

CLUTHA VETS DAIRY FARMER NEWSLETTER



April 2019



Clinic News

At the end of January, we farewelled Gary Beaumont from our Clydevale store. Gary and Sue were instrumental in setting up the Clutha Vets store in 1997, and have made the store a welcoming point of contact for everyone in the community. Gary's replacement will be Sonya Verdoner, a Balclutha local who many of you will know through horseing, motor sport and a number of other circles. At the moment Sonya is learning the ropes in Balclutha, but in time you will see her at Clydevale more often, as she settles in to the role there.

We were pleased to welcome two new graduates in January - Dave Exton and Olivia Hickman. Both will be in mixed practice so you will see them on farm, or in the clinic if you come in with the dog or cat. In Milton, you may see Tracy MacColl back in the small animal clinic. We are glad to welcome Tracy back after a period of parental leave, and we are sure the cat and dog owners at the northern end of the practice will be too.

Drying off - Planning for next season

Now through till dry off

The most important thing at the moment is to conserve/improve the condition score of your cows as this is your future production.

BCS the herd now - this will give you an idea where the herd is at and enable good decisions to be made. In general terms any cows that are a BCS:

- 3.5 or less and any 2016 born heifers that are a BCS 4.0 should be dried off now. Once they have finished the drying off process they should be fed ad-lib high quality balage + high quality grass + PK (if available). Under this regime they can gain up to 1 BCS in a little over a month.
- Cows BCS 4.0 or more and 2016 born heifers BCS 4.5 or more consider OAD milking for the rest of the season. It takes approximately 3 months of ad lib feeding to add half a condition score to a milker. So it is a good option for light herds or where feed is reduced which will help to start to maintain/gain condition in the lead up to the dry period.

Any culls should be sent to the works ASAP. This will increase feed availability to the main herd.

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Drying off

- Repeat the herd BCS in the 7-10 days prior to dry off as this is a good time to split the herd into mobs according to BCS. By doing this you can preferentially feed the skinnier cows over winter. Be sure to add any cows with twins to this group despite what condition they are currently in.
- Nutrition around the time of drying off should consist of high bulk, low quality feed. A combination of hay, straw or low quality baleage is suitable. Please do not feed solely straw, the ME is too low to maintain your cows on. Keep the rumen full – albeit of low quality feed, this will keep the cows happy.
- Try to minimise grass and other high energy feeds directly before and after dry off as this will help halt milk production. Ideally, you should continue this high fiber low energy diet for a week after dry off to keep milk production suppressed.
- Feeding crops such as fodder beet too quickly after dry off will re-stimulate milk production and potentially cause mastitis issues over winter. Moreover, be sure to transition the cows correctly onto fodder beet. Sub-acute acidosis and acute acidosis caused by incorrectly transitioning is a serious condition which can lead to many deaths.



Antibiograms & Mastitis

Are you treating mastitis regularly and seemingly getting poor results? You may not be using the most appropriate or effective antibiotic and this will be contributing to the level of resistance of common mastitis causing bacteria on your farm.

Antibiograms are a new way to monitor the level of resistance of two common mastitis causing bacteria, *S. aureus* and *S. uberis*.

A bulk milk sample is collected and cultured to determine if these bacteria are present on your farm. If they are, the bacteria grown are then tested against a number of antibiotics that are commonly used to treat mastitis.

The results achieved give an indication of the level of resistance these bacteria have to the various

antibiotics which in turn allows you as the farmer to make an informed and effective choice when choosing antibiotic treatment.

The results also give an indication as to how your farm compares to other farms in the dairy industry in New Zealand.

Autumn consults are upon us, this provides the perfect opportunity to ask your vet about antibiograms if you would like to know more.

Management of Cows with Twins

Of the dairy cows scanned by Clutha Vets this year 1.94% were diagnosed with twins, with up to 4-5% in some herds.

Cows that are carrying twins have an increased feed requirement because they are growing an extra calf. The twin pregnancies also take up more space in the abdomen of a cow and make it harder for her to physically eat the quantity of feed required to meet her needs each day. If these cows are not preferentially fed to meet their higher energy requirements then they will lose condition leading up to calving. This will put her at higher risk of having issues around calving such as going down, ketosis and premature birth or abortion.

Other issues associated with twin calvings include; more assisted calvings, calf/cow ID difficulty, freemartins, increased chance of uterine infection, poorer milk production, and poorer reproduction in the coming season due to low BCS.

Identifying cows with twins at scanning gives us the opportunity to make decisions to better manage these cows over the winter.

Management options to consider:

April: Preg-test twin cows again, BCS all twin bearing cows, decide whether to cull or keep, clearly mark twinning cows.

Dry-off: Dry off twin bearing cows early depending on body condition and expected calving date. Twin bearing cows often calve earlier than expected.

