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

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Clinic news

We hope you have all managed a little bit of time away from the farm to relax with family and friends in the good weather over Christmas and New Year. At the clinic, we are gearing up for the start of the pregnancy testing season. Is yours booked in yet? We are also excited to be welcoming two new vets this month – please ensure Bridget McCauley (Massey trained) and Marek Misiewicz (from Perth) receive a warm welcome on your farm.

BULL MATTERS

Enthusiastic Bulls causing injuries

I had a farmer comment recently that the bulls seem “overly enthusiastic and attentive to their duties”. I’m not sure if this was just on their farm or if it is a general observation (my apologies, I haven’t spent much time closely observing animal matings recently!), but the result can be an increase in injuries to cows, including dislocated hips, fractured backs and ligament damage in the stifle (knee). If you have a cow that has become suddenly and severely lame with signs of being ridden please look closely at the cow for signs of injury. This may be a rare occasion when the problem isn’t in the foot but higher up the back leg. It is possible for us to replace dislocated hips, but the sooner the animal is seen the better our (and the cow’s) chances.

The end of bull mating

In the post-induction world, your cows will be calving for a longer period of time than your mating period (some will inevitably calve early, some inevitably late). Fifteen weeks of mating will create at least 15 weeks of calving. If you want to be finished calving by 15th October, the bulls need to have finished their work by 6th January (based on “normal” gestation length bulls). Leaving bulls in until 15th January will mean calving until 24th October, and the 30th January will see calving continuing until at least 8th November.

No Bull

That footsore bull? He’s not making any babies. Check your bulls regularly, and bring them in for a look and treatment ASAP. Not only a good idea to keep them doing their job – they need to be well enough to get on the truck at the end of the season. If the infection gets into a joint, there’s no rescue. Even the best facilities can be a match for a sore, angry bull; keep yourself and your staff safe from harm, get a vet to see him and sedate him if needs be!



Handling bulls safely

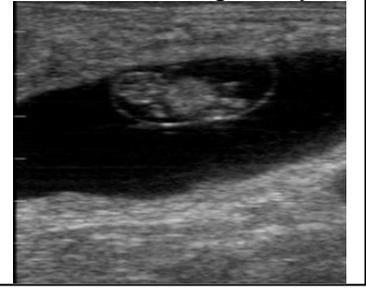
Never trust a bull. Keep yourself, your family and your staff safe working with cattle, especially bulls.

- Never turn your back on a bull – they can kill. Bulls are more dangerous the older they get.
- Keep children out of the yards, (especially visitors who may have no idea of the danger they can be in).
- Bikes can be fair game for stirred up or playful bulls, so don’t assume you, or anyone else, is safe on the bike – particularly children.
- Keep an eye on all the bulls when moving or working with them - make sure you know where the others are if you are concentrating on one particular animal
- Keep well clear of fighting bulls
- Carry a length of alkathene pipe or a ‘waddy’ (or ‘claddy’) stick and be ready to use it with a timely whack over the nose or rump if the situation arises.

Pregnancy Testing

The Clutha Vets pregnancy testing is more than just “scanning your cows”. We will customise our service to meet your needs. We offer advice on the best time to scan your cows, and have a team of experienced scanners available at the right time to accurately age pregnancies. We manually check cows scanned empty, which also allows us to identify cows unsuitable to carry over. Results can be electronically recorded on our toughbooks (or you can use our technicians to do it), and we can upload results directly to MINDA, providing comprehensive reports including empty, weekly due to calve and expected due date by cow number lists. We offer a safe and efficient service at a competitive price. Phone the clinic now to discuss how we can help you out.

6 Week Pregnancy



Don't Forget your Calves!

As more calves are weaned and head away for grazing it is important not to forget to monitor their progress and keep husbandry procedures up to date.

- Regular drenches are required as calves have yet to build any immunity or tolerance of parasites, remembering a combination oral is the preferred drench for at least the first two drenches.
- Weighing calves also gives you a chance to monitor their growth and make sure they are on track to reach target weights. If there is a problem, it's a lot easier to correct now before the calves fall too far behind. Clutha Vets is happy to weigh your calves for you (once or regularly), record their weights onto MINDA, and provide a detailed report with recommendations.
- Vaccination against leptospirosis and the clostridial diseases is also essential. If your calves have not received at least their first vaccination, please contact the clinic to organise it now, as antibodies derived from colostrum will have fallen to levels that won't protect the calves from infection.
- It may be time to be thinking of additional trace element supplementation, particularly copper and selenium. Every situation is different, so speak to a vet about what your calves might need now.

Staggery, apparently blind stock?

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 become 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 injection, and if the disease is caught early, treatment is often successful.

'Fog' fever – eating your greens can kill you!

In the UK, regrowth after grass or green crop is cut is known as 'fog'. In sheep and cattle, eating this fog sometimes causes the deadly disease 'fog fever' – a rapid onset, severe pneumonia, which is always fatal without judicious treatment. The fog regrowth can contain high levels of a compound called “L-Tryptophan”, as can rapidly growing kale, Lucerne, and turnip tops. The compound is converted in the rumen to a toxic form, which travels in the blood to the lungs, causing severe, irreparable damage to the lung tissue. Signs will be seen within 4-10 days after consuming the feed, including fast, open mouth breathing with an extended neck, grunting, frothing at the mouth, and sudden death. Animals may collapse and die if forced to move. Early recognition and treatment is essential to survival, but recovered animals often remain unthrifty. If feed exposure has been less than 5 days, damage can be limited by shifting to another feed source; any more than this and the damage has been done. Call us ASAP if you encounter something that looks like Fog Fever!!

In summary, keep a close eye on stock put in a paddock after cutting for green feed, balage, silage, hay, or when feeding summer crop!

This Month's Retail News –

- **Eprinex** – Buy 3 x 5lt get another one FREE
- **Nexepin Microjet Cattle Injection** – Contains Eprinomectin and Vitamin E. Low dose of 1ml / 100kg. Purchase 4 packets and receive a FREE Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 (7")

LOOK OUT FOR FANTASTIC NEW PROMOS COMING FOR 2015