

Calf Link



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Calf Rearing Newsletter No.11

Monday 16th September,

Everything comes back to bugs!

As more calves move out of the sheds, and the number of replacement calves born each day starts to dwindle, so too do the newsletters. This will be our second last weekly newsletter, with the newsletters changing to fortnightly from next week.

On review of the topics we have discussed, a lot seem to be talking about bacteria, or really bugs in general. So it seems fitting to continue the trend, but this time how to control internal parasites.

As always, if you have specific questions you would like answered on any calf rearing topic, please email your name and contact details to Elspeth -edunne@cluthavets.co.nz - and we will publish the answers in the next **newsletter**.

Hair loss in Calves

There have been a few queries recently about calves losing hair. There are many reasons as to hair loss, and the cause can often be found by where the hair loss has occurred as well as by the calves environment.

Tail and back of legs: often associated with scouring or faeces scalding the skin and causing the subsequent hair loss.

Muzzle or face area: often close to the mouth, due to contact of milk or other feed stuff.

Neck, and over shoulders: typically not seen in young calves but hair loss in this area is often typical of lice

Legs: is the bedding wet or if they are outside, is there mud around the feeders and water troughs? Continual moisture can cause a scald and hair loss.

Unless the calves are particularly bothered or the bare skin appears infected or irritated, hair loss itself is not of major concern. The calves mightn't win a beauty competition but don't worry, it will grow back!



Photo Competition

With only a couple of weeks to go until the competition ends, time is running out so get your photo in for a chance to win a *FACE Body and Beauty* Gift Voucher valued up to \$100, thanks to MSD Animal Health. Entries can be emailed to edunne@cluthavets.co.nz or send to 0275770078.



Giving tips on stealing milk perhaps? The ever present lab at the calf shed. (B. Geddes)



Peace and quiet; must be hungry! (M. Geddes)



Just a wee bit cute! (J. Wendelgest)

Internal Parasite Control

There is no set drench plan that will suit all farms and all situations. A drench plan for your particular situation should be discussed and developed with your vet. Our knowledge of parasites, drenches and anthelmintic resistance management is continually evolving, and there are no set recipes to follow.

While many calves are still in sheds, it is important to start planning ahead. Please remember that calves do not need to be drenched until after they have been grazing pasture for three weeks. The practice of pouring drench into calves' milk is both unnecessary and rather irresponsible. There have been calf deaths reported as a result of this practice and we don't want to see any one in this situation.

Resistance is the ability of a parasite to survive exposure to a dose of chemical that would normally be fatal. Currently most worm control programmes rely heavily on the use of anthelmintics. As such, resistance is an important issue and as evidenced by a national survey carried out in 2004/5 already well established. For example in this survey 92% of cattle farms had resistance to ivermectin and on only 6% of farms were all drench groups fully effective. There are several strategies to delay the development of resistance:

1. Do not under dose. (Oral & injection most reliable).
2. Limit the use of pour-ons as much as possible especially in colder weather as the absorption of these can be variable.
3. Always use combination products in stock less than 15 months of age. Cooperia are an issue in this age group and the "mectin" type products alone (abamectin - Genesis, ivermectin - Ivomec, eprinomectin - Eprinex, doramectin - Dectomax and any other "me too" copies) control this parasite very poorly. In addition the use of combinations has been proven to slow the development of resistance compared to the use of single actives alone. There should be no use of single actives in cattle under 15 months of age.
4. In older stock Cooperia are less of an issue however from the resistance development point of view the use of combination products is still best practice.

5. Oral combinations include Arrest C, Switch C and Matrix C. The latter being a triple combination would be the preferred product here. When stock are bigger and oral drenching is less practical use a combination injection – Eclipse E (combination of eprinomectin & levamisole). Finally if you must use a pour-on use a combination pour-on – Eclipse. This is a combination of abamectin and levamisole. Avoid single active pour-ons – there is greater than a 9 in 10 chance they will not be fully effective.
6. Quarantine drench new arrivals with a triple combination (Matrix C), before mixing with other stock.
7. Regularly check the effectiveness of drenches by monitoring live weight gains and faecal egg counts done 12 – 14 days after drenching.
8. When it comes to drench intervals there are no recipes as so many factors can affect this. With the oral drenches as a rule the interval required is likely to be 4 – 5 weeks. Rarely should you need to drench at less than a 4 week interval. The injections and pour-ons containing one of the "mectins" have some degree of persistent activity so drench intervals can as a rule be extended somewhat although as resistance develops the persistent activity can reduce. It is likely that you will be able to have a drench interval in the 6 – 7 week region with Eclipse E and Eclipse and if you resort to single action pour-ons, Dectomax, Eprinex, Genesis etc.
9. Develop an effective control programme in conjunction with your vet.

With most calves still on the home farm, not a lot of thought has yet gone into the runoff blocks. When it comes to parasites, beware of runoff situations where calves are the only stock grazing there year after year. This can result in very high worm challenges being placed on future calf populations. Worms becoming resistant to drench is a developing problem. Reliance on drenching alone by itself and carrying young stock on the same area annually, will only encourage the rapid development of drench resistance.

If you would like any further advice regarding parasite control, please contact us at the clinic.