



CUD

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

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The autumn temperatures seemed to arrive all of a sudden on 1st March, and now April is here it really feels like the season is coming to an end. Still, grass has been growing up to 60kg DM/ha/day in some parts of the practice, and with the clocks going back this weekend, the lighter mornings may hold winter blues at bay for a while yet.

Clinic News:

Did you know Clutha Vets has been serving the South Otago farming community for 100 years? Members of the board are in the process of planning centenary celebratory events for June. Mark in your diaries the much-anticipated annual golf day on the 19th, and a clinic open day on the 20th. Peter Kalb (at Milton) is half as old as Clutha Vets. He celebrated his half century recently, in which time he has accumulated plenty of tales to tell, involving near brushes with wild animals, wild policemen, and broken bones. Congratulations Pete, and thanks from all of us at Clutha Vets for your unique contribution to the team.

Mastitis Matters

Dry cow therapy (DCT) has two major aims, to treat cows with existing subclinical mastitis infections; and to protect cows from developing infections over the dry period and around calving time. Which of these aims is paramount for each cow in the herd (or the herd as a whole), determines which DCT product should be used. In both cases, the higher the proportion of the herd you treat, and the longer the duration of action of the product you use, the more likely you are to achieve the desired result. That is why we discuss those issues (and many others) with you at your “Milk Quality Review” before prescribing any PARs.

In New Zealand, the SAMM plan defines infected cows as those with ICSCC >150,000 cells/ml on herd test, and heifers >120,000. All of these cows should receive DCT. More and more evidence is pointing to the duration of treatment as being key to the success of the treatment, especially with respect to *Staph. aureus*. (This is the contagious bug that lives on the skin of the teats and udder and spreads between cows via the milking machine. It often causes fluctuating BMSCC (but not necessarily grades), and “repeat offender” clinical cases). Once a year, the dry period presents your best chance to clean these up with an appropriate, long-acting treatment. In the past many of these cows have been culled, but with current high stock prices it may be tempting to hang onto them and attempt treatment. Talk to a vet to maximise your chance of success!

The main natural protection of the udder from new infections entering through the teat canal during the dry period is the teat plug. This is made from keratin (a skin protein), produced by the cells lining the teat canal. Studies have shown quite clearly that DCT increases the rate of teat plug formation. Additionally, should the plug fail, the antibiotic from the DCT is on hand in the udder to fight any new infection. In this way, DCT can lower both the BMSCC and the incidence of clinical mastitis in the spring.

Rather than thinking about avoiding mastitis penalties, think about minimising the cost of mastitis. Dropping your bulk count from 220,000 to 150,000 next season has been shown to result in an extra 2.8kg MS/cow. Over 400 cows at \$7.40/kg that's about \$8300 in extra production. And that doesn't include the costs of treating clinical cases, milk quality penalties, higher culling rates etc. Milk Quality Review time is a time for you to make money. Book in now to collect the cash!

Lepto: Calves should be into their vaccination programme by now. They require two injections between four and six weeks apart, to give them full and long-lasting protection against the two most common “flavours” of Lepto. If we also vaccinate the yearlings and herd now, everything will be getting its booster within the 12 month period stipulated by the vaccine manufacturers. If calves have already had 5 in 1 (for tetanus, pulpy kidney etc), or you plan to use Vitamin B12 or selenium injection pre-winter (which can be combined with 5 in1), it may be better to use a “plain” Lepto, rather than the standard “7 in 1”. Please discuss you requirements with a vet and get them booked in.

Health issue -Pneumonia

We see quite a few cases of pneumonia in cattle through summer and autumn, often in yearlings and heifers. Most often they are viral in origin, and only single animals are affected. Whether antibiotics (especially white penicillin) are useful/justified can be debated, but anti-inflammatories probably do have a role in treatment. Vaccines against the most common viral causes are also available.

Dehorning: Now is the time to tidy up any odd horns left on your calves, yearlings or in the herd. After drying off and through the winter, when cattle are transported, and often crowded onto feeding breaks or around bale feeders, we often see cattle damaged by others’ horns. Also, it is better if the job is done at the runoff (providing there is a decent head bail!), so that this stressful procedure is not associated with the cowshed. Additionally, newly calved two year olds do not need any extra set-backs as they settle into the milking regime and getting back in calf.

Under the Animal Welfare Painful Procedures Code, local anaesthetic (ie a vet) is required for dehorning **any** animal **over nine months** of age. This applies even to “just taking the tips off”. If your calves have not been done, and you wish to do them yourself, time is running out!

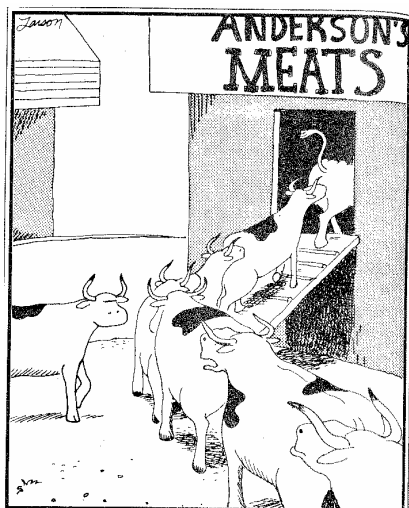
Taking the pain out of lameness – Improving your facilities for treating lame cows

Decent working facilities make even the most unpleasant task easier, and allow you to do a better job. Nowhere is this more apparent than when dealing with lame cows. Taking the time (and spending a little money) to get well set up, will pay off rapidly - in safety, time taken to do the job, quality of the job done, and enjoyment of doing it.

A roof over the lame cow treatment area (or even just a bit of spouting to stop the drips running off the iron straight onto your back!) makes things much more pleasant on some autumn days! How easily could you attach a bit of light framing and Suntuff to the existing beams to offer the operator a bit of shelter from the elements?

Things to do in April

- Finish preg testing, make some drying off decisions (light cows and low producers, rather than empties?)
- Book in Milk Quality Review
- Lepto calves, yearlings and herd (before the herd starts getting broken up)
- Tidy up dehorning before winter



“Hey you.... No cutting in”

This Month’s Retail News

Pre-winter deworming and delousing

- Cydectin 15ltr. Choose either the gas bbq & outdoor heater combo, or 2ltr extra for free.
- Genesis / Eclipse / Eprinex cattle pour-ons. Each purchase gives you a 1:33 chance for a wide screen LCD TV.
- Selected Eclipse, Eprinex and Genesis pour-on and injection also qualify for a merino countrywear jersey

Meaty Bites : 20kg Working Dog Formula \$41.31 while stock lasts.