

CUD

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



February 2017

Clinic News

We won't mention the unmentionable weather, except to say we all, animals and humans alike, need some sun! On the staff front we'd like to welcome new graduate Anna Burrell to the crew. Anna comes from a little area, Taylorville, just inland from Greymouth. Marek is back from his extended travels in South Africa & Australia. Most of us managed to get some break over the holidays, returning refreshed for the usual rounds of lame cows and preg testing. Hopefully those vets and techs out on your early morning preg test jobs aren't too grumpy! Elspeth will be taking a few months out to pursue her other life - teaching dance at her newly acquired dance studio, with the plan to return in August in time for spring.

Thiamine (B1) Deficiency

Cattle doing strange things? Staggery, blind calves? Polioencephalomalacia (PEM) is a very long word to describe a deficiency in vitamin B1 (not to be confused with Vitamin B12 "the cobalt one"). The bacteria in a cow's rumen are normally able to produce enough B1 (thiamine) for the cow's needs, however, for reasons often not clear, occasionally there is interference with either the production or absorption of thiamine from the gut. Cattle start showing neurological signs such as an apparent blindness and a staggery gait, which may lead on to seizures and death. Most often we see individual animals, or small numbers of a mob becoming affected, rather than the whole herd or mob. It is typically more common in young stock, but can occur in adult cattle, usually at this time of year. We have seen a number of cases of the disease recently, possibly due to the change in grass quality or diets of calves as they are weaned from meal. Regular monitoring of stock can identify potential cases early. Treatment is through thiamine (B1) injection, and if the disease is caught early, treatment is often successful.

Lame Cows

Lame cows and bulls have been a bigger part of the workload this January than is typical. The combination of the wet and cycling cows is never beneficial, especially where lanes are not good, and when cows don't have time or space to look where they're putting their feet.

The smallest part of the lame cow equation is treatment, so it's here first to get it out of the way:

- It's easiest to keep on top of the treatment side of things if a regular checking, drafting, and treating plan is in place. It's easier and better for you and the girls to do two feet every day as the yard is being hosed than twenty every second week!

The primary area to look at in the big picture is lameness prevention. **The most important part of this is FREE!!!**

- Look at the behavior of the humans and the cattle. This simple statement reflects a huge amount. Without wanting to get 'fluffy', have a think about how human behaviour (including our systems) impacts on cattle. If she were left to her own devices to wander to and from the paddock, how would she go about it? What motivates her to go each way?

- The golden rule** is for every cow to have personal space at all times bar during milking itself, i.e. not touching other cows, and able to see her feet.

- If any heads are up, the golden rule is being broken!

- Keeping to the rule affects how the cows are brought in, how they are handled on the yard, and how the backing gate is used.

- The next most important aspect is the layout (promoting free flow) and footing (smooth, dry) near the shed.
- Next, look at lane quality, especially near the shed and in shaded areas.
- Lastly, fine tuning things like mineral supplementation and foot baths can help.

We have so much more to offer when it comes to lame cow prevention – please contact us to talk about your system.

Calf (& cattle) Drenching

Iver Matrix Calf – The best anthelmintics for delaying the onset of drench resistance are the triple combinations. The problem in young calves, especially dairy calves <120kg has been that these contain abamectin which has a very fine safety margin, and even moderate overdoses can result in toxicity. Just new on the market is Iver Matrix Calf which is a triple combination containing ivermectin **instead of** abamectin. The dose rate is 1ml/10kg. This should be your drench of choice (over and above the dual combination Arrest C) for younger calves, then progressing to the standard Matrix in which you have a choice of 1ml/5kg, 1ml/10kg & 1ml/20kg dose rates. Once you feel your growing stock are getting too big for oral drenching then move to a combination injection (Eclipse E or Boss) and failing that, if you must use a pour-on, Eclipse or Boss combination pour-ons. Bear in mind the same chemicals given as an injection will always give superior results to those when applied in the pour-on form, so our recommendation is to always use an injection in preference to a pour-on. You should not need reminding that abamectin only pour-on products have a very high chance (at least 92%) of being less than fully effective, and hence should not be used for cattle drenching.

Lepto Vaccinations for Calves

Something else to remember at this time of year is that calves are now becoming overdue for their leptospirosis vaccination. Recommendations are that calves are to have had their second lepto vaccination completed before the oldest calf is 6 months of age. This is recommended as the older the calf is at their first lepto vaccination, the higher the likelihood that they have already been exposed to the lepto bacteria. This means they can still shed the bacteria as adults even after being vaccinated.

Best practice is that calves then receive a third vaccination in autumn at the same time as the herd/heifers to align them for the following year so there is no more than 12 months between the boosters. This will also boost the clostridal protection for the calves as they go onto winter crops.

These protocols need to be followed to ensure that you, your staff, and anyone else coming into contact with your stock, are protected from the chances of catching lepto from your stock following all other risk management's plans in place.

If your calves have not received their first lepto vaccination this needs to be done as soon as possible to lower the risk of them being exposed to the bacteria. Please contact the clinic to book in your vaccinations, this can be done when the calves are brought in for a routine drench.

Things to do in February:

- Pregnancy testing - needs to be done now for accurate aging of the first few weeks of calving
- Lepto vaccinate calves
- Johne's testing on milk samples from herd testing on herds with a known problem - give Bevan a call
- Vetcerts for lame (or any other injury) bulls going to works

Retail

February Specials & promos:

NeXepirin Microjet - Buy 1 x 500ml & get a \$75 Prezzy Card!

Merial Ancare Cattle Treatments - Get a Casio G-Shock or Casio Solar

Got a few to do? Get a cordless Stihl Garden Tool on a **12.5ltr Eclipse Pour-on**, or a **6ltr Eclipse E injection**

Dectomax Starter Packs - still a great price!

NEW! IVER MATRIX CALF. A low dose but high safety for young calves under 120kg.



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