Autumn/Winter: Feed separately over winter in a flat paddock with ad lib high quality feed available. Off crop means that they don't have to waste energy competing for food in mud.

Late June: Vet assessment and BCS twin bearing cows again. Controlled calving with vet intervention may be required on welfare grounds if weight loss has continued through the dry period.

Calving: Calve separately from main herd (with heifers?) to allow closer monitoring.

Contact your vet for a more detailed discussion on twin cow management this winter.

Case studies from the 9 herds found to have PI's this year

From Bulk Milk Test - PCR Positive Milks

1. One 16-born PI heifer; bought in stock most likely source of introducing virus into herd.

Testing replacement heifers as calves or yearlings saves cost of carrying PI's through this far, and also reduces risk of having virus spread among herd.

2. One 16-born PI heifer; mixed heifer grazing.

Heifers mixing with other herds at grazing should be vaccinated to reduce risk. Testing replacement heifers as calves or yearlings saves cost of carrying PI's through this far and also reduces risk of having virus spread among herd.

3. PCR Positive Milk - Investigation ongoing

4. Four first calvers; one second calver PI; two PI calves at debudding. Investigation ongoing

5. PCR Positive Milk - Investigation ongoing

From Young Stock Testing

1. One 17-born PI heifer.

Investigation ongoing

2. Two 17-born PI heifers.

Investigation ongoing

3. Four PI calves at debudding.

Investigation ongoing

4. Positive yearling bull.

Investigation ongoing

Options for Control

1. Do nothing

When the herd is exposed to the BVD virus, some cows will suffer from the disease and then become immune, but immunity is unpredictable and some cows will remain susceptible. This is a poor option with negative financial benefits.

2. Closed herd and biosecurity

Each cow, bull and replacement in the herd is individually blood sampled or bulk milk tested, and PI's are identified and culled. Then absolute biosecurity is maintained to prevent BVD virus getting onto the farm. The disadvantages of this option are that the herd becomes unprotected, since no immunity is generated either by vaccination or by natural exposure, and biosecurity can be very difficult to maintain, leading to great potential for disaster. Common routes of BVD entry include bought-in stock, contact 'over the fence' with neighbouring stock, stock brought home from grazing and PI bulls, but BVD has occurred in apparently 'closed' herds.

3. Vaccinate only the heifers/replacements prior to breeding

As long as the vaccinated animals receive a booster injection every year, this method will eliminate disease in the long term. However, in the short to medium term, many of the older members of the herd are left naive and unprotected. PI's will not respond to the vaccine, although their non-PI herdmates will, and so a vaccinated PI carrier will continue to shed virus. This may cause losses in animals that haven't responded well to the vaccination producing insufficient immune protection to avoid natural infection.

4. Vaccinate the whole herd, including replacements, prior to breeding

This protects all members of the herd, breaking the cycle of infection before exposure by making sure that most herd members are immune before mating starts. Herd members are protected from disease, reproductive losses are minimised and the chances of further PI carriers being born is greatly reduced. Annual booster vaccines are required.

5. Vaccinate the whole herd, including replacements, prior to breeding, and find and cull all PIs

Because the PIs do not respond to the vaccine, they will always produce PI offspring and so maintain BVD in the herd despite whole herd vaccination. In this option, each member of the herd is blood tested to identify, and then remove, any PIs. This option provides rapid and ongoing BVD control and also prevents the birth of any more carrier PI animals. This method is the gold standard. It is reliable and has maximum financial benefits.

Repro - where are you at?

How well has the repro season gone this year? Would we like it better next year?

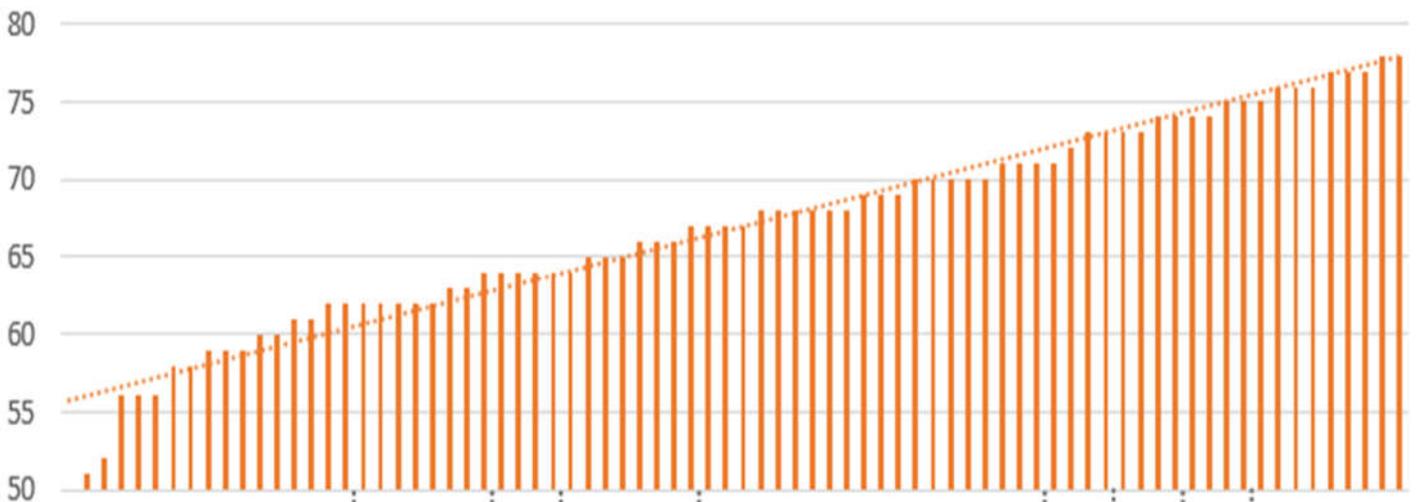
To give an accurate answer to the first question, and make the first steps toward having a better result next year, we must look closely at the data from the season just gone.

