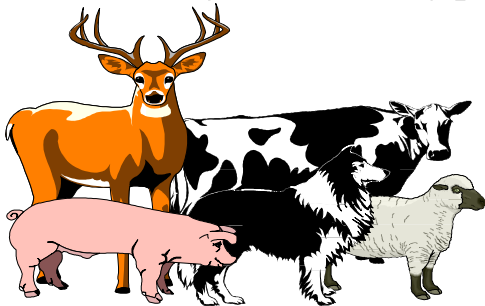


Dairy Farmer Newsletter October 2007

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Practice News

You will see Louise Oldham, an ex-dairy farmer and trainee Rural Animal Technician (RAT), assisting the vets at the Milton end with debudding calves etc. Kara-lee Clark, head nurse in the small animal clinic is putting all the

knowledge she learnt on her RAT course into action. You will see her out and about, calf debudding, metrichecking cows and anything else RAT's do. We are increasingly doing more shed checks as people run into grading problems in their BMSCC. If you have any mastitis problems please do not hesitate to contact us. CVAs' in-

house milk analysis for bacteria has been very popular, so keep those milk samples coming. We will now have a retail vet at the Balclutha clinic available between 12-1pm to assist you in any way we can. This is to cover during the busy time.

Around the Practice

Spring has well and truly arrived and big yellow has been out for a couple of weeks. Production is going well on most farms. Cows are achieving great prices down south and so far it has been a good season, apart from the excess precipitation at the start of the season.

Endometritis

Early detection and aggressive treatment of dirty cows is essential to successfully mating these animals. It has been shown in trials, that cows that have a vaginal discharge, a month before mating, have a lower pregnancy rate than cows that have little or no vaginal discharge.

Cows with an infected uterus post calving may, or may not, be noticeable in the dairy shed. Some of them have a smelly, purulent, vaginal discharge, which is obvious, and others may go undetected because nothing is evident.

To overcome this, we recommend cows have an internal examination to determine if there is an infection present.

First of all cows that have a higher chance of being infected should definitely be checked out. These "At Risk" cows include those that have suffered retained foetal membranes (RFM's), have any smelly discharge post-calving, assisted calvings, dead or induced calves, or twins.

They should be examined 3 weeks post calving. If your "at risk" cows have not been checked yet, then now is a good time to group all the "at-risk" cows that calved up to 3 weeks ago and get them examined by your vet.

Alternatively, at this stage all cows in the milking herd can be "metrichecked". This device allows rapid assessment of uterine health status of all animals.

When examining non-cyclers, or pregnancy testing, we have had strong positive feedback from clients where we have metrichecked the whole herd. The general feeling is that a significant number of dirty cows have been

discovered, that would have otherwise gone undetected.

We can metricheck herds at milking time on a rotary platform or we can use pit-fits and tread boards to do herds with herringbone sheds (between milkings).

Factors affecting numbers of cows cycling

Ideally one cow should produce one calf every 365 days. With the average length of pregnancy 282 days, that only leaves an average of 83 days for a cow to recover from calving, start cycling and conceive. The first part of these 83 days is the time taken for the uterus to shrink down and prepare for the next pregnancy. This period averages 42 days (52 days for first calvers) and is called the anoestrous interval. If you do the maths this only leaves 41 days, or at most, two opportunities for the cow to conceive, considering a cow cycles every 21-22 days.

The main factors affecting the length of the anoestrous interval include:

1. Condition score (CS) at calving:

For each additional score at calving the anoestrous interval may be reduced by up to 6-8 days. A cow of CS 5.0 will take on average 42 days to cycle, and a cow of CS 4.0 will take 48-50 days.

The CS targets are 5.0 for an adult cow and 5.5 for a 2 year old.

2. CS change from Calving to mating:

CS loss needs to be limited to a minimum of 1 to 1.5. Transition management and the post calving feeding levels influence this.

3. Other:

Other factors include feeding level around calving time, cow age, calving date, breed and disease.

Heat detection

An essential requirement for the successful use of artificial breeding is ACCURATE and THOROUGH detection of oestrous. Oestrous expression is greatest during the quiet times. Thus the best times to observe the herd are (in declining order)

-Late in the evening

-Before collecting the cows in the morning

-Mid morning or before the evening milking

It is best to do it as unobtrusively as possible and with your notebook in hand.

Difficulties are encountered because-

- Cows may come in heat any time between 18 and 24 days. Even successive cycles of the same cow may vary by several days.
- Oestrous may only be shown for a very short time. The range is 2 to 30 hours. Also, it may be very poorly expressed which is termed a 'silent heat'.
- Oestrous often starts during the night and oestrous expression is greatest during the quiet times. This means oestrous is seen less often around milking times and when the cows are being fed.
- Towards the later stages of the mating season, fewer cows are on heat, as more are pregnant. Thus, there are fewer numbers in the sexually active groups and the mounting behaviour may not be as obvious.

EU Hormone ban

On 25th July The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) placed a ban on the use of oestradiol (or "OB" as we commonly call it) in food producing animals. This is in response to the recent banning of oestradiol and its esters in all food-producing animals in the European Union. The EU will not import any milk or meat products from any animal treated with oestradiol products. The effect of the restriction is that oestradiol is no longer allowed to be used in a number of species including cattle in NZ. Oestradiol was a component of our non-cycling programme over the past few years.

