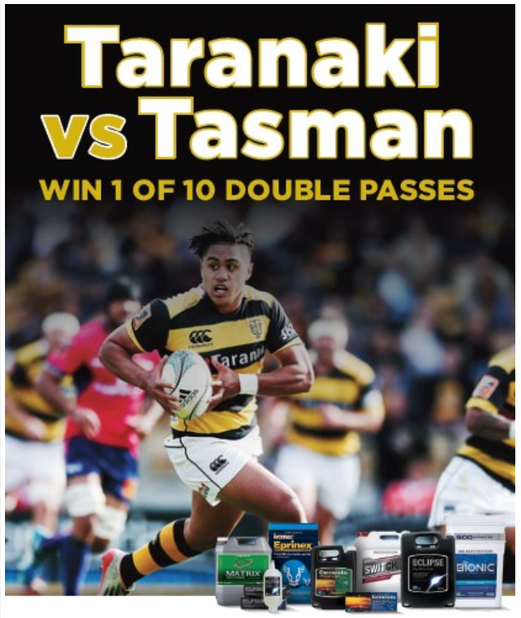
Treating your Calves for Worms this Season

Calving is a busy time of year that seems to go on until Christmas. Before doing what you've always done, take a moment to make sure it is still correct for your property. 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. Last season 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.

PROMOTION
ENDS 21ST SEPTEMBER



Ladies, if you come across a man who is smart, hot, humble, educated, financially secure and patient, great at fixing things around the house, not materialistic, good in bed, loves you like you are the only girl in the world and watches you applying your makeup while listening to every word you say … then, please be assured that the Weed you have just smoked is of super quality.

We can prepare an annual Drench Plan for your animals
Phone Daniel 0275479261

Spring and autumn are two important times for treatment of grazing animals.

During periods of stress, such as calving, the cow's immune system is lowered allowing parasites to take advantage. This alongside a seasonal peak in pasture larval numbers means that parasites are an important consideration.

New Zealand research has shown that heifers treated with EPRINEX® conceived 12.9 days earlier than their untreated herd mates. In a separate trial adult cows showed an increase of 9 days earlier conception. This improved reproductive performance is especially important as it means more days in milk and an improved calving pattern, setting them up well for next season. We know from other research that treating dairy cows can result in 0.03kgMS/day of increased milk production.

There are a number of reasons behind these improvements:

- Treated animals do not have to divert as much energy into fighting off parasites
- Treated animals increased their grazing time meaning greater energy intake
- Treated animals increased body condition score as a result of increased intake

A New Zealand survey has shown that the majority of adult dairy cows have abomasal lesions associated with Ostertagia. These lesions affect the ability of the abomasum to absorb nutrients.

To get your heifers and cows off to a productive start to the season, treat for parasites this spring for improved conception rates and improved milk production.

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Railway Street, Eltham
Ph . (06) 764 8196
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Nina Bloemen John Larkin BBS
Daniel Kidd Frank Suter

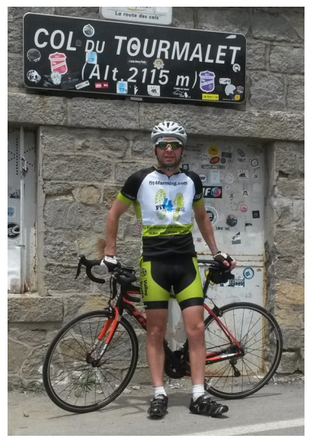
SEPTEMBER 2017

Wet enough for you? I'm struggling to remember a wetter start to a season & with that in mind I want to congratulate you all for how well you have managed in really difficult conditions. Not surprisingly, this weather has resulted in a busy spring for us - more metabolic problems than usual including a high number of prolapses early on, all the usual calving problems complicated by cold, wet conditions and a big rush of calf scours.

An increase in prolapses isn't really a surprise. The miserable winter & early spring meant cows were lighter than intended which by association means a higher energy demand trying to keep warm while at the same time, being expected to push a calf out and produce milk. All on restricted feed while you try & save pasture & store up feed going forward. A thin cow with low energy levels around calving tends to result in sub clinical ketosis and/or milk fever so after calving it doesn't take much for the uterus to follow the calf out & we end up with a prolapse. That seems to be settling down now as pasture conditions & weather slowly improve.

What about calf scours? Well again it's not that big of a surprise. A calf gets delivered into terrible weather so it's already behind the 8 ball. There's a good chance it didn't get adequate colostrum (or a feed at all) from a mum who is trying to maintain her own body condition & body heat so they arrive in your shed already with a compromised immune system (and possibly an already infected navel). Then with tighter calving patterns, sheds are filling up faster than they used to. Combine that with the fact that the weather has made it very hard to get them outside, if at all, & conditions are perfect for a build-up of contamination in the shed, resulting in scours. The good news going into September is that you should get more opportunity to get them outside in the sun & fresh air and onto clean pasture. Remember with scours that, despite the cause, your first aim is always to separate sick calves from healthy ones and to use electrolytes to replace lost body fluids. There are no shortcuts.

