

DECEMBER 2019

DAIRY MOOSLETTER

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It is very hard to believe that another year (and decade!), is coming to a close and very soon we will be dating everything '2020'. They seem to slip by faster and faster now as I'm sure they do for most of you too! Hopefully you are getting the big jobs ticked off before Christmas so you can relax and enjoy spending some time with family and get a chance to do other things you enjoy.

Although December is historically the 'quiet month' for our dairy team, we have still been kept busy. Mainly with young stock issues and then getting locomotion and tail scoring done for our WelFarm clients. We hope to have some R'n'R over the festive period to be ready for the busy pregnancy scanning season which kicks off the first week of January.

You will see a new face in the large animal vet team in the New Year. We have Zara Vallance working with us until June to cover Kristina's maternity leave. Originally from Masterton, Zara has 7 years mixed animal experience. She has worked at VetEnt Gisborne, Energy Vets in Taranaki, and more recently in the UK. Kristina will still be around in January showing her the SRVS ropes and helping her navigate the area while introducing Zara to as many of you as possible before scooting off in February and being back on deck in July.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support again in 2019. We enjoy working with you all and seeing results that make you proud to be a dairy farmer.

We hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2020.



DRY OFF FOR AUTUMN CALVING COWS

Just a reminder for those of you wanting to dry cows off with dry cow therapy in the next few weeks:

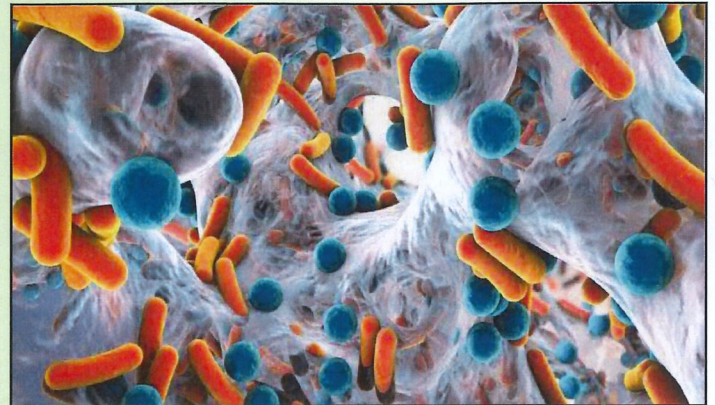
Please make sure you have talked to your vet regarding your requirements. This is especially important if you are wanting large quantities over the next couple of weeks due to wholesaler closures. This is the only way we can ensure we have the right product for you.



Changes to Restricted Veterinary Medicines regulations

As you would have read in the Vet Notes that were circulated with the November accounts the ACVM group of MPI is introducing some changes on January 1st 2020 concerning the authorisation and prescription of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM's). The antibiotics that they have classified as being of 'critical importance' for use in the human population, the main products involved here are Tylovet[®], Kelacef[®], Eficur[®], Mastalone[®] and Tylofen[®], these are now restricted for use in the animal population and because of this we can only provide a forward use authorisation for a maximum of 4 months. The current season's authorisations are valid until their expiry date of 30 June 2020.

The ACVM group produces regular reports on the volumes of the different antibiotic active ingredients (e.g. penicillins, tetracyclines etc) and monitors the trends in their use. The antibiotic actives in the 'critical importance group' should only be used when there is clinical evidence that there are no other options available in the other antibiotic active groups with less restrictions on their usage. The use of a product for management reasons, such as Kelacef[®] due to its nil withhold, is not a valid reason when there are other products available that will usually successfully treat the infectious condition.



However, the major concern from the recent ACVM group communications is that penicillin has now been reclassified into the highly important to human population group and so it is probable that restrictions will be placed on the use of penicillin-based products within the next few years. This is the total opposite of previous communications from the regulators where a change to prescribing penicillins where possible was advised. The recent survey data has shown an increase in penicillin usage accordingly.

The impact of these changes, especially with the penicillins, will become evident over time. In the short term the 'critical important group' of antibiotic actives are becoming more difficult to forward authorise and clinical justification is required for this to happen.

Please discuss any questions or comments you have with regards this with one of the vets.