Repro data can help us look specifically at several key areas. We can often have an idea of why we're not meeting targets but looking at this data is important to know for sure. We can see what has gone well and where there is some room for improvement, specific to each farm. Knowing which strategies were successful and which were not is the easiest way to make a successful plan for next year!

If you are interested in having a repro review, please give us a call and we can book it in and make the first step towards a more successful season next year.



Repro results 2019– how did you go?



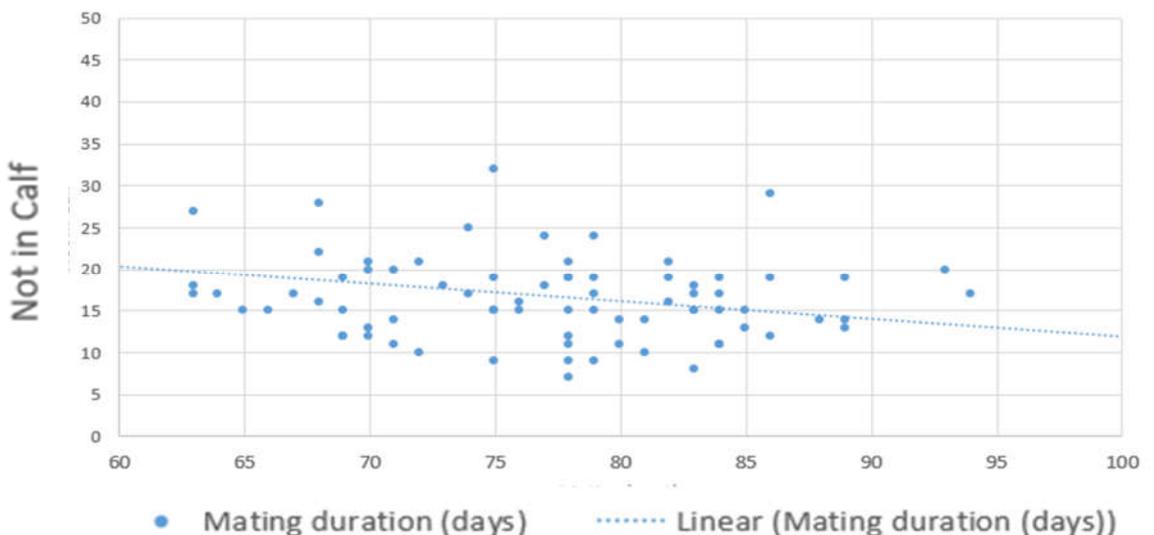
6 week in-calf rates for 77 of our farms:

At a glance... (region averages):

Industry Targets

6 week in calf rate	◆ 66.8%	◆ 78%
3 week submission rate	◆ 78%	◆ 90%
9 week in calf rate	◆ 78%	◆ 88%
Not in calf rate	◆ 16%	◆ Depends on mating length

Effect of mating length on empty rates:

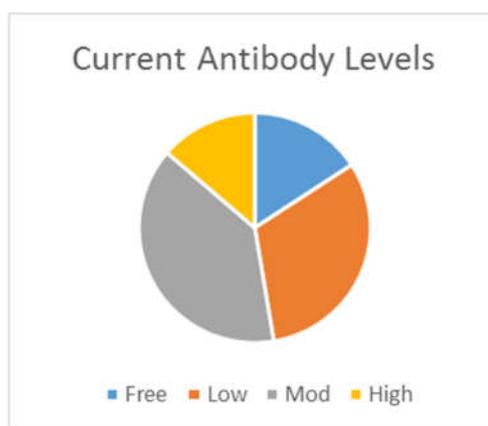
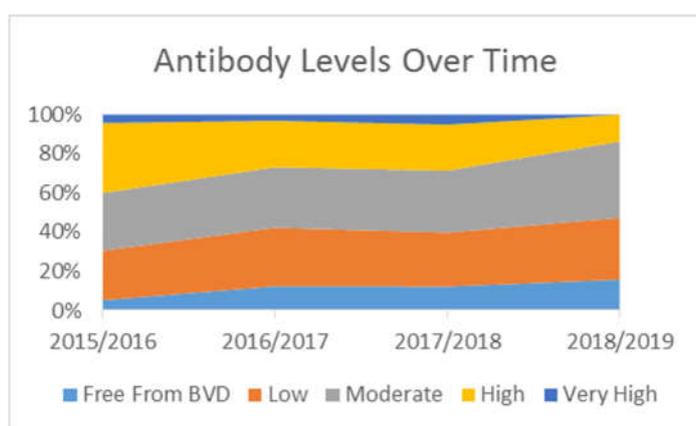


BVD In South Otago Herds in the Balclutha area

The graph below shows the latest results from the 2018/2019 season bulk milk testing compared to data from previous seasons showing an interesting trend...

	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019
Number of farms tested	85%	80%	80%	83% (110 / 133)
PI Found	7%	1.5%	4%	5% (5) *
Very high antibodies	4%	3%	5%	0% (0)
High antibodies	34%	23%	23%	13% (14)
Moderate antibodies	28%	30%	31%	37% (41)
Low antibodies	24%	29%	27%	30% (33)
FREE from BVD	5%	12%	12%	15% (16)

* Further 4 farms had PI animals found through young stock testing



Our herd immunity levels are reducing with herds having less contact with BVD virus. It has been shown there is a significant economic impact on production and reproduction when the BVD virus is circulating in the herd. As herd immunity reduces, the economic impact of introducing a PI animal to the herd increases dramatically so keep testing and any detection of a PI or raise in antibody levels can alert that there has been a problem. If we identify the change early, we can isolate and cull the PI animals before they have too much of an impact on the herd.

If you haven't bulk milk tested this year, it is not too late. Call us at the clinic and we can arrange for this to be done.

Results By Area

AREA	OWAKA / PARETAI	KAI / WANGALOA / INCH CLUTHA	CLINTON	CLYDEVALE
% of farms tested	73%	80%	84%	90%
PI Found	5%	0%	0%	11%
Very high antibodies	0%	0%	0%	0%
High antibodies	26%	8%	6%	14%
Moderate antibodies	37%	33%	29%	47%
Low antibodies	37%	17%	45%	22%
FREE from BVD	0%	25%	16%	14%

Balclutha Clinic

John Smart	BVSc
Jason Darwen	BVSc
Rob Mills	BVSc
Hamish Moore	BVSc
Catherine Copland	BVM&S
Peter Heslip	BVSc, MACVSc
Annie Jackson	BVSc
Steven Butler	BVSc
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Erin Riley	BVetMed
Andrew Comerford	MVB
Andrew Roe	BVSc, MACVSc
Sam Howarth	BVSc
Dave Exton	BVSc
Olivia Hickman	BVSc

Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Martha O'Connor	MVB
Tom Wallbank	BVM&S
Bevan Topham	BVSc

Gradual over-supplementation of copper, including feeding increased amounts of copper by feeding PKE, can result in copper toxicity. Chronic copper toxicity normally presents acutely at times of stress such as drying off and can result in rapid decline and death. Low copper levels can also result in problems including reduced production, reduced growth and pregnancy rates, scouring, faded hair and broken bones. Liver biopsy is the best way to find out current copper levels in your herd, and now is a good time to find out so that changes can be made if required before dry off. Give us a call to discuss liver biopsies or book in. Liver biopsies are a minimally invasive procedure and we normally sample 7 cows from the herd.

Things to do in Autumn

- Get your Autumn Consult done
- Talk to us about heifer teatsealing if you haven't done it before
- Liver biopsies (or cull cow liver samples) to assess Trace Element status
- Repro Review
- Condition score herd pre-dry off
- Book in early for our techs to assist with your dry cow insertion

Retail ramblings

A bit quiet at this end of the year but

Watch This Space...

• Boehringer Ingelheim

- Cattle Treatments— Polo Shirts and Personal Locater Beacons

• Alleva Boss Pour On

- Quality Work Vests & Hitachi Drill Sets
- AirFryers on Nexepin Inj



• Zoetis

- Dectomax Inj Starter Packs x 2 - **Tatonka** Carry All
- Dectomax Pour On - best buying ever!!
- Cydectin Pour On Bonus Stock Packs - 15ltr + 2ltr FREE

• Black Hawk Working Dog

- Look out for your \$10 discount voucher in **Farmers Weekly**