

CUD

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



February 2022

Your vet club - Our vet team

At a time when there is a recognised national shortage of production animal vets, we have been sorry to say goodbye to Andrew Comerford, Ruth Andrews and Matt Buckley over the last couple of months. However, we have also been very pleased to welcome two new vets to our team, Darius Tan and Jeanne Dennehy. Darius joins us fresh from Massey University vet school, and will be based in Balclutha. Jeanne is an Irish (and Irish-trained) dairy cattle vet with plenty of Kiwi experience and will be based in Milton for the next few months.

In early January, we farewelled Emma Smith after 12 years working at the Balclutha clinic. Emma's bright personality and no-nonsense approach have been great assets in her roles as vet nurse, receptionist and farm animal admin. But in turn we are welcoming Briana Dent (who some of you met when she worked a stint with us before Christmas) and Te Aroha Little, as technicians in Balclutha.

There are a number of advantages that come to your farm business when you deal with us at Clutha Vets. Our large team of experienced cattle vets means that we can usually get someone to your animals within an hour or two of your call – better in some cases than the Southern DHB can manage, or a vet practice with fewer resources. It also means we can commit our vets and techs for significant periods of time to some of your bigger jobs – half or even whole days at a time when necessary, and still have vets available to attend emergencies that occur elsewhere.

Our large team also means we can provide continuity of care for your animals. Not only do we have vets ready to go 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for afterhours emergencies, but we can also cover holidays, sickness or personal commitments that other vet practices can struggle with. And when Omicron arrives here, we have plans in place to make sure we can continue to function, even if some of the team are isolating.

Most importantly of all however, our vet team can offer you a vast range of experience and skills. At a rough count, we have about 300 years of combined experience across our large animal vets! This is not just in the more routine tasks like calf disbudding, intramammary insertion and pregnancy testing, but also in more demanding areas like cattle nutrition and mastitis advice, lameness prevention and treatment and abdominal surgery. And we are always keen to share this knowledge with our popular seasonal client seminars and workshops.

Finally, Clutha Vets can offer you the most comprehensive service across all of your animals – not just the cows – with both provision of services and supply of quality products at competitive pricing. And being a farmer-owned co-operative, the operating surplus that is generated is returned to your community – either to you directly as additional discount credited, or through support and sponsorship of innumerable community groups and activities.

After pregnancy testing

Townies (who are unfamiliar with how cattle are pregnancy tested) eyes sometimes bulge when they see the introducer we use to take the scanner probe inside the cow! For you and us, it's easy to overlook the fact that on rare occasions putting something this big into a cow, no matter how carefully it is done, has the potential to cause internal damage (just as an arm, an AI pipette or a CIDR can).

If you have a sick cow in the days after scanning, it could be related to the procedure, and in the worst case scenario can be fatal. After scanning, whether it is Clutha Vets who have done the job, or someone else, please keep a close eye on the girls, and let us know straight away if any cow is off colour—not eating, lethargic, off milk etc. If we get to these animals in time, we can sometimes turn them around.

Vitamin B1— staggery, stiff, blind calves

At this time of year, we usually see a few sporadic cases of Vitamin B1 (thiamine) deficiency in calves. Vitamin B1 is not to be confused with Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) that is often supplemented using drenches with cobalt added, or by direct injection with vaccines or other trace elements.

Vitamin B1 is usually produced in adequate quantities by the microbes in the animal's rumen, and it's not known exactly what derails the process. There is a suggestion that diets that are high in sulphur (eg summer turnips) can contribute, or sudden changes from low to high quality feed.

Usually the disease can be turned around with a series of thiamine injections—as with most things, early detection, prompt diagnosis and rapid treatment gives the best chance of recovery,

Things to do in February

- Display your farm business COVID tracker QR code prominently at your cowshed and yards, so that we, and others, can scan in when we arrive for jobs (please!).
- Final pregnancy testing, at least 6 weeks after the last possible mating date
- Weigh the calves and in-calf heifers to check the dry spell has not created a growth check. Regular worm drenching, and trace element supplementation as required.
- Lepto vaccination for calves.
- Body Condition Score the herd. Although last week's welcome rain will ease the feed situation a bit, from now on you should have an eye on light BCS cows for targeted early dry-off, if required.
- Discuss Johne's testing on autumn herd test samples if more than 2% of your herd are affected during the season.
- Fonterra suppliers: Book a time with your vet to get your Animal Wellbeing Plan sorted and signed off before your shed inspection. This will help you to access the "Co-operative Difference" bonus payment.

Cows Rock

It's been a while (November, I think), but well done to Matt & Kylie for correctly identifying Jersey Girl, by the inimitable Tom Waits. A few of you had it down as a Bruce Springsteen song; The Boss often performed it live, but I'm sure he wouldn't claim to have written it.

Jason's come up with another good one this month—

*"You'd barely get to see your banker otherwise
You'd never get to fix no fence or buy no barbed wires
Nor have some mangy neighbor's bull come breed the heifers that you prize
May you always have cows around"*

Title and songwriter to—03 418 1280 or admin@cluthavets.co.nz



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