



# CUD

“Cows Under Discussion” or “Something to Chew On”

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**Welcome to all of the dairy farmers who have moved in to the Clutha Vets area. We've tried to get out to meet as many of you as we can and for those we haven't met, we hope to soon. Please feel free to drop in to the Balclutha or Milton clinic any time, so you (and we) can put names to faces. Alternatively, come along to one of the upcoming events (see below).**

**“CUD” is a monthly news sheet we send to all our clients with an interest in dairy cows. Each time we try to briefly cover some of the relevant seasonal issues you may be facing, plus a few retail specials, and other things to think about. We put out a more substantial newsletter at key times (spring, mating, drying off) to cover those topics in more detail.**

## Clinic News

Winter is a time when vets try to take a break from the cows of South Otago too! Jason, Rob and Natasha will be attending the Dairy Cattle Vets conference in Christchurch in early July, and Teresa has returned to Ireland until August. Bernie and Andrew are back from parental leave (Bernie & Vanessa have a new wee boy, Tobias; and Drew & Rosie have added Blake to their family) but are still looking a bit jaded. Our new vet, Megan Bradly, is settling in well - just in time to take up the strain until everyone else is present and ready for calving!

The CVA Board are pleased to announce another good financial year, with an additional discount of approximately 4.2% for all Club members calculated on last year's business with us. This credit should appear on your June/July account.

## Mastitis Matters

With the lack of rain throughout much of May, drying off went really well for just about everyone, with very few cases of clinical mastitis immediately after dry-off. Remember, cows that develop clinical mastitis during the dry period should be treated the same way as they are during lactation – fully stripped out twice a day (with the use of oxytocin and anti-inflammatories if appropriate) and treatment with a full course of lactating cow intramammary. They should not receive dry cow therapy again, basically because of the risk of IS grades in spring, following late treatment.

## Reproduction

July is induction month. Bearing in mind that it takes about three weeks from the first injection until the cow calves; and that the aim of inductions is to bring cows as far forward as possible (practically about 10 weeks) into the *early* part of the calving period, many of you will have cows to inject before the end of this month. Please speak to a vet if you have any doubt about interpreting your pregnancy testing data, and when to induce which cows.

As has been the case for the last few years, the other key requirements of the induction code that we will be focusing on are: age of cow; body condition score; chronic illness (lameness, mastitis, photosensitivity); location, feeding and checking of cows; magnesium supplementation (for at least three weeks before the first injection); and trace element status. If you have any queries, these issues will be covered at your induction consultation, so why not book in and do it now?

### **PAR's – Prescription animal remedies**

The Food Safety Authority had been pushing that farmer consultations for PAR's should be re-done every six months. Fortunately, after some quite hard lobbying from the NZ Veterinary Association (amongst others), they have seen sense, and agreed that once a year for Dry Cow Therapy, and once a year for other PAR's will be often enough.

Have you completed an “Animal Health and Production Consultation” for the upcoming season? It is different from and not necessarily covered at the same time as, Dry Cow. Get it out of the way before things get too hectic and you are faced with retail staff who are legally unable to sell you intra-mammaries, some metabolics etc. Some people prefer to do it on farm with the new staff for the season, so everyone knows what is expected in terms of cow treatments. That makes it a good staff training opportunity, especially for those new to the industry.

### **Health issue – shelter for cows**

The conditions throughout June really brought home to us that sick, cold cows are very difficult to rehabilitate. Any unwell cow (that includes after difficult calvings) will benefit greatly from some decent shelter in which to recover. At \$1500 a cow, how many lives would need to be saved to make it worth putting up a shelter next to the cow shed? It could quickly and cheaply be made from deer posts, corrugated iron and an old gate, and bedded with sawdust. What a great winter project!

### **Rotavec**

A reminder that orders need to be in ASAP for those who use this tool to help manage calf scours. Cows must be vaccinated a minimum of three weeks before calving, for most people that means mid July. With the new formulation, nine weeks worth of calving cows can be done at one time and it's *now a 2ml dose*.

### **Reducing lameness - Neil Chesterton's yard management tip #7** (the last of the series!)

Check the speed of the top gate. It should move no more than 1m in 5 seconds (12m / minute) on round yards, or 0.5m in 5 seconds (6m / minute) on square yards. Small, regular, predictable movements of the gate will cause a gentle ripple effect amongst the cows as they move forward towards the bails. Foot damage will be minimal and lameness reduced.

### **Duck shooting**

On the first weekend in May, Jason went out duck shooting on a South Otago dairy farm, with some other local rural industry advisors – Jim Johnston the accountant, Geoff Campbell the farm adviser, and Mark Crawford the Ravensdown rep. When the first duck flew into view all four of them simultaneously raised their guns to their shoulders and let rip – and the duck plummeted to the ground. They walked over to the dead duck but could see no obvious signs of injury and a debate quickly developed over who had fired the fatal shot. Each of them was convinced that they had hit and the other three had missed. The (unnamed) farmer came over to see what the fuss was all about and between the four shooters they decided that he was the best one to adjudicate. The farmer took one look at the duck and declared that the vet had obviously shot it. The other three were incredulous. “How could you know that?” they asked. “Well you can see” he replied “that for all the vet's effort, it has gone in one ear and out the other!”

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Winter meeting. This year we have secured Jim Lloyd, a respected Australian Vet, to give us some over-the-ditch perspectives on disease management in dairy cattle. Also benchmarking of preg testing, and BVD eradication. Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm, at The Rosebank Lodge, Balclutha.
- Spring Supplies. Come along for a beer and a yarn and to stock up on some seasonal specials. Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July – afternoon in Clydevale, from 5pm in Balclutha and Milton
- Spring First Aid Seminar – a great staff training opportunity – calving, sick cows, calf rearing etc. Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July. A whole day of life-saving information for \$200. Ph. Balclutha to book a place.
- Clutha Vets AGM. Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August (evening) at the Rosebank Lodge. More details to follow.