Non cycling cows

This year we have 2 treatment plans available for our non-cycling cows.

The programmes we are using are called Cidr Synch and Ovsynch.

CidrSynch needs to be started approximately 8 days before you want to start mating. It involves a series of 3 injections and the use of a CIDR to initiate oestrous and ovulation.

The CidrSynch programme is recommended based on international research and extrapolation from programmes tested in New Zealand. The science behind it suggests we should get the same, if not better, response to our non cycling treatment than we have done in previous years

with the 8 Day CIDR programme.

The CIDR - primes the body such that there is a greater chance a pregnancy will occur.
-ensures the cow is more likely to show obvious heat signs.

There are 2 different CidrSynch options. Discuss with your vet which option would best suit you.

The Ovsynch programme was originally developed in the USA in 1995 for use in cycling adult dairy cows. A clinical trial in 2002 in 8 New Zealand dairy herds demonstrated 63% of non-cycling cows were in calf by day 24 of mating. This programme requires 3 injections. It involves FTAI after 10 days and then AI on detected heat onward. At FTAI at the end of the programme, some of the cows do not show behavioural oestrous which is different to other programmes. It has been used by a small number of our farmers in the past few years with varying reception from the farmers.

Action this month-cows

- Metrichk the whole herd (**early Oct**)
- Ensure cows are adequately fed. Dry matter intake should be 3.5% or more of cow live weight. Consider supplementary feeding (**now**). Young or light cows can be put in a separate mob to the main milking herd and given preferential feeding. Rumensin can be used in lighter mobs or indeed the whole herd if our target condition score has not been reached
- Provide a transition from first round pasture to second. This can be done by using the last of the first round for night feeds and the first of the second round for day feeds. This will make a more gradual change from winter grass to spring pasture.
- Ensure mineral levels are adequate by doing liver biopsies/blood test. The important tests include selenium and copper (**late Sept**). Iodine supplementation should be started 4 to 6 weeks pre mating (**late Sept**). Low iodine levels are associated with silent heats and poor conception rates.

- Tail paint the main herd now (**early Oct**). This will enable you to observe the cows for pre-mating heats and give you an idea of their performance. Record which cows are on weekly, and then repaint them. This will enable you to observe trends.
- Tail paint all cows that *calve* from now on (that is our late calvers) a specific colour. This will assist both you and us to make decisions during examination of non-cycling cows.
- Examine and treat non cycling cows prior to the start of mating (**8days pre PSM**)

Action this month- heifers

- Ensure your heifers are 60% of their mature live weight at mating. The effectiveness of synchrony programmes used for heifers are dependant on the heifers already cycling at the start of mating. The main determinant of this is heifer body weight. You will get a poor response to a synchrony programme if your heifers are under target weight
- Mate maiden heifers early (**late Oct**)
- Ensure mineral supplementation is adequate.

Action this month - bulls

- Buy an adequate number of suitable bulls early, and isolate until confirmed free of BVD and EBL.
- Blood test bulls for BVD and EBL, if not already tested (**As soon as possible**). Bulls carrying BVD have poor fertility, and can transfer the virus to in-contact cows, which are then dry at scanning, abort, or give birth to dead or deformed calves. It is estimated that 1% of the adult bull population are BVD carriers. Bulls that are positive for carrying the BVD virus are culled.
- Vaccinate bulls against BVD virus. The bulls require vaccination to protect them against cows that they mate with that may already carry the virus. (**Now and 4**

weeks later). Ensure second vaccination is given 3 weeks before bulls are used.

- If the bulls have not been vaccinated for leptospirosis previously, they require 2 injections 4 weeks apart. If they have had vaccination in previous years, they require just one booster dose.

Merchandise Matters

- Eclipse and Genesis Pour-on 2.5 and 5 Litres. Receive 5 piece Maxwell Williams bakeware set.
- Genesis Pour-on 12.5 Litre Herd Pack – very sharp price.
- Eprinex Pour-on 20 Litre – special deal great price.
- Cydectin Pour-on 15 Litre – extra sharp price \$1340 nett incl
- Eukanuba Premium Large breed 20kg \$119.95 Plus buy 10 and get a free 1.
- Hills Diet Canine Active 22.6kg only \$126.25

Some Light Relief

Travelling in a train were a Wallaby, an All Black, a spectacular looking blonde and an older lady. After several minutes of the trip, the train happens to pass through a dark tunnel, and the unmistakable sound of a slap is heard. When they leave the tunnel, the Wallaby had a big red slap mark on his cheek.

(1) The blonde thought - "That horrible Wallaby wanted to touch me and by mistake, he must have put his hand on the lady, who in turn must have slapped his face."

(2) The older lady thought - "This dirty Wallaby laid his hands on the blonde and she smacked him."

(3) The Wallaby thought - "That bloody All Black put his hand on that blonde and by mistake she slapped me."

(4) The All Black thought - "I hope there's another tunnel soon so I can smack that stupid Wallaby again."