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"Cows Under Discussion" or "Something to Chew On"

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November 2013

Clinic News – The Clutha Veterinary Association AGM is on Tuesday 19th November at 8pm at the South Otago T&C in Yarmouth St, Balclutha. It's your chance to hear how your vet club is going, and ask any questions you may have about us, and how we work. You may also be interested in our speakers, Neville Jopson from AbacusBio, and our own Jillian Clark, speaking about the untapped potential of the New Zealand sheep industry, and how Clutha Vets can help local sheep farmers tap it!

Although October was not as wet as last year there were still a few issues around lame cows (see Keara's article further down to register staff for some lameness training). There has been the usual rush around the start of mating and heifer synchrony programmes have been popular this year.

Things to do in November

- PG injection "Why Wait?" for cows cycling in the week before PSM
- Deal with cows calved more than 40 days, that have not yet cycled
- Plan a drench programme for your calves
- Speak to your contractor about leaving an un-sown margin in your winter crop paddocks - to allow you to introduce the cows safely to the crop in June. Failure to do this was a major cause of problems last winter.
- Source enough bulls - make sure they are BVD and EBL blood tested, and BVD and Lepto vaccinated (see Bull Notes further on)

Lameness Issues

Things may be getting busy with mating but before the bulls go out is a good time to check your staff are up to speed with lameness detection and prevention. The sooner a lame cow is noticed and treated, the quicker she will return to full production, start cycling, show signs of oestrus, and allow herself to be mounted. Of course, it's much harder to detect heat in cows that don't want to ride or be ridden because they have sore feet!

DairyNZ have produced a 'lameness scoring' video, available online or as a free DVD, ask us if you need a copy. This is a useful tool to start some discussion with farm staff on how they detect, record and treat lame cows. Also available from us are lameness prevention posters for your shed to remind staff of those golden rules to help avoid lame cows in the first place, and don't forget we have 1 (soon to be 3) "HealthyHoof" trained lameness veterinarians for working through lameness control and prevention on your farm. We are planning to run an introductory lame cow treatment workshop in November. If you are interested in sending staff to this workshop please email kbrennan@cluthavets.co.nz

Buying Cows or Heifers

Remember to add to your check list – what is the BVD status of the herd?

For milkers this should be easy to get an answer as all herds can have a bulk milk test done for antigen and antibody status. Carry-overs and heifers are a little trickier but information on the milking herd status in relation to PIs and antibody levels is still helpful. If they are vaccinated, they are lower risk and if they are grazed with other cattle, they are higher risk. At least if you know the potential risks you can plan to deal with them. Bulk Milk BVD testing results are coming through now and of the infected herds we are working through, bought-in cows, carryovers and 1st calvers have been at the centre of the problem. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Bull Notes

Preparation for mating is going full swing and although AB comes first don't forget about the bulls. Remember even the best 6 week in-calf rate will still leave 20% of the herd requiring a bull to achieve pregnancy.

So how many bulls will I need? A rule of thumb is 1:30 2yr old bulls in the paddock at any time for all estimated non-pregnant cows. Be conservative when estimating the pregnancy rate; a 90% submission rate with a 50% conception rate over six weeks of AB will produce a 70% in-calf rate. Well-grown yearling beef bulls are fine over smaller crossbred cows but don't expect these bulls to serve as many cows - an approximate ratio is 1:20. The advantage of yearling bulls is they can be used next year as a two year old – as long as weight gain is restricted.

BVD & EBL - bulls should be blood tested for BVD and EBL. Carrier bulls for BVD not only can cause abortion in the very cows they are trying to get in calf, but they can also infect other bulls. These bulls become temporarily infected with BVD which can cause short term infertility. Bulls can also give BVD to the cows and vice versa, so the bulls should receive a sensitiser Bovilis vaccination followed by a booster 3 to 4 weeks later. The booster should be administered no later than two weeks before bull introduction.

