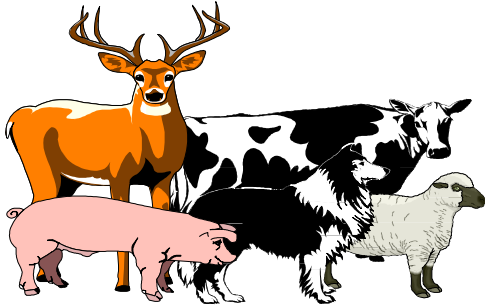


Dairy Farmer Newsletter April 2007

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Practice News

Teresa & Tash are managing wear & tear injuries. They will be helping in the short term to fill the gap left by Leanne Walker who is leaving in April, as well as continuing their dairy consultancy work. The plus side is there should always be a friendly face ready to answer any questions if you stop in to the clinic. Make sure you book in your yearly

Milk Quality Review (read Dry Cow Consult) before cabin fever sets in.

Congratulations to Mark Watt – winner of the 2007 Otago Sharemilker of the Year.

Milk Quality Issues

As cows are entering the wind down period of their lactation, BMSCC may well be winding up. The incidence of contagious mastitis is at risk of

increasing as the season progresses and this will be reflected in the BMSCC. If there have been any milking machine problems through the season or liners have not been replaced adequately, cows teats will be showing the signs of wear. Suboptimal teat condition predisposes cows to infection by the dreaded *Staph aureus*- a major cause of high BMSCC. *Staph aureus* classically produces a scenario of a high number of subclinically infected cows with grossly normal milk, which run at a high ICSCC and spread the infection through the herd. After a cow with *Staph* has been milked, the following 6 cows milked with that cluster after her can become infected.

Another later season contributor to the BMSCC is the inadvisable practice of stopping spraying the teats. Effective teat spraying is one of the major defences against contagious mastitis. There are several bugs in addition to *Staphs*, which are easily killed by effective teat spraying. In the absence of teat spraying, they will cause a level of subclinical as well as clinical mastitis and again push up that BMSCC.

You can also utilize herd test data to detect and dry off any high cell count low producing cows at this stage. Identifying these sub-clinically infected cows is essential to help stop the spread through your herd. If you do not wish to dry these cows off at this stage, then at least consider running them as a separate mob and milking them last. This will help protect the rest of your herd.

In the absence of herd test data, another effective way of identifying these problem cows is the Rapid Mastitis Testing (RMT). RMT is a cow side test that detects subclinical mastitis in individual quarters by the visible reaction between the cells present in a small amount of milk and reagent solution. The equipment – a 4 well paddle with squeeze bottle attached and mixing solution can be purchased from us for <\$50.

Drying Off

Dry cow treatment aims:

- *Treat existing infections at drying off
- *Promote faster keratin plug formation
- *Prevent new infections

As usual, you will require a consultation with a

vet to ensure that you are using the most suitable product(s) for your herd. If you have not already had a consult, please phone the clinic to make an appointment. Coming pre-prepared with your mastitis data for the season means you will be able to get much more value from the vet time.

The dry period is not just a rest for the milking staff – cows require a dry period that is sufficiently long to allow udder tissue to repair and rejuvenate (minimum 6wks, preferably 8wks). If this is insufficient the next lactation yield may be 25-30% lower.

Candidates for drying off early are –

- ✓ Thin cows. (use your Dexcel Condition Scoring booklet)
- ✓ Low yielding cows
- ✓ High cell count cows
- ✓ Induction cows.

We recommend DCT should be carried out along the lines of the SAMM plan. The whole herd should receive antibiotic DCT if there has been either a high level of clinical mastitis (>40% of cows) through the season, or a high BMSCC (>300,000). Selective treatment can be used in herds where mastitis has been less of a problem and threshold for treatment vs. non-treatment really comes down to how aggressive you wish to be. The SAMM Plan guidelines are to treat any cow that has had clinical mastitis this season, and any cow that has recorded 150,000 cells/ml (or heifer >120,000) at any herd test through the season. Teatseal is a non-antibiotic treatment that prevents any new infection for the whole dry period, and may be appropriate in some herds.

It is important to use DCT correctly – you must have plenty of time and staff available for the job, even if this means drying off over several days.

The method used to dry-off cows can influence how many udder infections establish during the dry period. Reduce production to less than 10litres/cow/day by restricting feed (but not water) intake and continue milking twice a day to avoid dramatic BMSCC increases.

After drying off, feed at a low level for another seven days until milk production has ceased, and only then start to increase allowances.

Leptosure

Leptospirosis is a disease that affects cattle, sheep, deer, pigs and other animals. It can be transmitted to humans by contact with urine, aborted material and certain offal. We have all heard the horror stories of how ill people can get with it. The aim of Leptosure is to minimize the risk of people working in a dairying enterprise from contracting leptospirosis. It involves doing a yearly Risk Management Plan consult with you vet and is OSH approved and LIC listed. After this consult you can then make changes, if necessary, to minimize the risk of lepto on your farm. It also enables you to make a vaccination plan for your herd so you vaccinate the cattle yourself. Let us know at the clinic if you are interested.

BVD Update

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) can have a large impact on the reproductive and productive performance of your herd. About 80-90% of NZ farms have had the virus at some time, with about 60% of cattle having evidence of past infection. Have your scanning results been as good as you would have liked? Do you have a BVD problem in your herd? There is now a simple bulk milk test that can answer that question. It will tell you if there is a BVD virus excretor in the herd. These excretors are usually the low producers in the herd. Thus if the Bulk Milk Test is positive, we would proceed to blood test the lowest 10-20% producers. Contact Teresa at the clinic if you would like your herd tested.