September is the time you should be thinking about mating in October & getting your cows ready to conceive. Don't be surprised that we have articles in this edition covering the early treatment of non-cyclers and identifying & treating At-Risk cows. It's nothing you haven't heard before but the message remains the same. Record keeping, heat detection & identification & early treatment of non-cyclers for the best return on investment courtesy of more days in milk next season.



In July I went on a cycling tour following the Tour de France. It was 32°, the category one climbs (none in NZ) such as the Col de Tourmalet & Alpe D'Huez with its 21 switchbacks were exhilarating . The scenery was fantastic & TDF was great to see in person. A great experience which I would recommend to anyone. John

It's not all work & no play though.

If you purchased more than $500 worth of Boehringer drenches since the 1st of August, you're in the draw for a

Double pass to the Corporate Lounge at Yarrows Stadium for the Tasman match on the 28th of September

If your name is drawn on the 22nd, Daniel will be in touch with details. It should be a good match; Tasman are always a challenge.

We will be hosting our now traditional

End-of-Spring Barbeque at the clinic on Thursday October 5th from 11-3pm

to celebrate the end of a long, wet spring. This will be our 3rd edition & it has proved a good opportunity to get off the farm for a few hours, share some hot food & beverages while discussing & comparing the start to the season & saying goodbye to calving. And of course, the chance to win a spot prize! We'll see you there.

The Importance of Treating Pain & Inflammation

It's not just famous All Blacks selling Voltaren Gel that realise the importance of treating pain & inflammation.
Cows that are lame or ill, for whatever reason, between calving and mating have significantly reduced pregnancy rates. Many studies worldwide show that cows that have mastitis or are lame, even very early in the season, do not get in calf as easily as their unaffected herd mates, and obviously cows with uterine issues such as metritis are at high risk.
These are all painful stressful conditions.
Pain equals more stress. Stress equals increased cortisol and/or adrenaline levels.
As this is a chronic situation, rather than a quick fight or flight response, the outcome is also more long term.

Drymatter intake falls as appetite is suppressed – cows are in a deeper and longer lasting negative energy state. This depresses ovarian activity so subsequent conception rate is depressed. Lower energy levels decrease the chance of cows displaying obvious behavioural signs of heat. Less eaten means poorer immune response, slower recovery and loss of condition. Less condition means less fat ingredients available to make the reproductive hormones necessary for successful pregnancy.

Consequently, treating ill cows as soon as possible not only reduces the direct effects of the problem itself but improves chances of a more successful subsequent reproduction. An important part of this treatment is to reduce the pain response – this may well have a bigger part to play in mating results than the disease itself.

For lame cows - reduce walking especially on hard surfaces, milk OAD at most, and make feed easy to collect i.e. take extra feed to the cow.

Even when antibiotics are not required or indicated, anti-inflammatory pain-relief like Metacam, Ketomax, Flunixin or Rimadyl should always be considered. Nowadays most have nil milk withholding. There is no excuse to ignore pain and inflammation in your cows especially when the beneficial effects of treatment are highly cost effective.

Getting pregnant when you are already in trouble is not a good idea for a dairy cow as it puts even more energy demands on her. Pain and/or stress in early lactation interrupts normal cycling, ovarian activity and hormonal production. The end result on farm may be varied including anoestrus (i.e. no cycling) and cystic ovaries of various degrees depending on the status of the cow when the problem began, how long it is before resolution and how severe it was. One day of pain or inflammation can delay pregnancy by more than one week.

The moral of the story is do not neglect problem cows. Treat as early as possible and don't skimp on the TLC. This is important from a welfare point of view but it also has financial implications.

Calf Scour Reminders

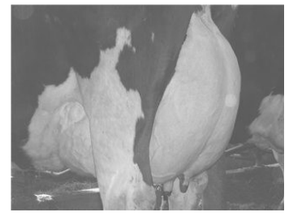
I can't help but notice that a few of you take big shortcuts when it comes to dealing with scouring calves. While it's tempting to think that addition of a tablet, powder or injection will solve your problem there are a few basics that really should be non-negotiable when dealing with calf scours and 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 usually 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. A dehydrated calf will actively seek water (if it's able to stand) so make sure it's always available.

After slicing his tee shot into the woods, *a golfer heads off in search of his ball, which he finds behind a large tree. After considering his position, and not wanting to take a drop and lose a stroke, he decides to hook the ball around the tree. He swings, the ball hits the tree, ricochets back at him, and instantly kills him.*
When he opens his eyes, he sees the Pearly Gates and St. Peter standing before him.
Am I dead?" he asks. "Yes, my son," replies St. Peter, who looks the man over and notices his clubs.
"I see you're a golfer," St. Peter says. "Are you any good?" "Hey, I got here in two, didn't I?"

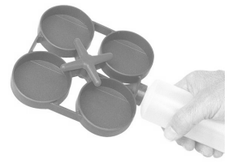
How to do a Rapid Mastitis Test/Tackling High Bulk Counts

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 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. Remember that as few as 5% of your cows can account for 50% of your bulk count so 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.