



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

December 2011

Clinic News: With the end of the year fast approaching we have a couple of staff changes occurring at the Balclutha end. Suzanne Craig is leaving after providing 10 years of service to the companion animal sector. Over this time she has treated many farm dogs (& cats) along with a large number of town pets. Hanneke van Kooten will also be leaving as she and her fiancé, Karl, head to Canterbury. Hanneke has been a great contributor to the dairy side of the business over the past 4½ years, working predominantly in the Paretai/Owaka area, and I'm sure her cheerful smile and 'can do' attitude will be missed on many dairy farms throughout South Otago.

Finally, from all of us, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and hope you all get some time to put your feet up and enjoy the sunshine (which seems to have finally arrived) over the festive season.



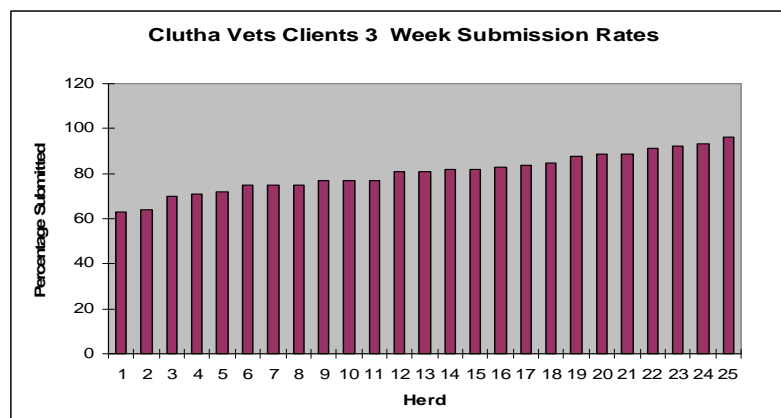
Managing Mastitis

December is a time when cow aspects of life on the farm can relax a little with AI starting to draw to a close and the bulls left to pick up the (hopefully few) remaining cows left to be mated. It is also a time when the pattern of mastitis can change from environmental to contagious causation – milking management must not slip the mind especially with any relief milkers and routine changes likely over the holiday period.

At this time of year the teat spray concentration can be reduced **slightly** from spring to mid-lactation: 1 ltr concentrate to every 4 ltrs water (at a 2.3% initial concentration). Any difficult cases of mastitis should be cultured to ensure the right treatments are being used (and to get an idea of the bugs involved) – this will help identify where the problem is coming from on *your* farm. It is too late to get a sample from a cow already in the treatment process – take a sample from every cow before you treat labeling with cow number, quarter and date, and chuck it in the freezer (our sample pots are free), then bring in the problem samples for us to culture.

Mating

Most people are four or more weeks into mating now with the end of AI fast approaching. Below is a graph of 3 week submission rates (SR) from this season for 25 of Clutha Vets dairy clients. This is real data from MINDA, accessed using the Infovet program for a range of farms in terms of herd size and ownership structure across the practice area. As you can see there is a wide range of results across the farms with some achieving well above the target of 90%, and others achieving 3 week submission rates in the mid 60s. Surprising as it may be, some of the 500 cow plus herds have the highest 3 week SR showing that the 90% target is an achievable one even in the bigger herds.



In order to achieve a good 6 week in calf rate (industry target 78%) herds need high SR and good conception rates (CR). The industry target for 3 week SR is 90% with the industry target for CR being 60%. Farms which have had very poor SR (< 75% three week SR) also have low CR as they are usually mating cows which are in their first heat and these cows have a much reduced CR. Therefore, on these farms there is likely to be a rather disastrous outcome in terms of the herd reproduction which will have long term ramifications especially with only 4% inductions next season. For example, a herd with 75% 3 week SR which has no interventions is likely to end up with around a 60% 6 week in calf rate. Current research shows the expected empty rate given the mating length.

Total weeks of mating (AB + bull)			
6 week in calf rate	9 weeks	12 weeks	15 weeks
60%	19%	11%	6%

Given that the limit for inductions next season is just 4% this means that for farms with a low 6 week in calf rate there are going to be very few options.

