



Welcome to the first Calf-Link newsletter for the season! Calf-Link is a newsletter for anyone who is involved or interested in calf rearing. It will be sent out via email over the next few months to help keep you informed on topical issues around the district as well as general calf care and husbandry practices to keep on top of. If you know of someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter please let the clinic know and we will ensure that they receive them. You can email [smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:smcnutt@cluthavets.co.nz) or call 03 418 1280. And if you have questions about specific cases or topics, please contact the clinic.

## Calf Scour Vaccines

Scours in calves are a devastating but all too common problem in New Zealand dairy calves. As well as being expensive to deal with, calf scours have been shown to increase mortality rates by 3% and result in a 12kg liveweight reduction at 18 months<sup>1</sup>. The combination of mortality, treatment costs, poor growth and poor performance all mean that preventative vaccines (eg Rotavec/Scourguard/Rotagal/Kolibin Neo) are a great idea. Using one of these to minimize the risk of a scours outbreak relies on injecting the cow with the right technique at the right time as well as good colostrum feeding practices.

These vaccines are a great management tool, but there are some very important things to remember to get the full benefit from them:

- All calves must be fed first day colostrum when they get to the calf shed, regardless of whether it looks like they have already fed off their mother or not.
- The sooner after birth the colostrum is fed to the calves, the more antibodies the calf is able to absorb. There is no cross-over of antibodies to the calf while it is still in the uterus - only through colostrum feeding.
- Vaccinating stock does not cover poor hygiene practices in the calf shed. Immunity breakdowns and disease can still occur if there has been an overwhelming challenge from the environment. You still need to operate with the same degree of care - wearing gloves, foot baths, disinfecting pens, feeders and equipment regularly etc.

• If you haven't vaccinated your cows, preventative options are still available - both in the face of an outbreak, or to reduce risk if there has previously been scours. Please contact us to discuss the best options for you.

• Call the clinic on 03 4181280 (Balclutha) or 03 417 8032 (Milton) to discuss your options.

