



CUD

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

P.O. BOX 231, BALCLUTHA

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
Fax (03) 417 8031

September 2011

Clinic News It's been a busy few weeks as we'd expect at this time of the year. Our calving competition among the vets includes a Yahtzee this year, where various different presentations & deformities have to be ticked off. Live twin heifer calves are so far proving elusive. After a decent couple of weeks' weather, to help dry out some incredibly wet paddocks, it's starting to feel like spring. Oh, and the Rugby World Cup's under way. We now have vets from 8 different countries, 7 of which are involved in the World Cup. Not sure yet who Hanneke (“Clogs”) is supporting!

Misuse of Drugs - We are aware of a few cases recently where prescription drugs have not been used appropriately. These two need particular attention:

1. **Oxytocin** – is prescribed on farm for two uses in cows:

- i) To aid in milk let down in heifers and for mastitis cases to help milk the quarter out.
- ii) To cause uterine contraction *POST CALVING* to help expel the uterine fluids and contract the uterus down, aiding in prevention of uterine prolapse.

Oxytocin is not in any circumstance to be given to aid in calving the cow. It will cause uterine contraction making the calving more difficult, especially if the presentation is wrong or if the uterus is twisted.

2. **Excede LA** – is to be given *UNDER THE SKIN IN THE NECK*. Excede LA is not to be given in the muscle in the rump.

When giving any drugs to your animals if you are unsure of the route it is to be given, or the dose required, have a look at the printouts that we send out with your prescription each year, or check the side of the bottle. If you are unsure if you should be giving the drug at all, then give us a call and we can discuss the case.

Has Your Cow Got A Hairy Heart? - Traumatic pericarditis, affectionately known as “hairy heart” or “hardware disease” is caused by ingestion of a foreign body into the rumen which then cleverly works its way through the lung space to damage the heart. Offending items are usually fencing wire, nails and sections of old tyres. When the heart is damaged it can no longer pump properly and often other organs have been damaged along the way further complicating things. Clinical signs may include weight loss, anorexia, reduced milk production, depression, arching of the back and rapid breathing. Response to treatment is often poor and it usually carries a grave prognosis. It can be controlled to some extent by putting a magnet in the rumen, but nothing beats ensuring your paddocks are free of bits and pieces.

BVD Update - Some recent outbreaks in Southland involving beef and dairy cattle have reinforced the need for continued BVD monitoring, education and vaccination. As well as causing occasional deaths, poor production and a few unthrifty young cattle on chronically infected farms, BVD virus can have a significant impact on fertility and kill large numbers of young animals.

If you haven't yet done so, all bulls **must** be blood tested and vaccinated before going anywhere near your cows or heifers. Vaccination consists of two shots 3 - 4 weeks apart, with the 2nd shot at least three weeks before mating.

A sample of 15 maiden heifers should be blood tested to assess what exposure they have had to BVD virus. Depending on the result of this test, we can determine whether or not PIs are likely to be present, and also make recommendations on vaccination.

Please speak to a vet now if you are unsure about your BVD status, and make sure you have considered all classes of stock (calves, maiden heifers, milking cows and bulls).

Mastitis - The wet conditions certainly provided good opportunity for environmental mastitis bacteria to wreak havoc, and we have had several cases of high Bulk Somatic Cell Counts and high levels of clinical mastitis. Most mastitis samples so far have grown *Strep uberis*, as expected. Your prescribed spring mastitis drugs (e.g. Lactapen G, Clavulox, Penethject) should be looking after these infections adequately.

If you are experiencing ongoing problems (e.g. high cell count; high number of clinicals; poor response to treatment; teat end damage; poor milk out), please get in touch with us. There is usually more to it than just changing brand of teat spray!

Is That Cow Really Calving?? - In a survey carried out by Clutha Vets in 2008, over 30% of the cows we calved had rotten calves. These are not only an animal welfare problem but can also be a big cost. These cows usually require considerable veterinary intervention and antibiotic treatments, and often end up as poor producers and being empty/late due to ongoing uterine infection and/or damage (abscesses, adhesions etc). It should be noted that it only takes a few hours for a dead calf to start rotting. The warmth and fluid within the cow act like a slow cooker. There are three main reasons why rotten calvings occur:

1. **Twisted uterus** – cow in distress goes unnoticed or farmer does not recognise there is a problem when he checks her.
2. Cow slipping late term (i.e. not yet in springers).
3. Calf getting stuck (e.g. head/leg back) and not being recognised by the farmer.

The catch phrase we often hear from farmers in relation to rotten calvings is “I thought she was calving a couple of days ago but then nothing came of it.” Any cow acting unusually around calving (whether she is in the milkers or the springers) should have a vaginal exam performed, using a **clean** glove & lube. If you are unsure of what you are feeling or she just feels “wrong” then call the clinic to discuss it with a vet.

When performing your last night check of the springers, any cows that look to be having trouble calving should be brought in and checked or assisted that night. Leaving them till the next day to “see how she goes” is inadvisable.

Finally, **always** check for another calf *after every calving*. If she has twins then go back in and check for a third - they do occur!

Trace Element Testing - Now is a good time to be assessing copper and selenium status. Selenium can be monitored by a simple blood test (5 or 6 samples is usually enough), but copper needs to be assessed by liver biopsy. Cows tolerate this procedure extremely well, and it provides important information to assist with supplementation levels in the lead up to mating. Liver biopsies are best done after the cows have had a good feed, so turn out for an hour or two after milking before bringing them back in.

This Month's Retail News –

- ***New Merial Ancare World Cup Promotion*** – A short sleeved Rugby World Cup polo top on all 2.5lt & 5lt purchases of Eclipse & Genesis Pour-on & 5lt of Eprinex and other selected Merial Ancare drenches. Receive a World Cup Rugby jersey on Eprinex 20lt, Eclipse 10lt & Genesis Pour-on 10lt & Eclipse E Herd pack.
- ***Dectomax Pour-on Herd Pack*** – Purchase 15lt of pour-on or 2 Dectomax injection “Starter Packs” (2x500mls + 1x200mls free) & receive a Ridgeline Clothing Pack or backpack.
- ***Cydectin Pour-on 17lt*** – Great price.
- ***Eprinex Pour-on*** – Purchase 3 x 5lt get another 1 x 5lt free.

Joke - The other day I got caught short and had to make use of the public conveniences. I was sitting down, attending to my business, when a voice from the next door cubicle called out, "Hello there, how you doing?" I replied that I was doing fine. He then asked me, "What are you up to?" and I replied that I was "probably doing the same as you, I suppose". He then asked, "Is it alright if I come over?" I wasn't all that keen on that idea, so I told him "I'm a bit busy at the moment". Then he said, "Sorry, mate, I'm gonna have to hang up - some idiot in the next door cubicle keeps answering all my questions".