Pinkeye - bulls can also be vaccinated against Pinkeye. This is a one-off vaccine using Piliguard. Bulls can easily contract Pinkeye and then spread the disease as they move around the herd looking for bulling cows.

Leptospirosis - bulls should also be fully vaccinated against Leptospirosis. Vaccination with 7 in 1 will protect bulls from clostridial disease as well as Lepto. If bulls have not received a Lepto vaccination contact Clutha Vets for control options – vaccination now will not be sufficient. Control of Leptospirosis in bulls is part of being Leptosure/Leptovac Plus accredited.

If you are buying bulls through an agent ask about the above vaccinations – buy the bulls which have been managed correctly!

One final note – bloat can be an issue for bulls if we get a change in the weather and the clover really starts to come through. The drier run-offs where the bulls are grazed will often be clover dominant. If bulls are bloating contact us for control options.

Lepto Vaccinations

In 2012 there were 113 notified cases of leptospirosis in humans in NZ. 51% of these were farmers or farm workers. It has been estimated that the actual incidence is 20-40 times higher due to under-reporting. Vaccination of dairy stock is a key part to lowering the statistics, but it must be done at the correct time, particularly for calves. The risk of a herd containing “shedders” (i.e. cows shedding Lepto in the urine) appears to be associated with the age at which calves are first vaccinated.

Current “best practice” recommendation is that the **primary vaccination course be completed before 6 months of age**. The first vaccination shot should be given at no less than 4 weeks of age. Ideally, calves should be vaccinated in mobs, according to age. However, as a general rule, assuming 6 weeks of AB, all calves should receive their first shot between 70 and 125 days after the start of seasonal calving.

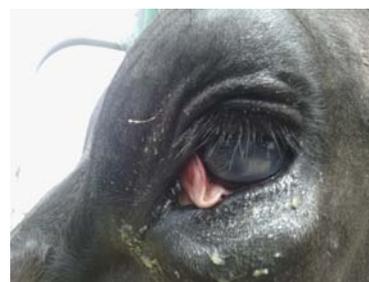
For example, if Planned Start of Calving was 10th August 2013, then first shot can be given between 19th October and 13th December 2013. Second shot must be given 4 to 6 weeks after the first shot. An autumn booster must then be given (e.g. April 2014) to bring them into line with R2s and adult cows. Long inter-vaccination intervals should be avoided.

Pink eye in cows and bulls

Pink eye is a bacterial disease of cows that if left untreated can result in serious infection of the eye and rupture of the cornea resulting in a significant welfare compromise and the loss of sight in one eye for these animals. Cases that do not respond to topical treatment can be treated with a third eyelid flap, a quick and simple procedure performed by your vet that can prevent further damage to the eye and allow it to heal.



Before



After

This Month's Retail News:

- **Merial Ancare Cattle Drenches** – Receive a Christmas ham on qualifying products. **Also** go in the draw for the ‘Take a Mate Fishing’ weekend to Stewart Island. **Also** a lucky draw to win a PowerBuilt® Tool Kit, sun shade umbrella, digital camera, iPod and a luxury gift basket
- **Eclipse E Injection** – Purchase 3 x 500ml packets and get the 4th packet free.
- **Eprinex Pour-on** – Buy 3 x 5lt and get another 5lt free.
- **Scanda, Alliance & Converge Sheep & Cattle Drenches** – Buy a 10lt drum of these and go in the draw to win a sleeveless vest.
- **Boss Cattle Injection** – A new combination injection of ivermectin, eprinomectin & levamisole for cattle from Alleva. Also effective against lice.
- **Dectomax Injection** – Receive a G Shock watch or Outback hat with every 2 starter packs.
- **Combat Topline Pour-on** – only \$418.21 nett incl. GST or \$2.34/500kg cow.
- **Meaty Bites Working Dog 20kg** – Currently on special at \$55.56 nett incl. GST (while stocks last). This is a very sharp price.