1. If they want to have a short mating period (9 weeks) then they will have to prepare for a very high empty rate (19% or more) and at \$2200+/-cow this could become very expensive.
2. The other option is to mate for longer and have a lower empty rate, however this could mean that you are still calving in late November and will also mean fewer days in milk for a large proportion of your cows.
3. The last, but best, option you have is to try to improve your herd's 6 week in calf rate. The aim on any farm should be to put up every cow at least once during the AB period, otherwise they may never come on heat. This late in the season there are few options available to you which include:
 - a) Improve your heat detection –
 - i. KAMAR every non cycling cow
 - ii. Get back up on the vet stand
 - iii. Paddock checks

After having palpated several hundred cows recently it seems that there are a large number of cows on some farms which have no activity on their ovaries despite looking in good condition. This could be due to the poor late Spring weather, however leaving these cows to just see how they go is not advisable.

- b) CIDR all non cycling cows (especially NCC late calvers)
- c) Ovsynch or CIDR all NCC dependant on state of ovaries post palpation.

There is still time to improve your SR and 6 week in calf rates if you intervene now.

InCalf

InCalf is a DairyNZ initiative which utilises trained InCalf advisors to help farmers improve their herd's fertility using a PLAN, DO, REVIEW process. If you are unhappy with your herd's reproductive performance or feel that you would like to do more to improve your herd's performance than just CIDR'ing all non cycling cows, then talk to your vet about this new and revolutionary way of approaching herd reproduction. Clutha Vets has seven trained InCalf advisors ready to help you achieve your goals.



Bull Management

Getting your bull management right is paramount if you are to achieve as low an empty rate as possible. If you start out with a low 6 week in calf rate then you will have a high empty rate (length of mating dependent). Most people will have already purchased their bulls however now is a good time to assess whether or not you will have enough. To do this you need to estimate the number of non pregnant cows you are likely to have at the end of AB. You can do this by looking at the fertility focus report on MINDA, or by looking at your herd's non return rate and submission rate, alternatively you could give the clinic a call and we can help you. A 500 cow herd with an estimated 6 week in calf rate will need:

$$500 \text{ cows} \times 40\% \text{ not in calf} = 200 \text{ non pregnant cows}$$

$$1 \text{ bull}/30 \text{ non pregnant cows} = 200/30 = \mathbf{7 \text{ bulls with the cows at all times}}$$

You need to swap the bulls every 3-4 days to allow them to rest so **you will need at least 14 bulls**. There should always be at least two bulls with every mob, bull numbers should be doubled on CIDR return days and herds which have had poorer submission rates need to have extra bulls.

All bulls should be BVD blood tested and vaccinated twice for BVD – 4 weeks apart (ask sellers for the evidence of this). Bulls should also be Lepto vaccinated.

BVD

For the farms that signed up for bulk milk BVD testing these results should have been received via email by now. Farms which had a positive PCR result indicating the presence of one or more PI milking animals in the herd should have been dealt with/be being dealt with by now as leaving PI animals in the herd will lead to poorer reproductive performance. Farms that had a negative PCR (no virus in the milk) should check and see which cows **WERE NOT** milking into the vat on the second pickup (ie late calvers or antibiotic cows) as these animals will not have been included in the last test. They need to be ruled out as potential PI animals which should be done asap via a blood test.

Abamectin Toxicity

Drenching young calves should always be undertaken with caution. Toxicity is a real issue, especially pre-weaning. The need to drench at all pre-weaning must be questioned. Worm establishment and their gastrointestinal effects are much less in calves predominately on a milk diet. Providing clean pasture is the most important aspect to minimising parasites pre-weaning. Drench should never ever be mixed with milk or given at the calfeteria. Suckling stimulates the oesophageal groove reflex which bypasses the rumen sending the liquid straight into the abomasum (4th stomach) where it is absorbed much more quickly creating a higher risk for toxicity.

Abamectin (Matrix, Alliance, Outlaw etc.) is widely used but has a small margin of safety, especially in young stock. Deaths and nervous signs have been reported when given as little as 1.5x the recommended dose. This applies to all forms of the drench; oral, pour on & injectable. Drench young stock with a combination drench that excludes abamectin (Arrest, Oxfen, Scanda etc.) then switch back to a triple as soon as they are of age (see below). Incidentally these alternatives contain levamisole which also has a low margin of error in young stock so always ensure when drenching young stock your weights for dosing are correct.

