

# CLUTHA VETS DAIRY FARMER NEWSLETTER



April 2017



## Clinic News

We are still enjoying some fine autumn days after a fairly average summer - overnight moisture/fog and warm days following have kept the grass growth up, and there has been some extra feed taken off the paddocks over the last month or so.

Staff-wise, we welcome Martha O'Connor, a 2006 Irish graduate, who has recently joined the veterinary team. Martha will be based in the Clutha Clinic, but will also spend some time working in Milton. Izzy Topham has now left to follow other pursuits - her Masters in Veterinary Science for one, and singing with the New Zealand Youth Choir for another!

The **official opening** of the Balclutha clinic redevelopment will take place on April 20th at 2pm. Bruce Bissett (ex CEO) will do the official honours, followed by a clinic tour for those interested in "seeing behind the scenes". The afternoon will conclude with afternoon tea. All members and partners are cordially invited. Please RSVP to 418 1280 with numbers.

And last, but by no means least - Congratulations to Russell & Tracy Bouma of Clydevale on their recent win in the Dairy Industry Awards 2017 Southland-Otago Share Farmer of the Year. All the best for national finals to you both!

## Autumn Dairy Consults 2017

It seems way too early to be talking about drying cows off, but we would encourage you to book in your Autumn Consult now, to allow plenty of time for planning and decision making. Although there are good supplies of Dry Cow Therapy for now, past experience would suggest that things can change very quickly, especially since we are usually among the last to dry off in this part of the country. The only way we can guarantee supply of your chosen, prescribed products is when you physically take it away from our premises!

Our range of stocked products provides a good range of options which we will be happy to talk you through, to come up with an appropriate prescription.

This year we are offering our best price to all Members with no penalty for later purchases. This allows you to make final decisions on numbers based

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on final herd test, without any extra cost.

Teatseal is available at the same price, whether it is used "in Combo" with an antibiotic, or used on its own in uninfected (low SCC) cows. With the tide turning against whole herd antibiotic use, Clutha Vets will encourage you to use Teatseal Only in appropriate cows, and with appropriate standards of administration.

The Autumn Consult is also an opportunity to discuss other ongoing aspects of animal health management, and to review current testing regimes (BVD, Johne's, trace elements etc.), and vaccination programmes (Lepto, Clostridial, BVD, Salmonella, Rotavirus etc). We can also discuss relevant services such as Heifer Teatsealing and end of season scanning.

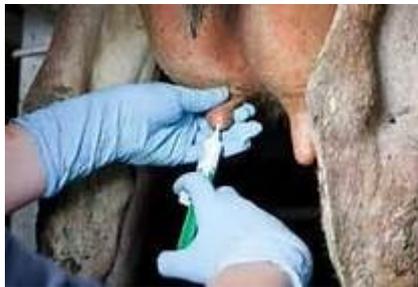
## Cows for Early Dry Off

Cows in the following categories can be considered for early dry off:

- Low Body Condition Score
- High SCC
- Early-calvers, especially R3's
- Low producers

Clutha Vets strongly recommend using Teatseal in early dry off cows, since this is the only way to provide protection throughout the dry period and right up to calving. High SCC cows will require Combo Therapy (Antibiotic + Teatseal); Low SCC cows may be candidates for Teatseal Only.

Please consider these options, and arrange to speak to a vet before coming into the store!



## Mating

- it's never too early to start thinking about it.

*What can you do now to improve your mating performance this November?*

Have you had a poorer than expected mating performance? Did you know that the body condition score that your cows were at when dried off in May last year will have had an impact on how well the cows produced, and then cycled and got in calf in November 2016. There is a wealth of research showing that the body condition score of cows at calving, and then at mating, affects mating and reproduction performance. Cows at calving that are either too fat (BCS 6.0 or more), or too skinny (BCS less than 4.5), will have a reduced chance of getting in calf in the subsequent mating period.

**The BCS the cows are at mating is largely set by what BCS they are at drying off**

BCS targets for the 20<sup>th</sup> May

- **Mixed aged cows should be a minimum of 4.5**
- **R2 and R3 heifers should be a minimum of 5.0**

Note: the above scores allow for the cows to gain 0.5 of a BCS over the winter period which is about all you can expect in a normal South Otago winter meaning that the cows will be at their target BCS for calving.