Fusion[®] - Anecdotal fly prevention as well

Fusion[®] by Nutritech absorbs endophytes and mycotoxins including those that are involved in the heat stress syndrome. There is also anecdotal reports (some local) of reduced nuisance fly problems. Some of this will be due to the cows not mobbing up in the paddock. The cost of Fusion[®] is 7.6 cents per day.

In herds displaying signs of heat stress, there should be a response to treatment in 3-5 days if endophytes or mycotoxins are involved in the cause. Therefore, it is more realistic to use Fusion[®] when early signs of heat stress are seen. It is not known if there are any preventative effects on turnip photosensitivity but herds that are often affected would benefit from using Fusion[®] due to the known effect of decreasing heat stress. Any possible effects on turnip photosensitivity would be a bonus. There are certainly preventative effects on ryegrass staggers. The common decrease seen in milk production should be reduced when Fusion[®] is used due to removing endophytes and mycotoxins that effect milk production persistency.



Young Stock Issues

Over the last 4 weeks we have seen a lot of ill thrift and disease in young stock, some of it entirely preventable and some of it sporadic disease.

PARASITES

We have seen a lot of clinical parasitism in weaner calves. Due to the warm but wet season, parasite survival over winter was better than normal, meaning calves were eating higher larval numbers sooner. This has meant that calves needed drenching sooner than normal, and if this job slipped you by, then calves became heavy infested in both intestinal worms and lung worms (and coccidia too!).



All weaner calves should have had at least one, if not two drenches by now. Ensure you put it in your diary and that calves are drenched every 28 days going forward. The 28 day rule is based on the parasite life cycle for the worms we are concerned about. By drenching every 28 days with a suitable short acting drench you will minimise growth rate losses and also minimise pasture contamination and therefore parasite burden. An appropriate drench is a double combination drench, where one of the active ingredients is levamisole. Levamisole is vital to kill the Cooperia worm as it has known resistance to BZs and the -mectin family. Oral drenches are the cheapest and are generally more accurate to dose followed by injectables. Pour-on's are acceptable but our general advice is to wait until they are too big to manhandle before using a pour on, just ensure it is a double combination pour on. Most pour-on's also have a minimum weight of 120kg.

THIAMINE DEFICIENCY

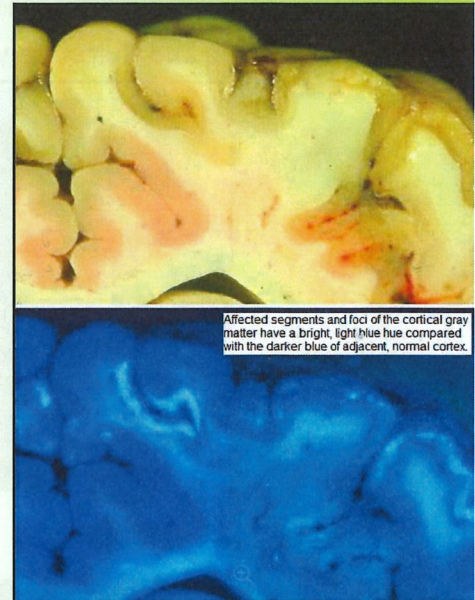
This is also known as vitamin B1 deficiency, or the more 'fancy', technical name of Polioencephalomalacia (PEM). Ruminants depend on the microbes in their rumen to make thiamine to meet their daily requirement. They cannot get thiamine any other way and cannot store it anywhere. If animals become thiamine deficient it causes softening of the brain – particularly necrosis of the grey matter of the cerebral cortex.

By far the most common cause of thiamine deficiency is when the rumen is colonised by different bacteria that then break down any thiamine produced before it is absorbed by the animal. In a pastoral farming system, changes in the bacterial population are usually associated with a change in feed, most commonly changing from a diet with rough, stalky grass to good, lush pasture. PEM is also associated with high sulphur intakes (e.g. sulphur in the fertiliser).

The disease is most common in cattle between 6-18 months. They are usually well grown and in good condition. It has a very sudden on-set but the signs can be extremely variable, from moderate neurological dysfunction to sudden death. If the affected animals are not treated then the signs will progress and they will become more severely affected.

