

Calf Link



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WELCOME!

Welcome to the first Calf Link for 2014. Calf-Link is Clutha Vets Calf Rearing Newsletter, developed to keep in touch with the people rearing the calves during the busiest, but most important time of the calf's life. Each fortnight we will be emailing out information to make your job easier. From hot tips to current conditions seen around the practice as well as reminders as to time to drench, disbud, and vaccinate your calves. This newsletter is being coordinated by Elspeth, one of our younger vets who grow up rearing calves on her family's dairy farm. So if you have questions, queries, or concerns, please don't hesitate to call or email Elspeth (edunne@cluthavets.co.nz) or contact the clinic directly.

The Wisdom of Willie!



We all know that it is important to disinfect calf sheds to reduce the risk of carrying over bugs from one year to the next. Disinfecting during the calf rearing period is also important but you don't want to be using one that can cause harm to the calves. Here is a general guide for the use of disinfectants.

Virkon S® This product has proven activity against 18 virus families that can affect animals and man. It can be used on all surfaces including calf sheds. It's mixing rate is 1:100 but check the label before use. This product would be one we would recommend for disinfecting calf sheds at the start of the season.

Vetacide® is active against a wide range of micro-organisms, even in the presence of organic matter. Suitable for hygiene control for livestock bedding, rearing pens, etc. Mixing rate is 10ml in 4L of water, or 25ml in 4L of water for TB control (stronger rate required). This is a good disinfectant for general purpose use such as calving equipment, scrubbing down waterproofs etc.

Vetsan Concentrate Super® This product is a high activity sanitiser for all surfaces, including animal housing. Surfaces do not need to be saturated but sprayed with a fine mist. It's safe to spray when calves are in the shed, making it an ideal product to reduce environmental contamination of the common causes of calf scours - rotavirus, coronavirus etc

Envirosan QHF® This product is for animal bedding and is a housing sanitiser. It is effective against a wide range of bacteria, fungi and viruses. A minimum contact time of 10minutes is recommended. The mixing rate for calf pens is 10-20ml/1L water.

Sterigene® This product is a high level disinfectant and cleaner concentrate, destroying bacteria, fungi, protozoa, spores and viruses. Mixing rate is 1:100, and can be used as a general disinfectant for equipment and for washing down waterproofs before entering the calf sheds.

HOT TIP #1

Collect your spring supplies now!

We appreciate how busy you get during the spring, especially those who appear to be starting with a bang rather than the manageable trickle. Getting organised before the rush is important to ensure you have what you need, when you need it. See the check list on the next page to make sure you are covered with the essentials!



Checklist: Calf Housing Facilities

I hope that most people will have all their calf sheds ready to go but for those who have been caught up with other things, here is a quick checklist for you to make sure nothing has been missed.

- ✓ Pens fixed from last year – no holes, no sharp hazards, limit calf contact between each pen to prevent disease spread. Ideally there would be a solid partition between each calf pen.
- ✓ Bedding in place – straw, sawdust, bark/wood chips or river stones.
 - Sawdust - make sure it is not tanned as this will cause arsenic poisoning if eaten by the calves. Must be deep enough to provide comfort to the calves and additional sawdust is required to top up the pens during the season.
 - Straw – has to be deep enough to provide warmth, not just a scattering on the ground and again will need topping up during the season. Also consider the fact that calves may eat this bedding, and the poo that is on it as well!
 - Bark/Wood Chips – similar to sawdust, make sure there is a deep enough bed to provide comfort and warmth to the calves.
 - River stones – if used previously make sure sprayed with disinfectant
- ✓ Water troughs – cleaned, test they are working and don't have any leaks. All calves must have access to clean water at all times.
- ✓ 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 them and contamination with poo is minimised.
- ✓ Pellet Feeders – set up so calves can access but not stand in or contaminate.

It is also important to remember that the above checklist in most part will be very relevant to the bobby calf shed as well. Clutha Vets offers a calf shed check where, in consultation, we cover all the elements that impact on good calf rearing systems. If you are interested in this service, please contact the clinic, and remember to allow time before the start of calving if changes need to be made.

Calf Rearer's First Aid Kit



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 – The normal temperature of a calf is between 38-39°C (anything above 39.5°C is considered high).
- Electrolytes – essential for scouring calves. In the next edition, we will cover types of electrolytes and how electrolytes work.
- Binding products (Bentonite fines, Bobby Binder, etc) – use on nutritional scours and bobby calves as has no withholding period.
- 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 (10% spirit) iodine mix for spraying/dipping of navels. The spirit based products help to dry the navels as well as reduce the amount of bacteria.
- Stock Iodine – great for cleaning wounds or diluted to flush out abscesses.
- 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).
- Needles and syringes – smaller syringes (5 and 10ml) and 18G needles for calves. Cow sizes (16G needles, 20ml+ syringes) are too big for the calves.

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 organising your calf first aid kit!