*What should you do now?*

- Get your herd individually BCS by a calibrated condition scorer to identify any light cows and any fat cows. Clutha vets has a number of trained calibrated condition scorers.  
10<sup>th</sup> April dry off
- All in calf mixed aged cows that are a BCS of 3.5 or less
- All in calf R3 heifers that are BCS 4.0 or less  
30<sup>th</sup> April dry off
- All in calf mixed aged cows that are BCS 4.0 or less
- All R3 in calf heifers that are BCS 4.5 or less
- Once these animals have been dried off (7-10 days on maintenance rations + dry cow therapy) they need to be fed good quality feed, ad lib. A good way to do this is to set aside a couple of paddocks with higher covers on the farm and block graze them with silage/PK available. If you stick them down a gully to eat out some rank feed they will not gain the required weight.  
18<sup>th</sup> May – just prior to dry off
- BCS the whole herd – including the early dried off cows and mark/ID any light or fat cows
  - R3 heifers BCS 4.5 or less
  - MA cows BCS 4.0 or less
  - Fat MA cows BCS 5.5 or more.
- The light cows and heifers should be separated and wintered in their own mob so they can be preferentially fed.
- The fat cows should be fed a light diet over the winter – kale and low quality hay or straw.
- Clutha Vets is offering repro reviews at the moment which is a one hour catch up with your vet to discuss the specific factors that have contributed to your herds repro performance.

## Worm Drenching

*Should you be worm drenching adult cows at dry-off?*

Why Drench -

Adult cattle are exposed to worm larvae every day, with the most exposure occurring in mid-late autumn due to the climatic conditions

being perfect for larvae at this time. Adult cattle have good immunity



and will kill worm larvae before they become adult worms. This means cattle have low levels of adult worms in their guts, but do spend a significant amount of energy killing larvae and these larvae can damage the intestines in the short time they are there.

Studies have shown that a worm drench around the time of dry-off can result in improved condition gains and can be used as a tool to help any young/thin cows to gain weight. To help prevent resistance to drenches building up in your herd, we recommend you leave all good -condition cows un-drenched.

What to use -

The best results are achieved with longer acting drenches such as Eprinex, Dectomax, or Cydectin pour-ons (all nil-milk withhold). A short acting drench will kill all larvae and the small number of adults on the day of drenching, but the cow will be on her own against the larvae the following day. Whereas, a longer acting drench will kill the larvae and adults on the day of drenching, and will continue to kill the larvae for the length of the persistent activity claim of that drench.

These pour-on products will also kill lice, so this saves on using a separate product. If lice is a problem on your property, you may want to treat the un-drenched cows with a lice only product, e.g. Blaze. You can use Tempor, but **only at dry-off** as it has a milk withhold.

### When to drench

Once cattle go on to crop, they will no longer be exposed to worm larvae (this is only true if they stay in the crop paddock, not if you are transitioning on/off with grass paddocks). The best weight gains are achieved by maximising the days without worm larvae. Therefore, give the drench close to the maximum length of the persistent activity claim before the day the cows are to stay on crop permanently for the winter.

### Examples of best times

- Cows going on crop on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June can have a Cydectin pour-on from the 10<sup>th</sup> of May onwards.
- Cows going on crop on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May can have a Dectomax pour-on from the 7<sup>th</sup> of May onwards.

If you are looking to drench your cows this dry-off, one of the team here can give you the right advice on the best product to use on your property.

## Calf Weight Competition Results

At the recent Clydevale Farming Expo, Clutha Vets ran a calf weighing competition.

The results were:

Red Calf - 242kg

Blue Calf - 241kg

The winner of the draw was Lindsay Marshall - congratulations on winning a free calf weighing

session with Clutha Vets.

There was a significant range of estimates from as low as 126kg up to as high as 320kg, so almost 200kg difference! With only 1kg actual difference between the two calves, it is important to remember that differences in height and stockiness can be deceptive when estimating calf weights.

This competition highlights that regular calf and heifer weighing is important not only to track growth and ensure calves are reaching necessary targets, but also make sure that medications such as drenches are being given at correct doses. Under-estimating the weight increases the risk of drench failure, while over-estimating increases the risk of toxicity issues.