Early in the disease you may see weaners depressed, apparently blind, staggering around and isolating themselves. If untreated at this stage the signs quickly progress to recumbent animals, rigid legs, eyes going back and forward and the head stretched up, followed by death.

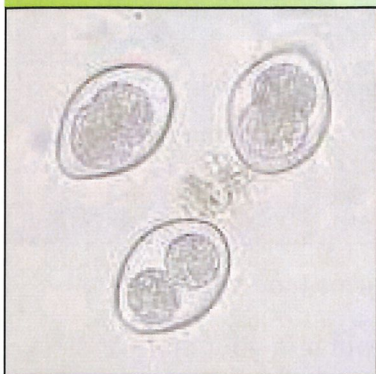
We normally see the odd case of thiamine in the summer months, but have seen a lot more of this disease earlier this year and in larger numbers. We have seen mob outbreaks with large numbers affected instead of just 1 or 2 sporadic cases. Prompt treatment is effective if instigated early enough and mob treatment can be carried out by



Affected segments and foci of the cortical gray matter have a bright, light blue hue compared with the darker blue of adjacent, normal cortex.

sporadic cases. Prompt treatment is effective if instigated early enough and mob treatment can be carried out by drenching with B1 powder.

COCCIDIOSIS



This is another very common post weaning disease that we have seen more of earlier as well. We have put this down to the warmer season allowing the protozoa to survive in higher numbers than usual. Most meal contains a coccidiostat these days, and it is generally thought that by feeding this meal you won't get the disease in your calves. However, we saw clinical coccidiosis in calves eating meal this spring.

Disease is characterised by ill thrift, weight loss, straining to defecate and the tell tail sign of mucus and blood in faeces. It can be a very painful disease as well. If it is left untreated the infection can become so severe that animals become recumbent and die.

Earlier on in the course of the disease it can be easily and successfully treated with a single drench of a specific drug that kills coccidia (e.g. *Toltrox*®). Coccidiosis is very common post weaning, especially as meal is faded out of the diet. Most calves carry a coccidia burden at a low level that their immune system eventually deals with. This is what is usually responsible for the post weaning check a lot of you see. At weaning time the entire mob can be given the drench to kill coccidia, to give them a good clean out. There is recent data that shows by doing this you get better weight gains post weaning. This trial is currently being extended to look at in calf rates in heifers after receiving anti-coccidial treatment – watch this space!

VACCINATIONS

A final reminder that by now all calf vaccinations (lepto and clostridial disease) should be complete or at least be diarised for the very near future. The sooner you have the calves fully vaccinated for lepto the less likely they are to pick the disease up and therefore you minimise your risk of having cows shedding lepto in your herd.



FACIAL ECZEMA DEFENCE

6 WEEKS

SEE YOUR VET

TIME TO CHANGE YOUR CAPSULE TO THE DURABLE FACE-GUARD® BOLUS THAT WON'T CRACK UNDER PRESSURE

A single application lasts up to 6 weeks with the option of topping up to give additional cover for longer periods.

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*See in store or online at www.faceguard.co.nz for full terms and conditions. Promotion starts 1st December 2019 and ends 30th April 2020.

The Co-operative Difference—vet Stacey

As most of you will already be aware, Fonterra have decided to follow suit and develop "The Co-operative difference". This scheme will recognise farmers who are going beyond the minimum standards to supply high-quality milk, care for their animals, protect the environment, support their people and community and engage in their Co-operative. At present this is an entirely voluntary scheme for Fonterra Suppliers, but it's worth having a browse over what's required to meet the criteria, as in the future it will likely become part of terms of supply.

Many of you will already be working on environmental plans, striving for low somatic cell counts and hopefully being part of your community goes without saying. So the last box to tick may well be the care for your animal's part. We know you all strive to do this anyway but Fonterra in conjunction with the NZVA have set some standards you need to fill to prove this. This involves developing an animal health plan with your vet.

This plan can be very simple and just cover the criteria needed, or we can go above and beyond making the process more beneficial to your farm by creating a full animal health calendar. The main points the health planner needs to cover is lameness incidence, clinical mastitis rate, mortality rate (cow and calf), body condition score and a discussion around antimicrobial use. These are all things you should be recording anyway but we need to discuss where you are sitting and a plan to manage these key parameters throughout the season.

