



CUD

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

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Clinic News

Hard to believe it's March, but the temperatures are becoming decidedly autumnal – especially in the mornings as most of you will have noticed! Steve has now headed off to start a spring and summer stint in the northern hemisphere but will be back with us later this year ready to take on our spring rush. Hamish & Sarah have announced the happy news of the impending arrival of an addition to their family in September – no references to calvings, please. Ben in Retail has had recent shoulder surgery, so no lifting for him for some time.

All our herds have now been pregnancy tested, with Rechecks going ahead now. We are still working on calculating 6 week In Calf Rates for the area, but most seem to be heading in the right direction.

Use of Excede LA

There is concern about the overuse of Excede LA and the possibility of contributing to development of resistance, both in animals and humans. We would ask that you limit the use of this product where possible. It should never be used as a 'standard' treatment for lame cows. Please speak to a vet for further discussion about appropriate use of this antibiotic or to discuss alternatives.



The What, Why and When of Body Condition Scoring

What A cow's body condition score (BCS) is a number between 1 and 9 and is an estimate of a cow's fat and muscle reserves. The score is given based on a looking at and feeling prominent points on the back half of the cow.

Why Research has shown that, compared with cows of lower BCS, cows with higher BCS at the time of calving will produce more. They are also more likely to be cycling by the planned start of mating.

It is recommended to calve at BCS 5. At BCS 6, more health issues are seen at calving time, such as milk fever, ketosis, and difficult calvings. In addition, it is inefficient to have more condition on a cow than necessary. This is because the increase in milk production going from BCS 5 to 6+ is much less than the increase from 3 to 4 or 4 to 5.

Heifers have a slightly higher calving target as it gives them a bit of a buffer against a very demanding period in their life. Calving them at 5.5 provides a larger energy reserve and will result in a better in-calf rate in the following mating period.

In an ideal world, the drop post calving wouldn't happen. This is because losing weight only to gain it back is inefficient; it takes ~50% more energy to gain the condition back than was released as condition was lost. In the real world, our cows are bred to milk at high levels and it is difficult to get enough energy into them post calving. Therefore, the aim is to minimise the drop in condition, and a 1 BCS change seems to not affect the productivity of the cow so long as she is feed well coming into, and during, the mating period.

In summary:

The targets set for cows at different times of the year are as follows:

- *BCS of 5 at calving (heifers at 5.5),*
- *dropping by 1 BCS at most post-calving,*
- *rising by ~0.5 BCS into mating,*
- *staying about the same level through summer (though may have a small drop),*
- *returning to 5 by calving the following season.*

When

- Autumn (most important) as we start to get the cows ready for the next season.
 - Early-mid autumn: allows for herds to be split based on their BCS and managed separately.
 - Mid-late autumn: used to make dry-off decisions.
- Pre-calving: If worried they have come home under conditioned.
- Pre-mating: To make sure they haven't lost too much weight over calving.

Early Dry Off – Combination Therapy

In every herd there are cows that would benefit from drying off early, light conditioned cows, cows that have been lame but are being kept for the next season and those cows that just tend to dry themselves off early. With the principle that all cows deserve some form of dry cow therapy, cows with extended dry periods would benefit from combination therapy, that is the use of an antibiotic and an internal teat sealant. Antibiotics provide a means of treating any existing subclinical infection but no dry cow product is available with a period of activity longer than 10weeks to protect against new infections. With dry periods of 16weeks or more, the addition of a teat sealant can provide protection from new infections for the whole length of the dry period. If you are drying cows off early, before you have done your Milk Quality Review consult, please contact the clinic so we can organize what product will best suit your needs.

Plain Lepto or 7-in-1

I'm sure everyone is aware of the need to vaccinate cattle in order to protect both animals and farm workers (or anyone who comes in contact with them) against leptospirosis. The gold standard of vaccination for all animals is a 7-in-1 product that combines lepto and clostridial vaccines. The trend currently is to vaccinate all young stock with 7-in-1 but the milking herd with lepto only. With many cows being wintered on crop, we often see cows dying from "clostridial like" diseases (i.e. sudden deaths), which may be preventable by annual vaccination with clostridial vaccines. The small additional cost of using the 7-in-1 vaccine will soon pay for itself if you can prevent any cow deaths. 10-in-1 clostridial vaccine is also available, offering protection against a wider range of clostridial diseases. This does not include a Lepto vaccine, but can be used alongside plain Lepto vaccine.

