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# CUD

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

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**February 2010**

**Happy New Year to you and we hope you have had a good one. The summer holidays are just about over so it's back to the grind for some. Last month has been a wet one and has kept up grass growth. However, the downside of that is some lame cows and bulls have emerged and require attention.**

## Clinic News:

We would like to welcome two new vet additions to the Balclutha clinic, Alice Lee and Steven Butler. Alice hails from a sheep and beef farm in West Otago and Steven is from Canterbury. They will be doing mixed practice to begin with, but they both have a special interest in farm animals.

We have most of our vets back on deck now after their summer holidays. They are rearing to go and ready for the scanning season.

## Leptospirosis and pigs

Pigs can carry leptospirosis and transmit it to humans and cattle. If you have a few fattening pigs on farm it is important to protect yourself and your workers from lepto. If possible, buy your pigs from a leptospirosis-free piggery. If you don't know the vaccination status of the pigs when you buy them, they should be treated with a course of antibiotics and vaccinated for lepto. They are vaccinated with two doses 4-6 weeks apart and need a six-monthly booster (if kept that long on farm). The vaccine used should be licensed for pigs. Also the pig effluent should be managed so it is not in contact with the dairy cattle. This may seem like a lot of hassle for a few fattening pigs, but if you do contract leptospirosis, the consequences can be very serious for your health.

## Nutrition – Feeding summer turnips

A number of you will be about to start feeding summer turnips, and as with swedes and kale in the winter, feeding these brassicas is not without potential animal health problems. Nitrate poisoning is the most spectacular, and is most likely to occur with lack of sunshine (surely not this “summer”!), after nitrogen fertilizer is applied, or after a dry spell. You can drop suspect crop in to us for lab analysis, or better still, have a cheap test kit on farm. We have also seen quite severe photosensitivity reactions (“eczema”). Anecdotal evidence suggests that increasing the zinc in the diet may help prevent the condition. Rumen acidosis may also be a problem, with a sudden radical diet change. Vitamin B1, copper and iodine deficiencies are all more likely on turnips than grass, and other less common diseases like redwater, pneumonia, and pulpy kidney have been seen on occasion. The best way to prevent any of these is to introduce increasing amounts of the crop to the diet gradually over 7-10 days, to feed a roughage supplement at the same time, and to monitor the animals closely!

## Young stock - Your Future

Growing calves have quite high selenium demands. It is possible to give too little, and also possible to give too much with bad effects. Talk to your vet. Prills on pasture are unlikely to provide enough selenium on their own for a whole year's growth. It can be supplemented in the short term by injection, pour-on, selenised drench, or via the drinking water. Selenium toxicity is a real issue, and occurs most commonly either when an error in maths means selenium is given at the wrong rate (e.g. 10 x the correct dose), or there is a cumulative effect from multiple sources of selenium. Probably the best method of supplementation is a long acting injection called Selovin LA. Given under the skin this injection releases selenium into the animal slowly over a period of about a year. The best time to give the injection depends on just what other sources of selenium the animals have been exposed to, and when. Selenium requirements, and the effectiveness of treatment, can easily be assessed from blood tests. Supplementation is especially important if these animals are to be grazed

on brassica crops, because they are low in selenium. As an aside, however, I discourage brassica feeding in the first winter because of the crop's generally poorer nutritive value (energy and protein required for growth) and oral problems from young teeth and gums trying to cope with hard stems and bulbs. Talk to your vet about selenium supplementation in your situation.

### Things to do in February:

- Book in your pregnancy scanning if you haven't done so already, so you can have your pregnancies aged.
- Second 7-in-1 vaccination for calves if haven't done so already.
- Weigh your calves and your heifers and see if they are reaching target weights (see January's newsletter). Remember target weights are the minimum weights we want to achieve.
- Selenium, copper and vitamin B12 supplementation of calves, where appropriate.
- Worm the calves every 6-8 weeks.

### Coming up in March:

- Lameness seminar is being held again on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March due to ongoing popularity. For more information: contact the clinic on (03) 418 1280 or watch your mailbox.

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

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drench** – Receive a choice of various Powerbuilt cordless power tools - angle grinder, skill saw, drill, reciprocating saw & torch - with any qualifying purchase of Genesis, Eclipse, Eprinex or Matrix C 20ltr.
- **All Merial Ancare Drench Purchases** – qualify for a draw to win the 'Mutt Hut', a dog motel with a difference. There is one on display at the Balclutha Clinic.
- **Dectomax Injection/Pour-on** – Purchase two starter packs and receive a slaughter set consisting of knives, steels and scabbard. New promo coming soon – see in-store.
- **Meaty Bites** – Working dog flavours and puppy biscuits are all on special for the month of February.
- **Tux Energy 40kg** - \$89.95 while stocks last.
- **Purina Performance Farmers Deal** – Buy 6 x 17kg bags of Performance Formula dog biscuits (for the busy working dog) and receive the 7<sup>th</sup> bag free. \$104.73/bag nett incl GST. Can split the charges.

### Joke – Cock-a-doodly-doo!

This farmer has about 200 hens, but no rooster, and he wants chicks. So he goes down the road to the next farmer and asks if he has a rooster which he would sell. The other farmer says "Yeah, I've got this great rooster named Randy. He'll service every chicken you got, no problem."

Well, Randy the rooster costs a lot of money, but the farmer decides he'd be worth it, so he buys Randy and takes him home where he sets him down and gives him a pep talk, "Randy, I want you to pace yourself now. You've got a lot of chickens to service here, and you cost me a lot of money, so I'll need you to do a good job. Okay, go out there, take your time and have some fun," the farmer ends with a chuckle.

Randy seems to understand, so the farmer points to the hen house and Randy takes off like a shot. WHAM! Randy nails every hen in the hen house three or four times, and the farmer is shocked. After that the farmer hears a commotion in the duck pen, and sure enough, there's Randy. Later on the farmer sees him after the geese down by the lake and, once again, WHAM, he gets all the geese and by sunset is out in the fields chasing the quail and pheasants.

The farmer is distraught – worried that his rooster won't even last 24 hours.

Sure enough, the farmer goes to bed and wakes up the next morning to find Randy dead as a doorknob – stone cold in the middle of the yard and there are buzzards circling overhead.

The farmer, saddened by the loss of such a colourful and expensive animal, shakes his head and says, "Oh, Randy, I told you to pace yourself. I tried to get you to slow down, now look what you've done to yourself."

Randy opens one eye, nods toward the buzzards circling in the sky and says, "SHHH, they're getting closer....."