

# Calf-Link



Issue 1, 2018

Welcome to the first Calf-Link newsletter for 2018. Another year has already flown by so hopefully you have all managed to fit in a break or holiday before the busy season starts! Calf rearing is not a task to be taken on lightly as this short stage heavily influences how each calf will go on to achieve and perform during its life. One of the main aims behind this newsletter is to keep in contact with the people rearing the calves and provide guidance and assistance wherever and however we can. We aim to preempt foreseeable issues in order to lead to a successful season of rearing well-grown, healthy and happy calves!

If you have any questions, queries or interesting cases that you would like to discuss or share please get in touch with Anna or Annie at the Balclutha Clinic (03 4181280) or Martha or Jillian at the Milton Clinic (03 417 8032).

## Preparing the Calf Shed

Most calf sheds are currently at the quietest and emptiest they will be for the next few months, so it is the perfect time to ensure they are set up for a successful calf rearing season. We also offer a Calf Rearing Shed and Systems check service, where we can help you make sure everything is up to speed and ready with a vet visit to your shed. We will talk through your system with staff to ensure everyone knows what to do and is on the same page.

- **Pens:** no holes or sharp hazards, limited calf contact between each pen to prevent disease spread. (Ideally solid partitions between each pen.) Each calf needs 1.5m<sup>2</sup> increased to 2.5m<sup>2</sup> after 3 weeks, with a max of 25 calves per pen.
- **Bedding:** new bedding in and sprayed with disinfectant. Choice of bedding is not as critical as the correct use of bedding.
- **Water troughs:** Cleaned, test they are working with no leaks. Ideally placed at front of shed. All calves must have access to clean water at all times.
- **Milk feeders:** washed and teats replaced to ensure no leaking teats.
- **Straw/hay feeders:** racks or nets up off the ground are preferred so that calves don't sleep in the straw and poo contamination is minimised.

## In this Issue -

- Calf shed set up
- Mycoplasma bovis
- Calf rearing toolkit

Check out our newly launched FB page for calf rearing updates - the first 50 to like us collect a free beanie from the clinic!

[facebook@cluthavets.co.nz](https://www.facebook.com/cluthavets.co.nz)



## Calf rearing toolkit:

- Tube feeder
- Brix Refractometer
- (for colostrum)
- Navel spray: iodine
- (spirit based)
- Neck bands
- Ear tags & taggers
- Gloves
- Disinfectant
- Tail paint
- Thermometer
- Measuring jug
- Electrolytes
- Spare feeder teats
- Notebook and pen

# Calves and Mycoplasma bovis

A new challenge this season will be dealing with the threat of Mycoplasma bovis. While this can seem daunting, it is important to remember that good biosecurity practices should already be in place to reduce transmission of many other diseases also (eg Rotavirus).

## Buying & selling calves:

- ◆ Reduce risk by getting as much information as possible about the source of calves or milk. (This should include M. bovis testing results, farm status, cow and calf health over the last two seasons). See the pre-purchase check list on Dairy NZ. ([www.dairynz.co.nz/mbovis](http://www.dairynz.co.nz/mbovis))
- ◆ Try to reduce the number of farms that you source calves and milk from. Avoid using discarded milk from ill cows on antibiotic treatment, even if it's been acidified (they are more likely to be shedding M. bovis than healthy cows.)
- ◆ Try to source milk from the same farm you have sourced calves.
- ◆ Calf milk replacer, pasteurised milk or acidified milk pose the lowest risk of passing on M. bovis
- ◆ Potassium sorbate preservative and yoghurt bacteria *do not* consistently kill M. bovis in the required time frame.
- ◆ Buy calves from as few sources as possible. Deal directly with sellers and avoid saleyards where cattle mixing occurs.
- ◆ Only purchase calves with NAIT tags in their ears and record all movements
- ◆ Ask your transporter to avoid mixing calves with other cattle in the yards or on the truck
- ◆ Quarantine your new calves for a week and monitor for signs of disease before mixing with other stock.

## ACIDIFYING MILK WITH CITRIC ACID

Correctly acidifying milk kills *M. bovis*. The best way to achieve success is to correctly measure milk and weigh acid before mixing.



### Guidelines for adding citric acid to milk.

- 1** Get fresh milk 24°C or below If milk is too warm it goes lumpy
- 2** Measure & add acid to milk Sprinkle & stir gently If stirred too quickly it goes lumpy
 

ACID	MILK
5.5g	litre
55g	10 litres
110g	20 litres
550g	100 litres
- 3** Wait 30 mins and test pH If milk is below pH 4 it will go lumpy
 

pH	Result
5+	X
4-5	✓
1-4	X
- 4** Cover & leave for 8 hours Leave for 8 hours
- 5** Stir gently & test again before feeding Store and feed as normal after this process

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## Top tips competition:



This year we are running a competition for your top calf rearing tips and pearls of wisdom. Whether you are a seasoned calf rearer or have some bright new ideas that simply make life easier, we want to hear and share them!

Each week we will publish a pertinent pointer and all contributors will go into the draw to win this handy chilly bin packed with goodies. Message 027 5500 505 with your tip and the reference "Calflink" and be in to win!



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