Fat Faces – Things that make heads grow big

The most common cause of a swollen face is an abscess. This is diagnosed by sampling the contents of the swelling for pus, draining the abscess, and giving a good course of antibiotics.



Facial haematomas, like in this photo, are basically a giant blood blister. They occur when a cow has trauma to a major vessel on the face without breaking the skin. These can take a long time to go down, a month or so, and the face sometimes never returns to 100% symmetrical.

Woody tongue can look like this too if the infection is in the cheek rather than the tongue, and can be a bit harder to diagnose definitively. This requires treatment with specific antibiotics (Bovipen is unlikely to be effective), so it's important to have a vet identify the cause of the swelling.

'Lumpy jaw' is similar to woody tongue in the jaw bone itself. The infection can be treated, but the swelling is bone hard (it is bone!), and will never go down. The onset of this tends to be slower than other problems causing fat faces.

Various cancers can grow on the face, under the skin, and in the lymph nodes at the corner of the jaw.

Bee stings/other allergies can make heads swell up. These can be localised swellings, or can cause the whole head including eyelids to swell up. Treatment with antihistamines and anti-inflammatories may be required to allow easy breathing and vision.

Johne's disease in the end stages can cause fluid accumulation under the jaw, "bottlejaw", as the proteins required to keep fluid in the bloodstream are lost in the watery diarrhoea.

Milksmart – Clydevale – Thursday 20th March

Last year, DairyNZ's Milksmart was a fantastic learning event, with a wide range of dairying topics covered for people at all levels in the dairy industry. It's on again this year in Clydevale, and Clutha Vets are pleased to promote it to you, and proud to be presenting information on how the Healthy Hoof programme can help you manage lameness on your farm. More info and registrations at dairynz.co.nz/milksmart. Get along!

Stocksense Workshop: Lameness Prevention Training

Wednesday 26th March, 10am-1pm

Location TBC to be as convenient as possible for those attending.

Cost: \$30 (part funded by DairyNZ)

This is NOT a TREATMENT training session but will help farm staff to:

- Understand what happens to a cow's hoof when she becomes lame
- Identify the key factors that cause lameness in dairy cows; including management of cows on the track and yard.

Practical training in the identification of lame cows.

Places limited. Please confirm by email to kbrennan@cluthavets.co.nz or call the clinic.

This Month's Retail News:

- *Merial Ancare Promotions*
 - Purchase Eclipse 2.5litre / 5 litre Cattle Pour On / Eprinex 5 Litres / Exodus 5 Litres / Genesis 5 Litres or 2 x packets Genesis Injection and receive a oilskin sleeveless vest
 - Purchase Eclipse Pour On 11 Litres and receive a pair of R.M.Williams Boots
 - Purchase 3 x Eprinex 5 Litres Pour On and receive the 4th x 5 litres free
 - Purchase 3 x 500mls Eclipse Injection and receive the 4th packet free
- *Combat Topline 5 litres cattle pour on* - only \$2.34 nett. incl gst per 500kg cow dose. Nil milk withholding 35 day meat withholding. 56 day lice claim.
- *Dectomax injection* – buy 2 x 500mls and receive 1 x 200mls free (Starter Pack) or purchase 2 x Starter Packs injection or 1 x Herd pack of Dectomax pour on and receive a 100 litre storage bin free.
- *New product* : Nexeprix Microject Injection for the treatment and control of internal parasites in cattle. Nil milk withholding period, low dose of 1ml per 100kg, short 14 day meat withholding and contains eprinomectin and vitamin E. Purchase 2 x packets and receive either a Morphy Richards Accents 4 slice toaster or 1.5 litre kettle.
- *Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg* – only \$60.77 nett.incl gst