

# Calf Link



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Animal Health Centre

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**Calf Rearing Newsletter No. 2**

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

## Calving is getting closer!

All of us at Clutha Vets are getting the final preparations done before calving starts. Heifer teat sealing is coming to an end, and calving gear is being retrieved from the dark depths of the vet trucks ready for those midnight calving calls. For some of you, your first calves may have already hit the ground while others are holding off for another week before the madness of spring starts. This is the time for final checks of the calf sheds and to get those supplies ready for the calves. As always, we are happy to answer any questions, just email Elspeth ([edunne@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:edunne@cluthavets.co.nz))

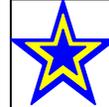


## HOT TIP #2

Having a calf first aid kit ready before the start of calving means that you will have everything on hand that you might require and will be completely prepared for whatever cases might pop up. The following is a list that we recommend including in your kit:

- Thermometer
- Electrolytes – essential for scouring calves. (Refer to Wisdom of Willie in this edition for an outline of products available)
- Antibiotics – individual for each farm depending on what best suits your system of management
- Anti-inflammatories – Metacam is a long acting anti-inflammatory that can help perk up sick or injured calves.
- Iodine – an alcohol based iodine mix for spraying/dipping of navels
- Plain Iodine – washing wounds
- Calf Covers – for those calves born in less than ideal conditions (i.e. snow/freezing rain) or sick calves struggling to maintain body temperature
- Dextrose – for those who wish to use intraperitoneal (IP) dextrose to aid in calf revival (Please ask for specific information)

We are happy to help you put together a complete kit or top up your existing one, just drop in to any clinic and ask about the calf first aid kits.



## REMINDER: Calf Rearing Seminar – This Week

If you haven't got your name down for the calf rearing seminar and wish to attend, please contact either Balclutha or Milton ASAP as places are filling up fast. The seminar will cover all aspects of calf rearing from the importance of the first feed of colostrum to weaning and more.



## Photo Competition

Week one of the photo competition and we are eagerly awaiting your entries. Remember, the overall winner and runners up will receive a gift voucher thanks to the generous sponsorship of MSD Animal Health.





## Checklist: Calf Housing Facilities

Hopefully after last weeks newsletter, most of the calf sheds will be back into working order again. This week, the focus of the housing facilities is on feeders and ways to minimise the spread of disease through the calf sheds.

Milk feeders – washed and teats replaced. Leaking teats don't enable calves to suck properly. It is the suckling reflex that makes sure the milk ends up in the abomasum and not into the rumen of the calf.

Straw feeders – racks or nets up off the ground are preferred so that the calves don't sleep in it and contamination with poo is minimised.

Pellet Feeders – pellets or muesli should be on offer from the first week of age. They provide additional nutrients and roughage for early rumen development. Feeders should be set up so calves can access but not stand in or contaminate. You don't want the feed going mouldy so smaller amounts given daily is better to start with than putting in the whole 20kg bag.

Separate gumboots and waterproofs for use only in the calf sheds – change on entry **and** exit from the shed. You don't want to be introducing bacteria from the cows into the shed.

Footbath – used on entry to the calf shed if separate gumboots and wet weather gear is not available. Refer to last newsletter for appropriate disinfectants

### Isolation/Hospital Pen

To minimise the spread of disease through the sheds, a completely isolated pen is needed for all sick calves. These pens should have

- Solid partitions, preventing any contact with healthy calves.
- Clear identifications that it is the hospital pen
- Footbath to be used on entry and exit from the pen to prevent the bugs from being spread through the shed.
- Recording notebook or whiteboard close to the entry of the pen so that all calf treatments can be recorded to enable easy identification of what needs to be treated and when.

Remember, once calves are recovered, they should not rejoin their original group but be put in a 'recovered' pen as they may still be shedding the bacteria/virus and can spread it to other calves. Calves can be regrouped once they leave the shed.

## The Wisdom of Willie!



Ever been really confused when it comes to all the different options for electrolytes? Here is a bit of a breakdown of what each of the main electrolyte options are and when it is most appropriate to use them. Remember it is the dehydration that will kill the calf first but hunger or starvation will soon follow, so calves can't be off milk for more than 24 hours.

### Revive®

This product comes as either a syrup or a sachet and provides both electrolytes and energy to the calf. Electrolytes help correct the acidosis that scours cause, and rehydrate the calf. It is best used when the calf is scouring but still standing.

### Diarrest®

This product comes in 250g sachet only and is considered one of the premium products. The combination of electrolytes, energy substrates, rice flour and starch means that this product can be used as a long term treatment (a few days). It rehydrates, corrects acidosis and provides energy. Unlike most electrolytes, this product can be mixed with milk. Good choice for those calves that are unwilling to stand.

### Enerlect®

Enerlect is similar to Revive, in that it provides electrolytes and energy. It comes in a 20kg tub and is good for those mass outbreaks. It can be fed adlib for those who wish to give calves a bit of a boost, especially if recovering from a previous case of scours.

### Bobby Bind®

This product has NO withhold so can be used on bobby calves that are just a bit loose from nutritional upset. There are no antibiotics in this product so will not treat infectious causes of scours.

### Bentonite 'fines'

Bentonite is great to have on hand as a binder for calves that have nutritional scours. Use with caution, as if there are bacteria involved, it will slow their passage from the gut and has no antibacterial activity.

Remember some severely affected calves may need IV fluid support to rehydrate from very severe cases of scours.