

CUD

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



June 2022

Clinic News

As we wave farewell to the old season, and look ahead to the next one, we welcome all the new farmers who have moved to “the Land of Milk and Honey”. Our aim is to provide you and your animals with “top quality and up-to-date animal health services, advice and products, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year”.

At the end of May we farewelled Kim Bastiaansen, our lead technician. Over the last 6 years Kim has been an integral member of our vet & tech team, and we wish her well in her new dairy role with Farmlands in Mosgiel.

And finally, please accept our apology if you have been caught up in a couple of recent security breaches in our computer network. Somehow the hackers in Russia (or Nigeria, or North Korea, or wherever they are!) got through our defences and sent some pretty dodgy emails in our name. It’s a timely reminder that if you get an unlikely looking email from anyone you do (or don’t) know, especially with attachments—hit delete!

Out of sight, out of mind?

Far too often at calving, mating time or even pregnancy testing, we hear that a farmer has been unhappy with the BCS of the cows when they return from winter grazing. While it can be convenient to trust the grazier to do a good job (and they usually do!) it is always worth checking in on the girls when they are off farm. We suggest a minimum of twice during the dry period, but better still, every fortnight. This can be tied in with vaccinations for calf scours or salmonella, or winter trace element top-ups.

Visit the cows on their break, and look out for—face length, depth and mob size; cows eating and ruminating (or not); cow demeanour; lying areas; fibre allocation; access to water; rumen fill; dung consistency; soil conditions; body condition score.

If you’d like help with any of this, or feel an independent eye would be helpful, please give us a call to utilise our “Winter Crop Check” service.



Mycoplasma bovis – still lurking?

MPI is still actively looking for traces of any M bovis that might be lingering around through blood testing of potential herds and properties. Did you know that if we come to do another job on more than 25 suitable animals (away from the milking platform), and we take M bovis bloods at the same time, MPI will pick up the mileage and testing costs, plus the cost of the materials used? If we use the same samples to test for trace elements, BVD or anything else, all you’ll need to pay for is the lab fees. And, for every animal we sample, we will donate \$1 to a local school of your choice. Sounds like a win-win-win to me!

Some people are concerned that a positive test may pop up, to which there are two responses—first, it is highly unlikely that it will; second if there is one, it will be detected sooner or later, and wouldn’t you rather know about it sooner?

Transition is not over for everyone!

While most cows settle onto crop pretty quickly and easily, there are often some cows in the mob that unexpectedly get crook a few weeks after the mob has transitioned. We suspect these are cows that have been slow to take to the crop (i.e. they haven't transitioned at all!). In the first few weeks, while per cow allocations are low, these cows focus on the bale feeders, while everyone else is jostling at the wire. Or, if they are less dominant cows, they may not have been able to get a space at the feeding face, until after the day's crop is all gone. They may not even eat any crop at all in the first week or two. By the time they are able to get to it, or decide to have a nibble, the allowance has been increased to 8 or 10 kg per cow per day, which is far too much for these cows in their first few days of crop eating. They overeat, and give themselves a good old belly-ache.

So what can be done?

- Make sure your mob size is appropriate for your face length – 2m is required per cow.
- Shift the wire twice a day so that shy cows have twice the opportunity to get to the face in the first few days. If they are pushed out of the morning break, they may have a better chance in the afternoon.
- Keep a really close eye on the mob once the wire is moved – are there any hanging back, while all the others are hoe-ing in? Note these cows, and pull them out for special management.
- Make sure whoever is moving the wires has a few metabolic bags and a bottle of anti-inflammatory, and knows how and when to use them. These two are good first aid treatments for any cow that may be wobbly or down on the crop.

What are the collars telling us?

Farmers who have fitted activity-monitoring collars (or similar technology) to their cows can take advantage of the information they provide all year round. Each device needs to come within range of the base unit once every 24 hours or so to upload its information. For cows within a few hundred metres of the milking shed (under cover or on crop paddocks) this is no issue, but some folk have invested in a portable base unit that can be moved around with the cows.

At this time of year, the most useful information the collars provide is about rumination during transition onto winter feed. While they can't tell whether the cow is eating roughage or crop, they can give an alert if a cow has gone off feed altogether, which can then trigger further observation or intervention. If the cows have a break out on crop, a significant number of them are likely to show increased activity—this too can be picked up by the collars.

Things to do in June

- Have a holiday—but check on cows away at grazing every couple of weeks, too!
- Treat cows that develop mastitis after drying off with LACTATING cow antibiotic, but first take a milk sample and strip the quarter thoroughly.
- Weigh the calves and yearlings - are they going to be adequately grown by their start of mating date?
- Contact us if you are noticing abortions in the cows—more than a couple within a day or two or with cows becoming sick afterwards,

Merchandise promotions

- **Turbo 7.5lt Pour On:** VERY LIMITED Stock—Get a Pole Saw with Turbo 7.5ltr Promo Pack.
- **Boehringer Ingelheim Cattle De Walt Tools On selected BI Pour On, Injection and Oral.** DeWalt 18V Cordless Drill Sets, Toolbox & Screwdriver Kits: Last Chance Limited Stock
Promo Eclipse 5.5lt Pour On: Best Buy—All Drench No Promo
- **Topline Pour On:** Always great buying.
- **Planning ahead?** Thinking of minerals, milk powder, drench, tail paint, anything... for next season? Wanting to ensure supply and beat price increases? Shannon Van Vugt is here to help and she can come to you! Give her a call **027 485 6015** or call your local friendly retailer.