If you are interested in our calf and heifer weighing services, feel free to give us a call on 03 4181280.

## BVD in South Otago Herds

We have now compiled all results of our bulk milk testing for the last season and have come up with some interesting data.

	2015/2016	2016/2017
Number of Farms tested	85%	80%
PI Found	7%	1.5%
Very High Antibodies	4%	3%
High Antibodies	34%	23%
Moderate Antibodies	28%	30%
Low Antibodies	24%	29%
Free From BVD	5%	12%

From this data we can see the levels of immunity to BVD in herds is lowering. Studies have shown that as immunity decreases the economic effects on herd reproduction and milk production increase.

But... always a but, as herd immunity reduces, the economic impact of introducing a PI animal to the herd increases



## Your vets

### 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
Elsbeth Dunne	BVSc, BAgSc (on leave)
Bevan Topham	BVSc
Ruth Andrews	BVSc
Bridget McCauley	BVSc
Anna Burrell	BVSc
Martha O'Connor	BVM

### Milton Clinic

Peter Kalb	BVSc
Jillian Clark	BVSc
Sid Taylor	BVSc, MACVSc
Barbara Christensen	BVSc, MACVSc
Marek Misiewicz	BVSc,
Tom Wallbank	BVSc

dramatically. Any replacements and bought-in animals must be tested before joining the herd. R1's and R2's can be checked with a POOLED ANTIBODY TEST, by blood testing any 15 heifers out of the mob. This minimises the costs of testing, while giving you the assurance that these mobs are free from virus, or enabling you to do something about it if infection is present. Waiting for the results of Bulk Milk Testing in October/November is going to be too late to be dealing with any issues that may arise.

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.

## Checklist for this month

- Book your Autumn Consult
- Herd test for making drying off decisions
- BCS the herd to aid in drying off & wintering decisions
- Book in trace element testing, or call us to arrange liver trace element testing on your cull cows going to the works
- Lepto vaccinate heifers and herd, and final vaccination for calves done early

## Retail - Promotions for April

**Need more Doses? Get great deals on large herd packs!**

Get a cordless Stihl Garden Tool on **12.5lt Eclipse Pour-on** or **6lt Eclipse E Inj.**

**Merial Ancare Cattle Treatments** - get a Casio G-Shock or Casio Solar Watch

**Boss Pour-on 7.5lt** get a FREE Oleo Mac Chainsaw! Limited time & numbers

**Combat Topline Price Fighter** - under \$1 per dose

**Dectomax Herd Packs** - a great buy with 2.5lt FREE

**Dectomax Starter Packs** still a great price with a FREE 200ml!

**Cydectin Pour-on** now with bonus product - The 17lt Pack is Back!

**NeXepirin Microjet** - Get warm this winter with a heated jacket!

## Cock-a-doodle-do

This farmer has about 200 hens, but no rooster, and he wants chicks. So he goes down the road to the next farmer and asks if he has a rooster he would sell. The other farmer says "Yeah, I've got this great rooster named Russell, he'll be all over all your hens, no problem".

Well, Russell the rooster costs a lot of money, but the farmer decides he'd be worth it, so he buys Russell, takes him home and lets him loose saying, "Russell, I want you to pace yourself now. You've got a lot of chickens to service here, and you cost me a lot of money, so I'll need you to do a good job."

Russell seems to understand, so the farmer points to the hen house and Russell takes off like a shot. WHAM! he nails every hen in the hen house, and the farmer is shocked. Then he hears a commotion in the pond, sure enough, there's Russell after the ducks and geese, and by sunset Russell is down by the creek chasing the pukekos.

The farmer is distraught – worried that his rooster won't even last 24 hours. Sure enough, he wakes up the next morning to find Russell dead as a doorknob – stone cold in the middle of the yard with hawks circling overhead. The farmer, saddened by the loss of such a colourful and expensive animal, shakes his head and says, "Oh, Russell, I told you to pace yourself. I tried to get you to slow down, now look what you've done to yourself." Russell opens one eye, nods toward the hawks and says, "SHHH, they're getting closer....."

