

Calf Link

Calves, Calves, and more Calves!

With the calf sheds back into life and the pens steadily (or rapidly) filling with calves, life is getting busy. Newborn calves and sick calves can take a lot of time as well as feeding all the other calves as well as they transition into becoming ruminants. While I hope there haven't been too many problems or complications with your calves, now might be the time to review some of the main points that we have covered already as they might be a little more relevant to you now with lots of calves in the shed.

So grab a quick coffee, have a read, dig out those old newsletter and remember, 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



Photo Competition

After the calf rearing season slows, wouldn't it be nice to have a bit of self pampering to finally remove the smell of dried milk and calf poo? Wouldn't it be even nicer if you didn't have to pay for it? Send in a photo of your cute calves and you could win yourself a *FACE Body and Beauty* Gift Voucher valued up to \$100, thanks to MSD Animal Health. Entries can be email to edunne@cluthavets.co.nz or sent to 0275770078.



Review: Calf Rearing

Calf Pens

- Bedding that is in place is deep enough, clean enough and replace or top up if required
- Disinfect pens at least once a week – not that some products are able to be used when calves are still in the pen and different products have different requirements regarding contact time (Newsletter no. 1)
- Check water troughs are working, and clean if needed
- Check hay racks and grain troughs, calves won't eat mouldy feed or feed with poo in it – clean and replenish with small amounts frequently. Remember getting calves to eat meal is important for rumen development.

Hygiene

- Check footbaths on entry to shed, make sure they are being used and replenished often. Washing boots in baths that are more mud than anything doesn't actually disinfect much at all.
- Clean overalls or scrub waterproofs when moving between sheds and on entry and exit of sick pens
- Feed/treat sick calves last to prevent the disease being spread to the healthy calves.

Sick Calves

- Scouring calves die from dehydration before the actual bug will kill them – electrolytes are critical to keep the calves hydrated
- Isolate all sick calves – different pens for different conditions to that a calf with pneumonia doesn't end up with scours as well!

Clutha Vets Services: Calf Disbudding

Most people will appreciate that the simplest, easiest, and most effective time to remove horns from cattle is as calves rather than as adult cattle when they are bigger, and have started using them against other cattle. Its never pleasant to go and stitch up a cow that has had its udder ripped open by a horn.

The advantage of removing the horn buds as calves is that up until a particular age (typically around 6 weeks of age), the buds are not attached to the skull. You can feel the bud present but can move it around independent of the calf's skull. Removing the buds at this point means that it can be done with just the hot iron rather than having to cut the horns off. With any type of disbudding or dehorning, thought must go into the welfare of the animal and the pain associated with the procedure.

Clutha Vets offer a pain- free calf disbudding service, using local anaesthesia to block sensation to the horns, removing the pain caused by the hot irons. All calves are sedated for the procedure as well for ease of handling to administer the local anaesthetic and for the disbudding procedure. Calves ideally are disbudded from 2-6weeks of age.



The Clutha Vets disbudding service also includes:

- Checking all navels for signs of infections or hernias, and treat where necessary
- Removal of additional teats on replacement heifers to prevent problems once the heifer has entered the milking herd
- Castration of bull calves – only if required, don't worry we won't do your replacement bulls!
- General health assessment of the calves and identification and treatment of calves if required.

If you would like more information regarding this service or pricing, or would like to book in calves for disbudding, please contact your respective clinic's reception, they are happy to help.

The Wisdom of Willie!



The calf scour battle is about to start for some people, and it can be very frustrating and unrewarding at times. In most situations, most calves will respond to electrolytes but sometimes, electrolytes alone are not sufficient. If you have previously had a scours outbreak in your calf shed and have done testing to identify the causative agent, be it rotavirus, coronavirus, E.coli or cryptosporidium, and were unable to vaccinate your cows with either Rotavec or Scourguard, there are still products available that can help prevent and treat these causes of scours.

Rotagen Combo

Rotagen combo is a product that can prevent or treat if necessary rotavirus infections. Rotagen can be fed to calves from day 1 and should not be needed for longer than 14days as the calves are mostly out of the risk period for rotavirus by this time. It can be mixed with the milk or individually drenched to allow more accurate dosing. Rotagen is a product that can have other protective immunoglobulins added to the product to broaden the viral or bacterial cover. Additional protection can be provided for cryptosporidia, coronavirus, e.coli and salmonella. As the cost of the product increases with each additional immunoglobulin type added to the mix, it is recommended that the source of the scours is identified to enable targeted prevention and treatment.

Prevention:

- All calves receive 10g/day for 5 days (50g total give to each calf)

Treatment

- Sick calves receive 20g on the first day then continue on 10g/day for 3 days

The advantage of Rotagen is that there is no WHP on it, so not an issue if accidentally fed to bobby calves.

Halocur

Halocur is a product that can be used for the prevention and treatment of cryptosporidium. It doesn't kill the parasite but slows its multiplication within the intestines to allow the calf to develop its own immunity and fight off the infection using its own antibodies. Halocur is specific to crypto and if it is going to be used as a treatment, it has to be done within the first 24hours of signs of diarrhoea before the parasite numbers become too high. Again, these calves need supporting with electrolytes during the scouring period to prevent dehydration.