

# CLUTHA VETS DAIRY FARMER NEWSLETTER



June 2021



## Clinic News

As we roll on towards the shortest day, our thoughts go to friends, family and colleagues in Canterbury who have lost significant winter feed to the recent deluge. Much of Clutha District's dairy land is similarly prone to flooding, and so it is a timely reminder to have a contingency plan for your farm – where can the cows go, and how will you get them there if the farm is threatened? What can you feed them if much of the feed you are counting on is lost? These are the same sorts of questions we need to be asking if any other sort of weather bomb hit cows on winter crop – you need to have a plan for shelter, feed and hard standing when the weather sends us its worst.

But turning to things immediately at hand in South Otago, we are now well through heifer teatsealing. If you are wondering whether you'd like your heifers protected against mastitis for the coming spring, there is still time for us to seal their teats, please give us a call. It has been a great team effort to get this job done despite some pretty awful weather. Hopefully, however, the sun shines on Lake Brunner at Queen's Birthday, for Anna who will be getting married there. Congratulations from all of us, to her and Joe.

We extend congratulations and a warm welcome to all the new farm owners, sharemilkers, managers and staff who have moved between farms or into the district for the new season. With the payout forecast, it could be a very good year to be farming in the best dairying area of New Zealand! Unfortunately, by the time you receive this in the mail registrations for our Clutha Vets Golf Tournament to be held on July 10 in Clydevale will be closed. However, if this miraculously turns up in time, and you are keen give us a call on 03 418 1280 to see if there are still any places.

Finally, a farewell. After 30 years service to the cats and dogs of Milton, Gaynor Finch (vet nurse) will be leaving Clutha Vets. There are many animals who owe their happiness and health (not to mention their lives, in some cases) to Gaynor's professionalism and TLC. Gaynor is also well known for her service as a Clutha District Councillor, which Clutha Vets has supported for many years. We thank Gaynor for all she has done at Clutha Vets during her long career here, and we wish her good health and happiness as she spends more time with Geoff.

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## Transition is not over!

By now, most of the cows of the district are dried off and successfully transitioned onto their winter rations, be that swedes, kale or fodder beet. We've all learned some lessons over the last few years about how this can be managed for minimal complications.

One thing we have noticed however, is that there are often some cows that unexpectedly get crook a few weeks after the mob has settled onto the crop. We suspect these are cows that have been slow to take to the crop. In the first few weeks, while per cow allocations are low, they focus on the bale feeders, while everyone else is jostling at the wire. Or, if they are less dominant cows, they may not have been able to get a space at the feeding face, until after the day's crop is all gone. They may not even eat any crop at all in the first week or two. By the time they are able to, or decide to have a nibble, the allowance has been increased to 8 or 10 kg per cow per day, which is far too much for these cows in their first few days of eating it. They overeat, and give themselves a good old belly-ache.



So what can be done?

First, make sure your mob size is appropriate for your face length – 2m is required per cow.

Second, shift the wire twice a day, so that they have twice the opportunity to get to the face in the first few days. If they are pushed out of the morning break, they may have a better chance at the afternoon break.

Third, keep a really close eye on the mob once the wire is moved – are there any hanging back, while all the others are hoe-ing in? Note these cows, and pull them out for special management.

Fourth, make sure whoever is moving the wires has a few metabolic bags and a bottle of anti-inflammatory, and knows how and when to use them. These two are good first aid treatments for any cow that may be wobbly or down on the crop.

We have emailed some separate advice on transitioning and First Aid Treatment for Rumen Acidosis. If you haven't received this please call the clinic—it may be that your email address needs updated, or we need to add you to our email address book.

## Post drying-off mastitis

As mastitis around the district gets pushed to lower and lower and lower levels, one of the consequences is less clinical mastitis in the dry period. However, from time to time cases do pop up, and some of these can be very severe, so it is important to manage them effectively.

The key to treatment, as with nearly everything, is early identification. Any cow showing udder discomfort needs to be examined. Start by feeling the udder for heat, swelling, hardness or pain. Only if you detect any of these should you strip the teat, because if mastitis is not present, the last things you want to do are to stimulate milk production, disrupt keratin plug formation, or dislodge any teatsealant or antibiotic that has been used.

If you find mastitis, a sample taken at this time is really helpful – to establish both where it has originated and how best to treat it. Regular, frequent and complete stripping of the quarter will certainly be an important component of treatment, just as it is for lactating cows with mastitis. You can't expect them to get well with an udder full of bacteria, toxins and pus! The best antibiotics for use may be amongst those that are classified as "red light" ones, so a call to Clutha Vets to discuss the situation and work out a treatment plan is warranted. Anti-inflammatories are also important, and if the cow is really unwell, she will probably benefit from fluid therapy too.

## Preventative Animal Health

Everyone knows the value of time and money spent preventing disease, as opposed to having to control a disease outbreak – just look at the worldwide rush to vaccinate against COVID-19. At this time of year, there are four main vaccines to be thinking about for your cattle.

