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CUD

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

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June 2010

The rainfall and cold weather in the last week of May seems to have given us all a bit of a wake-up call that there will be a winter after all! The warm weather earlier in the month kept grass growth (post-grazing recovery) at exceptional levels, and encouraged many people to get an extra week or more of milk for the season. Those who dried cows off early and have since fed them an extra week of grass, will reap the benefits next spring from good cow condition now. And the tentative payout predictions must make everyone head into the winter in an optimistic mood.

Clinic News: It's been a fairly rocky road at Clutha Vets over the last few months, but things seem to now be well on the way to getting sorted out. The Board, especially Garth Shaw (Chairman) and Charles Macfie (Vice Chair) have worked very hard on your behalf to resurrect the situation, and ensure that the voices of all senior staff are heard. We can now all work together to find a way that will make Clutha Vets fit to last another 100 years. As vets, we hope that our service to you has not been compromised at any time, and we are confident that we will be able to provide the high level of service that you have come to expect throughout the Spring, and beyond.

At Milton, the clinic extensions/renovations are proceeding at pace. Again, we hope that you have not noticed any disruption to our service. The project should be completed by mid-July. By some bizarre coincidence we have the two lead characters from Bad Jelly the Witch locuming there for a while, Tim Luke is doing predominantly dairy work through the winter and Rosie Thorpe will be managing the cats and dogs until mid September.

Mastitis Matters – Clinical cases during the dry period

Treatment of clinical mastitis during the dry period is no different from treatment during lactation. It is vital to strip the infected quarter fully, at least twice a day. Treat the cow with lactating cow intramammary (or an appropriate injectable), but do not reinfuse dry cow at any time. Because the size and activity of the udder are reduced, the distribution and metabolism of drugs within it will be altered. This may lead to hidden residues after next calving, and IS grades.

Young stock – preparing for calf rearing

Now is the time to be getting your calf sheds ready for next season's occupants. For a full description of things you may wish to consider, check the May 08 Dairy newsletter on our website : www.cluthavets.co.nz.

In association with Intervet-Schering-Plough Animal Health, we are also pleased to bring John Pickering from Wanganui Vet Services, a recognised expert on dairy calf rearing systems, for two seminars later this month. On the evening of Tuesday 15th June at the Balclutha Town & Country Club, we are having a “Ladies Only” event, which includes a complimentary buffet meal. On Thursday 17th the seminar will be repeated at the Henley Hall at 10am (again, free). For more details, check our website or ring the clinic.

Calf Scours Anyone?

Despite the drying-off season being well and truly here, and things feeling a little more relaxed, it won't be long before your calf sheds will be brimming with activity. Inevitably 80% of farm calf sheds will also be brimming with calf scours. Rotavirus, Corona Virus, E.coli and Cryptosporidium are the biggest infectious causes of calf scours (in addition to nutritional scours). Rotavec is a vaccine which, given to the milking herd 3 weeks before calving, will boost the scour-protective antibody levels in the colostrum for the first 9 weeks of the season. Split herd vaccination can provide longer protection. If you have had bad cases of calf scours last year or want the best in protection, give us a ring at the clinic to talk about whether Rotavec would be a good idea on your farm. If you have used Rotavec before, and wish to do so again, now is the time to place your order, at either clinic.

Nutrition – monitoring cows on crop

Much can happen between now and calving as regards condition score and general health of your cows. Even a moderate loss of body condition can cost you a lot of money next season.

Are you also going away and won't be on hand to check whilst you are on the Gold Coast? To give you peace of mind or, if you just want to have an independent eye over your cows on crop to assess them (ongoing or one-off), we are offering a new monitoring service for cows during this period.

The full programme is a visit every 10-14 days for the duration of the dry period (preventative). One-off trouble shooting visits can also be done to encourage all parties involved to communicate effectively, get the right information and get the job back on the right track.

Sid has considerable experience doing this and will also involve your local farm vet. The visit normally takes 60-90 minutes depending on the number of mobs and herd size. If you are interested give Sid a call in the first instance (at the Milton clinic) or speak to any of the vets to tee this up.

BVD- what next?

Many farms are now in the pattern of ordering a bulk milk BVD antibody test in the spring. This is a great starting point for investigating / monitoring the BVD status of your herd. What then follows really depends on what the result of the test is, and what we know about other age-groups of animals in your operation. That's why we don't see the point in signing up to a fixed set of (sometimes unnecessary or inappropriate) bulk milk tests at the beginning of the season.

A high bulk milk antibody result, indicates about a 40% chance of the presence of a PI animal, which will be spreading the disease throughout your herd. We check for this with a bulk milk virus (PCR antigen) test. There is no doubt that it is economically sensible to identify and eliminate the PI(s). It is also worth blood testing a sample of young stock, to see if they too harbour a PI, because this has serious implications on breeding performance. If you had a high bulk milk antibody test through the season, and this has not been followed up with an investigation (by blood test) of the young stock, these quiet winter months are the time to do it!

Things to do in June:

- Run the cows back through the shed to check udders for mastitis.
- Finish all Leptospirosis vaccination; LeptoSure clients return completed paperwork.
- Selenium, copper and vitamin B12 supplementation of calves, and yearlings where appropriate.
- Order Rotavec for collection in July.
- Come to calf rearing seminars (15th & 17th June) RSVP to the clinic.
- Have a milking machine annual check done, and replace rubberware for the new season.
- Book in heifers for us to Teatseal – the best mastitis preventative.
- Speak to us about your trace element requirements for next season. The Nutritech range we have adopted has proved highly effective and economical.

Annual Clutha Vets Members' Golf Tournament.

Open to all Clutha vets members and their immediate families (regardless of experience or ability). No entry fees, no green fees, no talent required, just a great day!

Friday 11th June 2010, Owaka Golf Club (postponement day Friday 25th June)

Registration & morning tea @ 10.30 sharp, prior to tee-off.

BBQ lunch provided. Bar and refreshments available. Dinner and prize-giving follows golf day.

To enter, just ring (03) 418 1280 before 8th June.

A motorist in a BMW. was driving through South Otago one afternoon recently, when he came to an area of the road that was covered with a rather large puddle of water from a previous rain storm. Worried that he was going to damage the car and its engine in the deep water, he spotted a nearby cocky and asked how deep the water was. "No worries", said the local farmer "That water's only a few inches deep." Relieved, the motorist edged his car into the water, expecting to come out the other side in no time. Instead, as he drove in, the water came right up the side of the car, and the engine sputtered to a halt. Sitting there in his soaking wet luxury car, the motorist yelled at the local angrily: "I thought you said this water was only a few inches deep!!!" "Well," replied the farmer "It only come up to the waist of those ducks!"