

# CUD

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



February 2021

## Clinic news

The wet early summer meant good grass growth which in turn has meant a lot of winter feed taken off the paddocks. Excellent summer turnip crops have also provided some good feed for a lot of farms. Unfortunately at the time of writing we are in the middle of a very cool spell, and although the rain was welcome, hopefully we'll get back to the warm temps we experienced late January / early February.

We have had a few staff changes with the new year—in Balclutha we welcomed Eckard (Eckie) Abrie, our Massey new graduate, and technician Anna Ramsay. Familiar faces returning are Rob Mills, and Alisa McDonald; Alisa worked with us a few years ago and will be working mainly from the Lawrence Clinic. We sadly farewelled vets Tom Wallbank and Barbara Christensen from the Milton Clinic, and tech Audrey MacBeath, from Balclutha.

## February focus—Lame Cows

Lame cows can appear at any time of the year, but many farms will have seen a spike in cases recently with some very wet days contributing to the problem.

Lame cows can be frustrating and have a negative impact on the farm as well as the impact on animal welfare. The impact on the bottom line can also be significant with treatment costs, lost production, and knock on effects on areas such as reproduction. Dairy NZ has estimated \$250 to be the average cost per case of lameness costing the average farm \$15,000 annually, and many others estimate it even higher.

Although the cause of lameness is multifactorial, we can influence some of the risk factors to help prevent lameness. We can also optimise our treatment of lame cows to get them back in the herd faster and prevent them from going lame again.

## Healthy Hoof

The Healthy Hoof programme is a simple farm-specific approach to managing lameness. Largely developed by NZ lameness specialist Neil Chesterton, the Healthy Hoof programme consists of five key steps that each farm takes with the support of a trained programme provider. This includes an initial farm visit, action planning with farm management and training with staff to help target specific risk factors for lameness. Following the latest provider training with Neil Chesterton in November, Clutha Vets has five trained Healthy Hoof providers: Annie, Bevan, Andrew C, Dave & Matt.



If you would like to know more about Healthy Hoof and how it could improve lameness on your farm please give us a call.

## Keeping track of your lame cows

Treatment records for lame cows are often only kept for those who get some antibiotics or anti-inflammatories. However keeping records of all lame cows that have their feet picked up for lameness can have several benefits:

- It allows us to keep track of what % of the herd is lame and compare monthly and yearly data
- It identifies cows that are repetitively lame

- It helps identify what types of lameness are common on your farm
- It helps develop a big picture of lameness on the farm to help target lameness prevention

Records don't need to be complicated - Cow number, Foot, Cause of lameness, and Additional Treatment is generally enough information. Recording directly onto MINDA or a similar platform is one of several ways of doing it. The Dairy NZ Healthy Hoof app is a quick and easy way to record lame cows, for example - to record the diagnosis you simply click on the area of the hoof where the lesion was (*see right*).

### Top Tips

Some of our vets give their top tips on treating lame cows.

*Andrew C:* Always lift the opposite back foot after treating the lame one - you'll be surprised how many have similar lesions on the 'good' foot that may develop into a problem if left untreated.

*Bevan:* Treat lame cows regularly. It's much easier to motivate yourself to deal with 2 or 3 cows, than to deal with 20-30 cows, plus it's better for the cows if they are treated promptly.

*Dave:* Look after your hoof knives. Some regular maintenance and sharpening of your hoof knives will make treating lame cows easier, safer and maybe even more enjoyable!

*Matt:* Make sure you remove all underrun hoof and leave an exit. Without this the problem is unlikely to resolve.

*Hamish:* Always check between the toes for a stone or for footrot.

*Finally - don't forget to provide cut-proof gloves for anyone using a hoof knife to treat lame cows, and ensure they are worn!*

### Clutha Vets' Lameness Services

- ◆ Lameness treatment
- ◆ Lameness scoring
- ◆ Healthy Hoof lameness prevention
- ◆ Retail of everything needed to treat lame cows
- ◆ Knife sharpening
- ◆ Tailored on-farm staff training



### "Cows Rock!" Competition

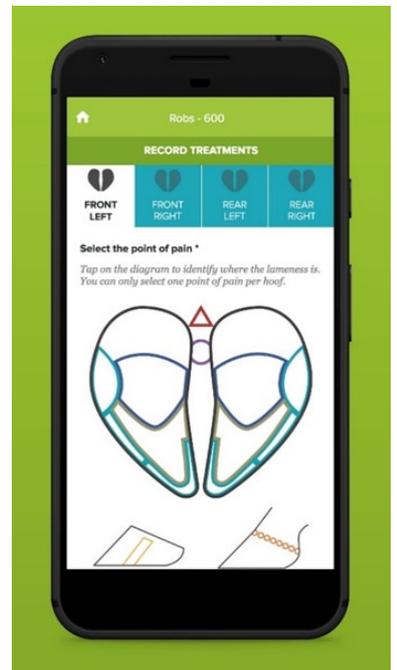
All you have to do is name the Band / Singer and the Song!

This one for February —

*"I'm going down to Cowtown, the cow's a friend to me  
Lives beneath the ocean, and that's where I will be.."*

Answers to [admin@cluthavets.co.nz](mailto:admin@cluthavets.co.nz). Correct answers will go in the hat for a box of beer or reasonably-priced bottle of wine.

December's song—"The Size of a Cow" by The Wonder Stuff; winner out of the hat was—Heather Gordon of Milton.



### **Things to do in February:**

- Have all your paperwork in order for shed checks—RVM shed sheets for the last two years; authorisation for any drugs held that are not on your script; any Red Drug Authorisation required.
- Booster lepto (7 in 1) for calves
- Preg testing—cows & heifers
- Lepto (7 in 1) booster for R2 heifers