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CUD

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

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December 2008

As the AI season draws to a close, and you hand over the heat detection to the experts, maybe there will be a bit more time to consider some of these issues..... as well as taking things a bit more leisurely over the Christmas period!

Clinic News

Welcome to Catherine Copland, our new Small Animal Vet, and her family. Hailing from Scotland, Catherine adds to our UN contingent. Welcome also to Peter Heslip who is filling in for Suzanne Craig while she and her family are in the UK for the next couple of months.

Applications are now open for the Clutha Veterinary Association student bursaries and scholarships for the 2009 year. They are available to students hailing from South Otago who are studying Agriculture or Equine at Telford, agriculture at university, or are in the final two years of the vet course at Massey. If you know of someone eligible to apply, please encourage them to do so.

Help with Lameness

If you get more than the occasional lame cow, you should be asking the question, “Why?”. Clutha Vets is proud to be a provider of The Healthy Hoof Programme (HHP). It has been developed by DairyNZ to focus on the prevention of lameness in dairy herds. It involves a number of visits by a vet to the farm to identify factors that are likely to contribute to the lameness problem and offer recommended solutions in the form of an action plan; staff training in prevention and practical treatment of lameness; and periodic reviews of lameness issues. If you are interested in joining the programme, please contact DairyNZ to register or pick up a registration form from Clutha Vets.

Reproduction – BVD

Hamish Moore recently e-mailed our dairy farmer client database outlining the potential benefits of identifying the presence of BVD on your farm. At the moment, as well as contributing to poor growth rates in calves, this disease could be significantly affecting your herd fertility and cell count, costing around \$35/cow/year, on average infected farm. BVD can be identified from a sample of your bulk milk collected by the dairy company on your behalf. We advise all dairy farmers to obtain this baseline information as a basis for making management decisions. Please contact any of the clinics to organise a BVD bulk milk sample. If you didn't receive this e-mail, we don't have your correct address, so please let us know!

Mastitis Matters- Changing your rubberwear

Non-fitting, old or damaged rubberwear can have a significant impact on mastitis in your herd. Liners do not last forever – and there is a simple calculation (based on herd and shed size) for how often they should be changed for optimum performance. In most cases it is around 100-120 days. To work the figure out for your farm check CUD November 07 on our website. If you changed liners in the dry period, and started calving on 10th August, it is probably time to be changing them again now.

Health issue - Grass staggers

Grass staggers is sometimes confused with milk fever (because it can predispose to it, or occur at the same time as it), but they are two distinct diseases. Grass staggers is due to low blood magnesium, milk fever is due to low blood calcium. Grass staggers produces nervous signs (irritable, excited, tremoring, convulsing or aggressive cows), milk fever produces signs related to muscular weakness (slowness and

incoordination). Milk fever normally occurs in older cows a day or two either side of calving, but grass staggers can affect any cow, at any time of year. We have seen a few cases in recent weeks, so a reminder is timely.

The amount of magnesium in the cow is quite closely related to their intake in the previous 24 hours. A cold, wet day when the cows don't go to the trough, often precedes a case (or an outbreak) of staggers. Maintaining pasture dusting on these days is especially important, and we recommend continuing mag supplementation in some form all season.

Treatment of grass staggers can be difficult. We normally give a mixed calcium/magnesium bag into the vein, a bag of straight 20% mag sulphate under the skin, and often some oral magnesium as well. Recovery is slow, and not always complete. You should always have a couple of bags of mag sulphate solution in your animal health cupboard so you can treat these appropriately. If you haven't got any, please pick some up next time you are in town.

Parasites in adult cows

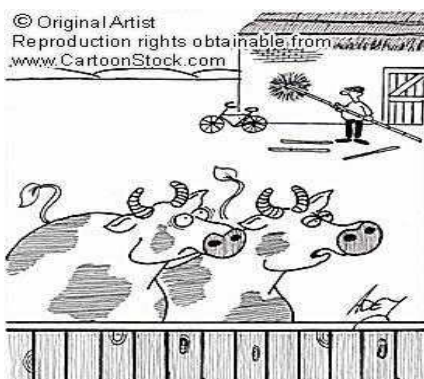
Studies show that most adult milking cows have some parasite worms in their gut, and that these worms depress milk production to some extent. The difficulty is how to measure this effect and know whether it is worth spending money to kill those worms.

Ancare Scientific have come up with a way of measuring the cows' worm burden from a bulk milk sample. This can be collected automatically by Fonterra, in much the same way as the BVD bulk milk samples are collected. It can then be related back to a likely milk production response to removing those worms. All you need to do is fill out one of the authorisation forms at any of the clinics or depots, or on our website. We will get back to you with results and recommendations once the sample has been taken and analysed. There is a small fee on your vet bill, but it is refundable on a subsequent purchase of Eprinex.

Things to do in December:

- ☺ Reinsertion of CIDRs into early-treated non-cyclers. Beware of the strain that may be put on bulls if there is a large number of synchronised returns after the end of AI.
- ☺ Treatment of late-calving non-cyclers.
- ☺ Early pregnancy testing – 8 weeks after PSM for non-returns from first fortnight of mating.
- ☺ Check all shed rubberwear
- ☺ 5-in-1 vaccination of calves, +/- B12, +/- Se
- ☺ Organise BVD and parasite bulk milk sampling

Please Note that, unfortunately, we are now no longer able to loan out the Weigh Scales



Don't panic Daisy dear. You can relax your buttocks, it's not the vet, it's the chimney sweep getting things ready for Santa.

This Month's Retail News:

- **Purchase any Merial & Ancare Drench** and qualify to go in the draw for a place in the **'Take-A-Mate Fishing'** trip to Stewart Island and also go in the draw to win a **Sony LCD 32" TV**. You also qualify for a Christmas Ham, a Breville Wizz & Blend, or a Breville Electric Wok.
- **All drench purchases** qualify for an entry in the draw for a **Kawasaki 50cc Quad Bike**.

Retail Direct Line – (03) 418 1281