

CUD

“Cows Under Discussion” or “Something to Chew On”



June 2019

Clinic News

Winter feels like it has arrived now, and although drying off covers around the district look good, by the time you receive this, there won't be too many cows left in milk. The team has been busy with end of season jobs - re-scanning herds to make sure no unexpected dries are carried through winter, liver biopsies to check trace element status of cows going on to crop, and getting lepto vaccinations tidied up.

And of course, with drying off we've been inserting a lot of Dry Cow Therapy. Thank you to everyone who got your prescription sorted out nice and early, and uplifted your prescribed products, it certainly makes managing our stock much easier as well as ensuring you have what you need when you need it.

Mastitis after drying off

Every year, most herds get a couple of cases of mastitis in cows in the dry period. Some are new infections acquired by the cow during or after dry-off, and some may be caused by a latent subclinical infection becoming clinical. If you get more than one or two cases after drying off, we are keen to investigate the cause, so please let us know.

Treatment in the dry period is four pronged. Despite the inconvenience, the affected quarters must be stripped, at least twice a day. The cow will not come right while the udder remains full of toxic crud and more accumulates! Injectable antibiotic is probably going to be more effective at permeating the affected quarter than intramammary treatment. You should never re-treat a dry cow with DCT. Anti-inflammatories are probably even more important in these cows than for those with mastitis during lactation. And finally, sick cows need TLC in the winter – shelter from the weather, out of the mud and an attractive and palatable food offering.

Heifer teatsealing

With the ever-increasing push to reduce antibiotic use on farm, the emphasis is moving even further in favour of disease prevention. Teatsealing heifers to protect against mastitis at the time of first calving is now a well-proven and widely-used tool, though it is not the only one. Our team has already inserted internal teat sealant into over 10,000 heifers this season, but we have the capacity to do more. If you are considering heifer teatsealing for the first time but are put off by the thought of the logistics, come and watch our team in action! If you'd like to see the benefits it can offer you, we can still fit a few jobs in towards the end of the season (early July).

Cows down on winter crop

The rain came just in time to give many of the winter crops around the district a much needed burst of growth before winter. The key to avoiding health issues on the crop is to make sure every cow has a gradual introduction to the new high-sugar feed type. If you measured your crop a fortnight ago and did your feed allowance calculations on the dry matter yield then (and also mob size and face length), but the crop has since grown another 3 tonne / ha, you could be offering the cows significantly more crop than you had bargained on, and thus setting them up for issues with acidosis. Re-measure the crop before letting the cows on to it!

Rotavirus vaccination

Colostrum, the first milk produced after calving is vital to protect calves from scours. One way to reduce scours caused by certain bugs is to load the colostrum with antibodies, and the best way to do this is to vaccinate their mothers before calving. There are a number of vaccines on the market, please discuss your options with a vet, and make sure our retail team has your order in June, so we can supply the vaccine for you to administer pre-calving in July.

Calf disbudding – new regulations

From 1 October, new regulations mean no cow or calf of any age may be dehorned without a minimum pain killer of local anaesthetic to numb the area. There will be significant penalties for those who break this law.

For many years, Clutha Vets has offered a “painless calf disbudding service” that meets these requirements, and which is very popular with our clients. We sedate the calves so they lie down, insert the local anaesthetic, and burn the horn-producing tissue off each calf’s head. At the same time we check navels and remove extra teats, some clients use this as an opportunity for tagging, blood sampling, vaccinating and other jobs. If you have not previously done it this way, you are going to have to make a plan for this season’s late-born calves (at least), so please give us a call to discuss your options

Calves to heifers

In just 5 months’ time, your 2018-born calves are due to go to the bull. Are they on target for liveweight gain? This group often falls below the line during their first winter, when they are not only trying to adjust to new feed and use energy to keep warm, but also continue to grow. The fewer obstacles they have in their way, the more likely they are to hit the targets, and be well set up for a long, productive life.

If they have had no trace element supplementation since summer, they could well need at least copper and selenium boosted. A Multimin injection, or AllTrace boluses, supplying a range of trace elements, may be even better.

After the dry autumn and now welcome rain, we have seen a huge rise in parasite worms on pasture. Don’t rely on the cold as having killed them all! They could well be in need of a drench. If you give them a long-acting, dual-family drench now, it will not only clean them out, but keep them clean until they go on to the crop, and then right through the winter.

We also know that circulating BVD virus can also significantly decrease the growth rate of the whole mob, so if you have not already done some blood testing, now would be a good time to check, and eliminate that threat, well before mating in November

Winter seminars

Our upcoming round of Winter Dairy Farmer Seminars gets underway with

Calf Rearing (Ladies Night if we are allowed to say that...)

Thursday 4 July, 7 - 9pm at the Balclutha Clinic.

Phone **03 418 1280** to **RSVP**

See the enclosed flyer for further details.

Things to do in June:

- Have a holiday, and make sure your staff do too!
- Welcome your new neighbours, be there for them
- RSVP for one of our winter seminars
- Order Rotavirus vaccine
- Check all stock classes have adequate trace elements to get them through winter
- Book in for your Spring consult, for an RVM prescription for spring

