



CUD

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

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January 2013

Clinic News – Lewis Sparrow will be starting work as a vet with us on January 14th. Lewis is a Cantabrian and I'm sure you'll all make him feel welcome in South Otago. Most of us have managed to get some sort of a break over the Christmas period, so hopefully we're all refreshed and ready for the onslaught of preg testing that awaits us. The weather has been patchy, but some meaningful rain at the time of writing will please many of you. Oh, and Happy New Year to you all!

Lame Cows – A little bedtime reading...

We have some really useful booklets from Taranaki vet Neil Chesterton on the causes, treatment and prevention of lameness in your dairy cows. Lots of handy hints, useful guidelines for track design and things to think about – all for just \$24. Pop into Retail or give us a call if you would like a copy for yourself or your staff.

Also available is Neil's set of 3 lameness DVDs (\$275) with some more visual hints and details on improving cow flow in your herd. This is an excellent resource and well worth the investment. Alternatively, give us a call for advice. Current estimates put the cost of lameness at over \$600 per cow. This isn't just a welfare issue, it's affecting your bottom line too.

Finally, we are hoping Neil will be visiting the region in early March 2013. If you have any requests or suggestions for seminars, or you'd like him to visit your herd, please call Keara on 03 417 8032.

Photosensitisation

Photosensitisation, as the name suggests, is a sensitivity to sunlight that occurs after the animal has eaten certain plant material. Some plants (e.g. brassicas) contain chemical compounds that, when exposed to UV light, cause the skin to become red, swollen and painful. It is similar to sunburn (which I'm sure we have all painfully experienced at some point) but differs in that the plant chemicals need to be present and cows are often more irritated. It is mainly the white or light coloured areas that are affected and the udder and teats can be very painful. Affected areas start to become oozy and slough off with time. Prevention can be difficult, but always adjust gradually to any new feed. Treatment is through the provision of shade, applying sunscreen e.g. Filtabac, and the use of pain relief/anti-inflammatory drugs and antihistamines. Antibiotics may be needed to combat secondary infection if there is extensive sloughing of skin. Avoid cow covers.

Tetanus in Calves

Recently there have been a number of calls to see calves that are lying out on their sides, heads pulled right up and with their jaws clamped shut. This is the classic presentation of tetanus, and often occurs after castrating or dehorning where there is a wound that has healed over to some extent. The Tetanus bacteria, *Clostridium tetani*, needs an environment with no, or low, levels of oxygen in order to multiply and produce the spores that contain the toxin which attacks the nervous system. While we often see Tetanus affecting beef calves a few weeks after marking, it is a reminder that dairy calves are also at risk for Tetanus as well as the other Clostridial Diseases such as Blackleg and Pulpy Kidney. There is no real successful treatment but the vaccine is relatively cost effective and can be given as a 5-in-1 or a combined with the leptovaccine as a 7-in-1. Hopefully all calves or R1 heifers should have received their first vaccination by now, or will have in the near future.

LDAs

Although we had a high incidence of Left Displaced Abomasum in the spring, we suspect that this may be the tip of the iceberg. We are interested to hear from you if you have dried off any young cows (2 & 3 year olds) early for poor production and/or weight loss with no obvious cause. We will offer a free visit to assess any suitable candidates.

Trace Elements: Copper and Selenium

I'm sure you are all aware of the importance of copper and selenium in cow health and reproduction with supplementation being routine on most farms through Dosatron or in-feed systems. Often this form of supplementation is through a 'paint by number' system rather than tailored to the cows requirements. Trace element testing is common pre-drying off to ensure that the cows have adequate levels to carry them through the winter but often we find that if the cows are low, it is difficult to lift them to adequate levels before being sent away for wintering. On occasions we have also found cows bordering on toxic levels, particularly when being fed palm kernel as well as daily supplementation. Mid-lactation testing through either liver biopsies (preferred) or blood testing can give you a clear picture about where your cows are at and prevent that last minute panic of trying to give copper boluses to unco-operative cows.

Pregnancy Testing

Hamish has been busy ringing around to book in your preg testing, but if you haven't yet received a call please get in touch soon, especially if you want an early scan. As with most things a bit of thought and planning helps the job to go so much smoother.

A few considerations:

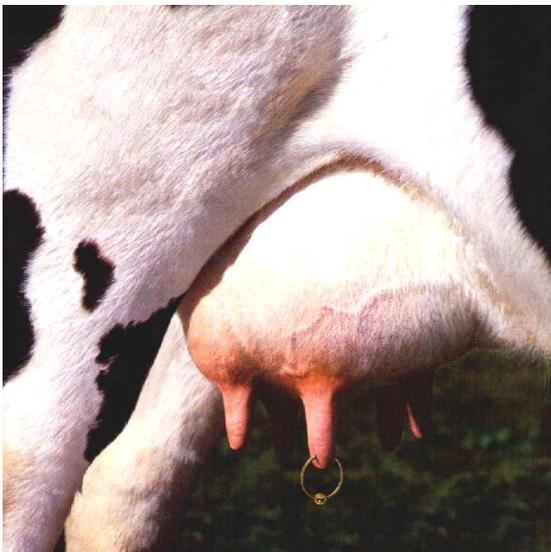
- **Ear tags** – Clean/Legible? Double-ups? Missing tags?
- **Platform** – Good grip? Wide enough?
- **Herringbones** – Bring the cows into the yard in smaller mobs to minimise time standing in the yard.
- **Staff** – A few extra pairs of hands are usually helpful, especially at the start of the job.
- **Tail-Paint or Marker Spray** – Sufficient to identify Rechecks etc.
- **Records** – All matings loaded onto MINDA?

As for last year, we will be using our "Tough book" laptops to record the information which can then be uploaded into your MINDA records. Please get in touch with us if you are having trouble with any of the above. We may even be able to help!

This Month's Retail News:

- ***Eprinex Pour-on*** - purchase 3 x 5lts Eprinex and get 4th at no charge.
- ***Cysectin Pour-on 17ltr Pack*** - Pay for only 15ltrs.
- ***Sunblock Vetsep 2kg for cows*** - \$52.08 nett incl GST – great price.

Moosic



Congratulations to Phillip Wilson for the only correct answer to last month's Moosic competition. The album was Atom Heart Mother, the band was Pink Floyd and the cow was a Holstein Friesian - Lulubelle No III, owned by Arthur Clarke from a rural area near Potters Bar (a few miles north of London). The band requested something plain for the cover! Phillip will be picking up a box of Speights from the Milton clinic. The first (nearly correct) answer was from Stephen Ray who will receive a liquid refreshment bonus prize. Several people incorrectly identified the cow as an Ayrshire.

This month's Moosic competition is to identify the band and album name for this album cover. Apparently no animals were harmed in the making of this picture! Entries to admin@cluthavets.co.nz or phone 03 418 1280.