



CUD

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

P.O. BOX 231, BALCLUTHA
www.cluthavets.co.nz
BALCLUTHA CLINIC
Wilson Road - Phone (03) 418-1280
Fax (03) 418-1750
Merchandise Direct (03) 418-1281
enquiries@cluthavets.co.nz

MILTON CLINIC
Union Street - Phone (03) 417-8032

November 2009

As we head in to another round of mating, it looks like the very promising start to the season was a bit of a red herring. Grass growth since September has been slow with all the cold and wet weather, and there are not as many silage paddocks shut up as usual for this time of year. Most cows are peaking about where they did last year, although many farms are still ahead of budgeted production because of the flying start. However, cows seem to be cycling well which is good for all concerned.

Clinic News: This month we are sorry to be saying goodbye to Nic Hinchy, who has been with the Balclutha team since January. Despite the best efforts of several young local farmers to give her a reason to stay, she is heading home to Australia to pursue some further training in companion animals. Thanks for your help Nic, goodbye and good luck! On a brighter note, we do have two new Massey graduates lined up to start in the early 2010.

Many thanks to Glen and Dean Storer who provided cows and facilities for Sid to demonstrate his cattle blood transfusion “tips and tricks” to a group of our dairy vets recently. It is great for vets to work in a large practice where we can draw on each others’ skills and experiences, and ultimately you and your stock will also benefit. We are all looking forward to doing our “own” blood transfusion soon!

Mastitis Matters: A number of people have been enquiring about treating subclinically infected cows based on recent herd test results. In some ways this makes sense – the only difference between clinical and subclinical mastitis is how hard you have to look to find it(!), and if they were clinical, they would definitely be treated. However, the cost effectiveness of treating subclinical mastitis varies, depending on the BMSCC, stage of lactation, age and production of the cow, type of infection, antibiotics used, and duration of treatment. For example, three treatments at 12 hours with a tube that was highly successful against environmental mastitis in spring, may not be successful (or cost effective) in an eight year old cow that has had a high cell count ever since a clinical case of mastitis last season, despite DCT at drying off last year! Please speak to a vet before treating high SCC cows, based purely on herd test results, to develop a plan that is likely to get the result you are seeking. And remember, they may remain +ve on the RMT paddle for up to a fortnight after the infection has been cured – don’t rush in to re-treat them.

Reproduction – When to inseminate? In recent years there has been a change in thinking about the best time to inseminate a cow on heat. The people who study these things think about: when ovulation occurs in relation to the start and end of heat; how long the egg takes to travel to the site of fertilisation; how its viability is affected by this journey; how long the sperm take to get to the site of fertilization; how long it takes sperm to mature in the female repro tract; the differences between AI and natural services; the difference between fresh and frozen semen etc., so it’s not completely straight forward!

In the past we have worked the “am/pm” rule, but the current thinking is that cows should be inseminated at the first opportunity after heat is detected. There is no evidence that waiting 12 hours gains anything. In other words, “you see them, you do them”.

Cows first seen/detected on heat before or at morning milking ⇒ inseminate that morning.
Cows first seen/detected on heat through the day, at or after evening milking ⇒ inseminate next morning
If inseminating twice-daily, do not delay insemination unnecessarily.

Refresh tail paint or heat mount detectors when the cow has gone off heat (generally at the next milking), not as she is served and is still on heat. Re-inseminate any cow that is still on heat two milkings (24hours) later.

Health issue – Trace element supplementation for milkers

Pre-mating trace element checks have recently shown up some probable deficiencies on a number of farms. When we enquire, it often turns out that the “mineral brew” being used doesn’t actually have the recommended daily intake levels for South Otago milking cows. This is made worse in cold wet weather, when the cows’ water intake is reduced. As a general rule, the mix used should supply 5mg selenium, 250 mg copper, 10mg iodine, 8mg cobalt and 500mg zinc, per cow per day. Boron, manganese, chromium etc may make the brew look like it’s got more goodies in it, but are they actually required?

Many people are now using up the end of last season’s supplies. Before re-ordering the “same again”, check what is in the mix, and what the levels are. Better still, have us check what levels are in the cows. If you would like the knowledgeable local Nutritech rep to visit your farm to discuss meeting your cows’ requirements, ring or call in to one of our Clutha Vets stores.

Vet Certs for cull cows: A few of the cows that didn’t come through the spring in full health are now heading to the works. Often these will require a certificate stating that in our opinion they are fit for transport and slaughter. The inspectors at the works may still condemn them, based on what they find post slaughter, but you will be protected from accusations of cruelty etc. Certified cows must go to the nearest slaughter premises and the certificates must have a realistic expiry date. The most practical way to make this work is for you to book the cow into Finegand or Mataura, and then get us to check it within a couple of days of it leaving the farm.

Things to do in November:

- PG injection (“Why Wait?”) for cycling cows at end of first week of AI
- Deal with non-cycling cows calved >40 days.
- Plan drench programme for calves. An oral white/clear drench is most cost effective in young calves and could be used from about 30days after they go onto grass.
- Assess ICSCC from herd test against age of cow and last season’s mastitis/DCT history
- Make sure all bulls for use on the herd are BVD and EBL blood tested, and BVD and Lepto vaccinated

This Month’s Retail News (quoted prices include GST and member’s discount)

- **Tail Paint:** Good stocks of quality products, all colours and the 10ltr DeTail pails
- Merial/Ancare **pour on and injectable drench** (deferred payment options available). Receive muckboots, windstopper jersey or Christmas ham with qualifying purchases, **and** go in the draws for the “Ultimate Outdoor Summer Package” and “Take a Mate Fishing”.
- **Calf meal** (Sergeant Dan’s / Clutha Vets) and **Calf milk powder** (Milligan’s) flying out the door!
- TUX Energy **dog biscuits** 40kg \$99.95
- Nutritech Clutha Vets **daily in-water mineral supplement**. Contains only the essential elements proven to be necessary, and at the levels required locally. About 4.1c per dose, phone for a quote.

Retail Direct Phone Line (03) 418 1281

One day, a local dairy farmer was noticed that one of his cows was completely cross-eyed. He phoned the vet to come and investigate. The vet took one look at the cow, stuck a tube up the cow’s rear end, and blew into the tube until the cow’s eyes straightened out.

A while later, the cow’s eyes were crossed again, but the farmer remembered the previous month’s vet account, and thought that this time he could probably take care of it himself. So he called his herd manager over, and together they put a tube up the cow’s rear end. The farmer put his lips to the tube and started to blow. Strangely, nothing happened, so he asked his off-sider to give it a try.

The young guy removed the tube, turned it around, put it back in the cow and started to blow.

"What are you doing?" asked the horrified farmer.

"Well, I wasn’t about to use the end that YOU had put your lips on."