inject all heifers with PG on first day and repeat a second shot 10-12 days later. Heifers will start coming on heat from about the 2nd day after the last shot and the bulk will come on heat over the next 5 days. You can continue to AB longer if you want but generally after 5 days the bull is put out to ‘mop up’ any late cyclers and returns

- Heifers must be cycling. PGs only work on cycling animals so if your heifers are small and you haven’t seen any action this won’t work.
- Insemination needs to be to observed heats so this option is not suitable if you want to do fixed-time inseminations
- Do you or the AB technician have time to visit every day for 5 days after the second injection to inseminate heifers seen on heat?

So, if your heifers are in good order, cycling and you are able to visit each day for at least 5 days after the second injection this option may be suitable for you. It is cheap at \$5.50 per injection + visit fees.

One last fish-hook however: even in ideal circumstances occasionally we find we get a very poor result with this option. Frankly we don’t know why. Usually, all things being equal it works well when inseminating to observed heat, but be warned, occasionally it just doesn’t go well.

Option 2. Cidrs

This is your only practical option if you intend fixed-time insemination and works as follows:

- Day 0. Vet visit to insert Cidrs and inject with GnRH
- Day 7. Vet visit to remove Cidrs and inject with PG
- Day 9. Inject with GnRH and inseminate all heifers on that day

Last season the recommendation was to inseminate the day after the last injection but what happened was about 50% of heifers came on heat on Day 9 so the recommendation this year is to do them at the time of the 3rd injection. It also saves you an extra day of yarding. We will usually leave you the 3rd shot to give yourself, saving you another visit fee. Cost \$39.70 + visit fees.

A word of warning re bull power - if you do fixed time AB you should assume 60% of the heifers will return to heat over a three day period so you will need enough bulls to serve 20% of your heifers per day. (This is pessimistic but safe, the last thing you want is a third of your heifers calving six weeks after the start of calving because the bulls were overwhelmed).



InfoVet is coming to Eltham Vets. You’ve probably seen the signs on Taranaki Vets utes or heard about InfoVet through the grapevine. Well, we’ve taken the plunge and invested significant capital into this program. We believe it is the way of the future and believe we will be able to deliver significant benefits to you by using this program.

We’ve just taken the first baby steps and have significant training & work to do before we roll it out to you, hopefully in time for scanning next year. but we thought you would like to know what’s coming.

We’ll let you know more as it gets closer but here’s a brief introduction from the developers:

“InfoVet is an innovative software programme developed by New Zealand vets to improve dairy farm performance.

By using InfoVet, farmers and vets have a wealth of data at their fingertips, enabling accurate insights into herd health to drive farm profitability. The efficient nature of the system minimises the need for time-consuming paperwork.

InfoVet delivers timely, accurate, secure data to allow informed decision making at the farm level. InfoVet assists with all aspects of dairy practice, from individual cow medicine through to herd health monitoring and investigations. This makes the tool an integral part of dairy practice.”

We look forward to telling you a lot more about InfoVet in the months to come.

