

CLUTHA VETS SPRING REMINDERS



Are your cows being affected by Ketosis?

- Commonly seen in spring on South Otago farms; excess body fat is mobilised leading to development of Ketosis
- In severe cases the cows will show signs such as an increased excitability, excessive licking and circling.
- However often the signs are more subtle such as reduced milk production and feed intake.
- Significant effects on cow performance include:
 - 7% reduction in 6 week in calf rate
 - 300% increase in uterine infection
 - Drop in milk production
- Body condition score and feed management over spring plays a major role in the development of ketosis.
- The use of monensin based products such as **Rumenox and Rumensin**, which alter the rumen and increase energy availability can also aid in the management of the disease. Monensin used from 3 weeks pre-calving has been shown to **reduce the chances of a cow developing ketosis by 19 times**.
- Monensin based products also have the added benefit:
 - **Increases milk and protein production**
 - **Provides long last bloat control**
 - **Reduces ketosis**

Drenching Cows at Calving Time

Selective drenching of part of your herd at calving time can be a useful tool to improve reproductive performance.

- Drenching First calvers at calving has shown to:
 - Shorten time from calving to conception – more days in milk next season
 - Increase in-calf rates.
- Drenching Adult cows at calving has shown to:
 - Increase milk production (Whole herd drenching not usually recommended as it increases drench resistance)

Clutha Vets advice in most circumstances would be to drench the following animals at calving:

- First calvers + Low body condition score cows
- Whole herd drenching can be used if required

What drench to use?

- Broad spectrum drenches with a Nil meat and milk withholding period (WHP) should be selected. The WHP for the bobby calf needs to be taken account of as well. Options include;
 - **Eprinex** and **Cydectin** pour-on drenches both have Nil meat and milk WHP

Milk Fever Treatment Options

Milk fever is generally seen in high producing dairy cows; usually 4 years and older; and within a few days of calving. The disease is characterized by three stages:

Stage 1: Up and down, maybe wobbly.

Stage 2: Down; and may have a dry nose, cold extremities, or an S bend in the neck.

Stage 3: Near death; lying on her side, bloated.

A Clutha Vets Treatment Regime

Into the Vein - Calpro 375: This contains high amounts **Calcium borogluconate** PLUS **Vitamin B12**. It is the treatment of choice in an uncomplicated milk fever case *followed by*

Under the Skin – Glucalphos/Calprophos/Calpromag – These provide some calcium and magnesium, given under the skin provides a more sustained release *followed by*

Oral treatment within 6-12 hours – **Calol/Jumpstart/Headstart Gold** – Ensure cow can swallow. Provides a backup of high levels of calcium +/- Magnesium and Energy to boost the cow and prevent relapses.

Good quality colostrum contains high levels of antibodies and is free from bacteria.

Cow factors that affect the quality of colostrum include time from calving (milking her the sooner the better), volume produced (over 8L the antibodies become too diluted), and age of the cow (cows over six years had greater levels, below six years antibody levels were the same, including in heifers). Ideally colostrum fed to replacements should also be from cows with a low risk of Johnes disease, free of blood or mastitis, and from cows vaccinated against Rotavirus.

Bacteria can bind and lower the levels of available antibodies in colostrum, so collection into a clean bucket is important. Antibodies also degrade with time, and colostrum stored for longer than 12 hours should have a colostrum keeper added, such as Potassium sorbate.

Antibody levels can be measured from a composite colostrum sample (not from the teat), using a Brix meter.