By now, you probably have your lepto vaccination across all stock classes completed. As part of this most young animals will have been given 7-in-1. The “seven” are two strains of lepto, and five diseases from the clostridial family (including pulpy kidney, tetanus, black leg and other “blood poisoning” type diseases). Despite this protection, we sometimes see outbreaks of similar diseases, particularly in young stock on winter crop. Either the challenge from bacteria in the environment is so overwhelming the antibody level in the animal is not enough to offer protection, or there is a strain of disease (eg a new variant) that is not covered by the vaccine. In these cases, and to prevent them happening again, some farmers are using a 10-in-1 vaccine that covers the five normal clostridial diseases and five additional ones, offering a higher level of protection. This vaccine does not include lepto, which is protected against separately with “plain” lepto vaccine.

We have also seen a rise in Salmonella in cattle nationally over the last few years, and have had some pretty heart-wrenching outbreaks within the Clutha Vets practice area. More and more farmers are choosing to vaccinate against this disease to protect young calves and cows from often-fatal gut damage, scouring and dehydration. Salmonella is transmitted to people too, so vaccinating stock also helps protect your family and your staff. As with most vaccines, two shots are required in short succession in the first year, and then a single annual booster in each subsequent year. Let us know numbers, especially if partway through the vaccination course.

Finally, it won't be long until it is time to vaccinate pregnant cattle to protect calves against scours, primarily Rotavirus. There are now a number of these vaccines on the market, and each has pros and cons to its use. The main thing however, is that the cows get their vaccination somewhere around 3 to 10 weeks before their due calving date, usually in July for early calving cows, and August / September for the later calvers.

Most of our regular users have now ordered their scours vaccine, if you are unsure, please feel free to give the retail team in Balclutha or Milton a call to check. Similarly, give us a call if you'd like to go through the benefits or details of vaccination and subsequent colostrum management, and chat with a vet.

## BVD testing

If your young stock have been, or are away grazing, now is a good time to check their BVD exposure. If you are making strong positive steps to reduce this disease, the last thing you want is introduce it to your herd via the heifers that have been grazing off farm. These animals will often be grazed with, or near, other farms' young animals, and even if all of the animals on the grazing block are disease free, what about the neighbours on all sides? Or the herd they share the truck trip with?

Ideally stock leaving the farm and coming back would be fully vaccinated before leaving home (like Olympic athletes). This will prevent them catching BVD from any infected animals they may come into contact with while away. It will also prevent them creating “Trojan calves” – unborn PI's that sneak through testing because their mothers are antibody negative.

If your animals were not vaccinated before leaving home, why wait until the busy-ness of October before checking them out? A simple blood test of 15 animals taken now will tell us whether the mob has been exposed to BVD, and indicate the risk of them bringing the disease home.

## Calf rearing “Ladies' Night”

Our much anticipated annual Ladies' Night is scheduled for Tuesday 29 June, starting at 7pm at the Balclutha clinic. Come along to relax, socialise, have some fun and maybe win a prize or learn something new.

We will be offering practical tips on a range of calf-rearing topics, to help this season be as stress-free as possible, for both the calves and you!

To register, please phone the Balclutha clinic (03 418 1280) or email [admin@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:admin@cluthavets.co.nz)

## MULTIMIN: some remarkable results

In a recent study carried out in Canterbury, the product MULTIMIN (containing copper, selenium, zinc and manganese) was given to cows 14-28 days before planned start of calving, at the same time as scours vaccine. These were “normal” cows that had been on a regular dosatron regime through the season, normal DCT plan etc. Those given the MULTIMIN were shown to have approximately half the rate of clinical mastitis (6.1% vs 3.8%) in the first 30 days after calving, and approximately 25% reduction in subclinical mastitis at the first herd test of the season. There was no measurable difference in “dirty cows” or the quality of colostrum between the cows that were treated and those that were not. An earlier study had shown no difference in mastitis, but some gains in repro for cows treated twice with MULTIMIN.

These studies come on top of some data from several years ago that showed an injection of MULTIMIN to calves within 24 hours of birth produced a measurable reduction in the amount of disease and death in the calf shed.

How the product has produced these results is unclear, but it is thought MULTIMIN has a “top up” effect even in animals with “adequate” trace element status, allowing the body (particularly the immune system) to function at a higher level at key times.

## Buying cows — things to look for

Are you looking to buy or lease a few extra cows for the coming season? It makes sense to enquire about their production and BCS, of course, and also get accurate calving dates, but it is also worth asking about the disease status of the herd they are coming from. There are a range of undesirables you could bring on to your farm if you are not careful. You could be left with a problem that persists in your herd much longer than the cows you are buying will! A good operator who has cows on the market should easily be able to tell you about:

- What Mycoplasma bovis testing the farm has had
- The BVD status of the herd — from bulk milk testing; and vaccination status
- Johne’s Disease — from clinical cases or more detailed investigations
- Staph aureus mastitis and antibiotic resistance—from BMSCC, Mastatest and Antibiogram
- Lepto vaccination — up-to-date to protect anyone working with these cattle
- Tail scores—to protect yourself from mis-treatment allegations; and horns — no weapons allowed!
- NAIT records

### Retail News for June 2021

The Balclutha retail team is pleased to welcome Terri Mathieson to the shop, and Shannon van Vugt, who will be focusing on on-farm dairy support

#### LAST CHANCE -

Boehringer Ingelheim Pour-On - BBQ, Knife Set or BT Speakers

Win a BBQ Package with any purchase

Alleva Pour-On - Turbo Pour On 5ltr + Drill Sets

- Food Saver & New World Vouchers

Elanco Copper - win 1 of 5 x 50” Panasonic TV’s