Heifer Health Issues

Now is the time to make sure heifer replacements are on track to reach target mating weights in November. Adequate nutrition is a must, with worms and trace elements being the other major factors we can control. *Eclipse*, a combination pour-on is **the** product of choice for drenching cattle <12mths of age. Selenium and copper deficiencies limit health and growth. They can be diagnosed with a quick, reliable and inexpensive blood test. Then you can have a proactive plan to achieve optimum levels over the winter. Grazing calves (and all stock) on crop or Brassica's over

winter increases the risk of copper &/or selenium deficiency. Bullets are probably the best means of supplementing copper to yearlings while they are still just manageable in size. Copper injection is a bit more practical for the in-calf heifers. One of the best methods of supplementing selenium in calves is via long acting selenium injection (Selovin LA). This will give up to 12mths coverage, lasting until mating. Most other selenium products are really only top-ups, lasting 6wks at best. If paddocks have had prills applied, care should be taken because of potential selenium toxicity. The best person to formulate a supplementation plan is your vet.

Ensure your calves lepto and clostridial vaccines are complete before the winter. Using 7-in-1 gives protection against a number of the fatal "Clostridial diseases" that may occur with the transition to crop (and mud) – these include pulpy kidney, black leg and tetanus.

Dehorning of last year's calves should also be done by now. Under the new animal welfare laws, all cattle over 9 months of age must have local anaesthetic (a vet visit) to be dehorned. Get it done quickly! The best time to dehorn any calf, however, is in the first month of life.

Induction Cows

By now you must have your potential induction cows for next spring clearly identified, and be looking towards managing them in accordance with "The Induction Code". The stage of pregnancy at the time of induction is critical to ensuring no live (but unviable) calves are born. This information will have come from your pregnancy testing, and you should have evidence to support it. Cows should be between 3 and 8 years old, and in condition score between 4.5 and 6.5 (ideally 5 and 6). Remember, adding one condition score (about 30kg liveweight) requires an additional 150-200 kg DM of pasture (or equivalent) above maintenance. It may be time to dry them off now to allow for the extra weight gain required. A cow is metabolically more able to gain condition during lactation compared with the dry period.

Other measures can be put in place to help light cows gain condition through the winter. Our

policy concerning drenching at drying off is that routine whole-herd treatment is not advisable. However, selective drenching of lighter or young cows can be advantageous. To gain the most benefit from this, ideally dry off and drench these animals early. Another alternative is the Rumensin 100 day capsule – which helps the bugs in the rumen extract more energy from the same amount of food eaten.

Cows that have had chronic lameness, high SCC, or recurrent clinical mastitis should also not be induced.

Other conditions that must be met include ensuring there is sufficient feed available to feed induction cows as springers from the time of the first injection; adequate trace element status; magnesium supplementation started at least three weeks before the induction programme (Rumbul bullets are good for this); and there must be a documented management plan, including all of the above plus minimum twice daily inspection of cows and euthanasia of calves born alive.

You should be aware that we are unable to induce cows at a runoff, due to the above requirements and also the welfare code on the transport of pregnant animals.

Rotavirus

Just a reminder for all those Rotavec users (and should be users). The vaccine should be given between 10 and 4 weeks before the cow calves. So if your calving spread is more than six weeks, it is best to do early and later calving mobs at different times. For most people this means a first shot in mid July. We purchase Rotavec to order, so if you are a user, or potential user, please let June (Milton) or Wilma (Balclutha) know how many doses you will require and by when.

There is a new version of the vaccine available this year – it covers Coronavirus as well, another cause of calf scours. It also has been modified so that less site reactions occur at the site of injection.

Merchandise Matters

This months bargains:

- **Genesis and Eclipse Pour-on** – Get the classic Ancare oilskin vest with these products.
- **Genesis Pour-on** – Purchase a 6lt promo pack & pay for 5lt.
- **Cydectin Pour-on** – Pay for 15lt & get 17lt ie. 2lt free.
- **Eprinex Pour-on** - Get your Prezzy cards (pre-loaded visa card useable everywhere visa is) \$200 with 20lt, \$50 with 5lt, \$50 with 2.5lt Alpha.
- **Tempor Lice Pour-on** – Buy 5lt and get a bonus 1lt.
- **Kaiwaka Clothing** – Get ready for winter with 30% off all shop stock.

Joke

Real notes to the Milkman

These notes left for milkmen came from England, where milk apparently is still being delivered.

"Please leave an extra pint of paralysed milk."

"Sorry not to have paid your bill before, but my wife had a baby and I've been carrying it around in my pocket for weeks."

"Please knock. My TV's broken down and I missed last nights Coronation Street. If you saw it, will you tell me what happened over a cup of tea."

"My daughter says she wants a milkshake. Do you do it before you deliver or do I have to shake the bottle."

"Please send me a form for cheap milk, for I have a baby two months old and did not know about it until a neighbour told me."

"Milk is needed for the baby. Father is unable to supply it."

"From now on please leave two pints every other day and one pint on the days in between, except Wednesdays and Saturdays when I don't want any milk."

"My back door is open. Please put milk in 'fridge, get money out of cup in drawer and leave change on kitchen table in pence, because we want to play bingo tonight."

"Please leave no milk today. When I say today, I mean tomorrow, for I wrote this note yesterday."