Rules for drenching young stock:

- Never drench calves under 4mths or 120kg with drenches containing abamectin.
- Never mix drench into milk or put it through a calfeteria.
- Don't orally dose next to the calfeteria as the oesophageal groove will be stimulated. Take the calves to the yards to drench.
- Never swap drench containers. If decanting to smaller container always write on the container or transfer back to the original container when finished.
- Double check correct product is being used. Pour-on's given orally are lethal.
- Check drench gun is measuring accurately
- Weigh animals and split into groups if necessary. Whilst it is usually recommended to drench to the heaviest in the mob this must not be done with young stock.
- Don't drench the dog with abamectin. It is ineffective at killing worms but effective at killing dogs.

Calves Dying With Nervous Signs

We have had several cases of Vitamin B1 deficiency and lead poisoning in calves recently, and while these are not the only causes of nervous signs in calves at this time of year they are important causes to keep in mind for sudden death or when animals are showing nervous signs.

Lead Poisoning occurs due to ingestion of lead or lead containing substances with common causes being lead paint or lead in batteries. Only small amounts are needed to cause toxicity. Young, inquisitive calves usually end up ingesting lead after licking lead based products with the clinical signs dependant on the amount of lead ingested. Acutely affected animals are usually found dead, or staggering with blindness and muscle tremors, head pressing and salivation which leads to death 12 to 14 hours. Less acute cases show signs of being lethargic, off colour, and not eating, leading to poor growth or weight loss.

Thiamine/Vitamin B1 deficiency presents as staggering animals which don't appear to be able to see and could be frothing at the mouth with muscle tremors. The disease progresses to the animal lying on its side, with an outstretched neck, muscle rigidity, and seizures, with the animal eventually dying. The cause of thiamine deficiency is not well understood but sudden changes in diet, and excess sulphur intake can both play a role.

Both diseases are treatable providing the affected animals are seen to early in the course of the disease. If you are having trouble with calves “not looking right”, or dying suddenly, then call the clinic ASAP to discuss the problem.

Leptospirosis Vaccination

It is Lepto vaccination season again and we strongly advise that calves be vaccinated early to reduce the ‘window of opportunity’ for them to become infected with Leptospirosis. As Leptospirosis is an OSH risk, it is the responsibility of the employer to minimise the risk of your staff (and visitors to the farm, including us!) contracting this disease. Early vaccination is part of achieving this.

Best practice is the vaccination of all calves from **12 weeks** of age, with two injections of a Leptospirosis vaccine 4 – 6 weeks apart. Vaccination is usually combined with a ‘5 in 1’ clostridial vaccine (making it ‘7 in 1’) to provide additional protection against pulpy kidney, blackleg, tetanus, black disease and malignant oedema.

Our technicians will be in contact with you early in the New Year to arrange vaccination of your calves at a time that suits you.

Lameness Seminar

Before you head off for a break send your workers to our popular Lameness Seminar and know you can leave your cows in good hands - or come along for a refresher yourself. Places are limited so be in quick.

Date: Wednesday 21 December 2011

Time: 9.00am – 3.00pm

Location: Balclutha Clinic – 3 Wilson Rd, Balclutha.

Cost: \$200 per person (includes morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea)

Format: A morning of training then a practical afternoon on farm

Registrations to Balclutha – (03) 418 1280 or Milton (03) 417 8032

This Month's Retail News:

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches** – All purchases of pour-on & injection receive a Xmas ham & go in the draw for the ‘Take a Mate’ Fishing Competition, and also the draw for an outdoor barbecue package including a stainless steel barbecue, terracotta brazier, Icy-tek chilly bin, gas bottle & much more.
- **Cydectin & Dectomax Drenches** – Receive a \$30 New World voucher with selected Dectomax drenches. Plus some special pack deals on Cydectin Pour-ons.
- **Alliance or Converge 5lt** – Purchase 2 x 5lt & receive a drench gun & cattle drenching hook – only while stocks last.
- **Combat Topline Cattle Pour-on** – Super special – only \$716.83 nett incl GST for 7.5lt – will treat 300 x 500kg cows for \$2.39 each.

