

Clinic News I've just read the clinic news for last December and it begins with – “The hot, dry days continue...” Enough said about the weather! We will sadly farewell Lewis this month, he will be missed by us, and by all of you who were fortunate to have him on your farm. He is heading north to be with his partner and we wish him all the very best. We will be joined by two new graduates in January so will introduce them next month.



We wish you all a Happy Christmas and safe travels if you are on the road. For anyone fortunate to get a break – head for the sun and make the most of it!

Pinkeye in cattle

Lately we have been seeing a few cases of pinkeye, mainly in calves and yearlings. This is due to a variety of reasons, including an increased amount of dust and other irritants due to all the wind, and irritation of the eye from seed heads on the grass. Other causes can include the effects of UV light (which we don't seem to be seeing too much of lately); dusty bedding in calf sheds; and feeding of hay, especially in small areas (which also potentiates the spread). Clinical signs include reddening of the membranes around the eyes, the cornea going cloudy, or ulcerating, and a profuse ocular discharge which starts as a clear discharge but becomes purulent. It can be a very infuriating disease as you pull out the affected animals, and next time you look there are more animals affected. The disease is usually spread by carrier animals and flies

Well, don't stress about it, we can help. There are treatments that we can do for the rest of the mob that are relatively easy and treat the subclinical (animals yet to show the disease) and carrier animals. Treatment of individual cases is usually by the use of an antibiotic ointment. Some animals however (especially ones with corneal ulceration) may require the eyelids to be surgically closed to aid recovery. If left untreated animals may lose the eye. A vaccine is also available.

Calf x-ray



This calf presented as suddenly lame, and with the lower leg (cannon bone) angled outwards from the carpus (“knee”). We suspected a fracture but decided to take an x-ray to confirm this.

The x-ray shows a clear fracture through the growth plate at the end of the radius. With no cost effective means of dealing with this, a decision was made to euthanase the calf



Calf Hernias

Throughout the debudding season, we found a number of calves with umbilical hernias ranging in size from a small one 1cm (can fit a pinky in the hole) to larger 5cm hernias (can fit 2-3 fingers in the hole). We suggested to keep an eye on the calves and check for closure at weaning, as a large number of hernias smaller than 3 cm will close up on their own, while a small proportion of those larger will, but others will require surgery. Well now is the time to check the calves that were identified. If the hernia is still present, then the calf will most likely require surgery. Surgery is relatively simple, where the calf is sedated and put on its back and the hernia repaired with sutures. We require the calf to be kept off feed for approx. 12 hours prior to the surgery to empty the rumen out, as if the calf is full, it is difficult to put everything back in. Umbilical hernias in cattle is thought to be an inherited trait, thereby it is recommended not to keep offspring of affected animals, however some are a complication of umbilical abscesses. If left un-corrected, viscera (mainly small intestine) can become entrapped and strangulate, causing severe colic and death, or adhesions may form which may or may not cause the animal problems, depending on what structures are involved.

Health & Safety Issues

With the pending changes to the Health and Safety legislation we thought it might be useful to mention some specifics around improving safety on farm, in particular relation to areas that our staff work in. With the upcoming preg testing season now is the time to make sure that facilities are up to scratch. Some things to consider include;

- Having a stable platform for the scanner to stand on in the shed; the purpose built platforms are ideal while two drums with a couple of planks on them are not so ideal.
- Checking over the cattle yards where any heifers or carry over cows are to be scanned for things that may need attention
 - Board walks should be stable and ideally slip free, mesh netting can be added to help here.
 - Gates should swing
 - Fix any broken rails or posts etc.
 - Remove or bang in any protruding nails etc.

Postmortem in cattle

Lately we have done a number of postmortem (PM) examinations of cattle and have found a variety of things ranging from a rare congenital kidney defect – polycystic kidneys with subsequent rupture and peritonitis in a yearling heifer; liver abscess/neoplasia with subsequent peritonitis in a cow; a calf with infected kidneys; a cow that had been losing weight and had small abscesses and pieces of intestine adhered to each other causing intestinal malfunction (this cow had a larger abscess on the uterus and the lesions seen were most likely due to a resolved peritonitis post calving). This is just to name a few.

It can be very useful to have a PM done, as

1. Is it something that could be affecting other animals
2. You actually find out what was going on, and
3. They can sometimes just be plain interesting.

Sometimes it is still not completely obvious what was going on with the animal however. Below are just some of the interesting cases we have seen.

- a. Opened abomasum of a calf with three ulcers (*fig 1*), two of which had ruptured. The calf was only unwell for about a day before it died.
- b. Polycystic Kidney (*fig 2*) from a heifer, with a normal size and shaped kidney on the right (*fig 3*).
- c. Cow with liver masses and subsequent peritonitis (*figs 4 & 5*). Note the amount of fluid on the ground that came out of the abdomen (left). On the right is a close up of the omentum in the same cow - note how thick it is. The omentum is usually a thin membrane that helps to compartmentalise the abdomen.



fig 1



fig 2



fig 3



fig 4



fig 5

This Month's Retail News:

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches** – Currently running the quality Xmas Ham promotion; the draw for places on the “Take a Mate Fishing to Stewart Island” trip; & all purchases qualify for our in-store promotion of a choice of 1 of 3 packages - a Stihl Kombi pack plus a blower, a Powerbuilt tool chest including tools, or a Shimano Fishing Pack with everything you need for a successful days fishing. Prizes on display in the Balclutha shop.
- **Zoetis Anthelmintics** - Dectomax, Vetdectin and Cydectin - receive a \$30 New World voucher on selected items.
- **Eprinex Pour-on 5lt** - Buy 3 x 5lt and get the 4th one free.
- **Genesis Pour-on** - Buy 2 x 5.5lt and receive the 3rd free.
- **Cydectin Pour-on 5lt** - Receive a portable Bluetooth speaker with each 5lt.
- **Boss Pour-on 10lt** – get a free pizza oven.
- **Kaiwaka Children's Wet Weather Clothing:** from size 2 up. These are particularly well priced, and would make great Christmas presents from the grandparents.