I also believe there is some glory and farm source dollars in it for you if you can reach all the standards. So if you're a Fonterra supplier and would like to do an animal health plan or you're with OCC and you think an animal health calendar could benefit your business, then please give us a call and have a chat to your vet.



CHRISTMAS HOURS



Wishing all of our clients a safe and happy Christmas & New Year

Over the Christmas period, our hours will be as follows:

Bulls Clinic:

Sat 22 Dec: 9am-12pm

Sun 23 Dec: Closed

Mon 24 Dec: 8am-4pm

Tue 25 Dec: Closed

Wed 26 Dec: Closed

Thurs 27 Dec: 8am-5.30pm

Fri 28 Dec: 8am-5.30pm

Sat 29 Dec: 9am-12pm

Sun 30 Dec: Closed

Mon 31 Dec: 8am-4pm

Tues 1 Dec: Closed

Wed 2 Jan: Closed

Thurs 3 Jan: normal hours resume (8am-5.30pm)

Marton Clinic:

Mon 24 Dec: 8am-3pm

Tue 25 Dec-Wed 2nd Jan: Closed

Thurs 3 Jan: 9am-2pm (Vet in-clinic
9am-11am)

Fri 4 Jan: 9am-2pm (Vet in-clinic
9am-11am)

Mon 7 Jan: normal hours resume (8am-5pm)



For all after-hours emergencies phone 06 3222 333

Non-Return Rates—Vet Kristina

We have had a few farmers approach us after looking at their non return rates (NRRs) and commenting that these figures are down on last year. We don't have an answer but it seems to be a common theme across the district.

Firstly – what is a non-return rate???

This is the non-return to heat after a mating. It tells you the percentage of cows that were mated more than 24 days ago and have not been detected on heat since. We can often use the NRR to estimate a conception rate, which is typically about 10% less than the NRR (but looking at the data below this isn't always the case!).

NRR ideally sit at 64% or above, with alarm bells starting to ring if it was less than this.

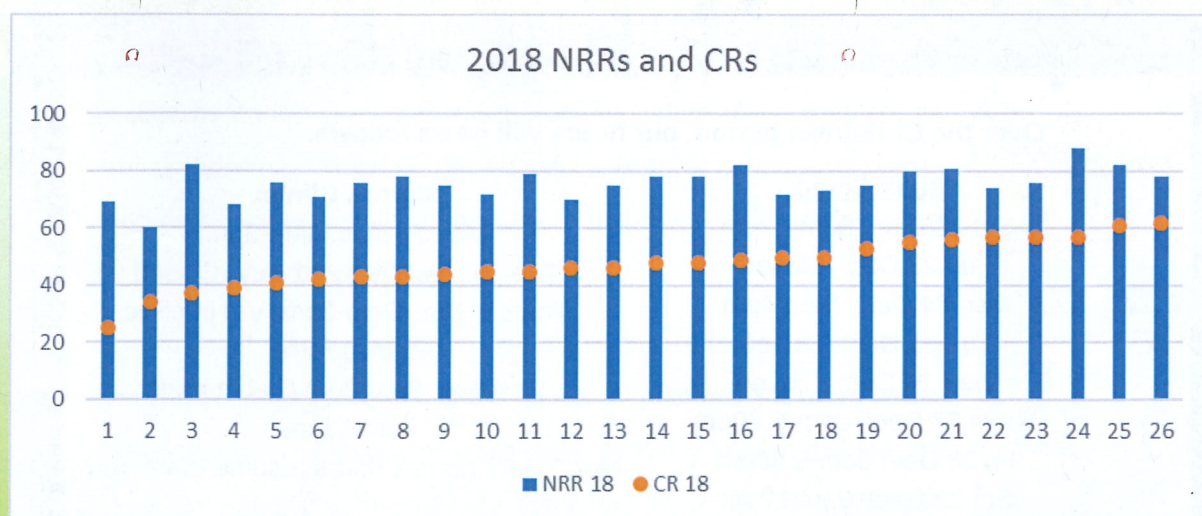
After a cow has been inseminated:

1. Some cows become pregnant and do not come on heat – on average 53% of inseminations are successful.
2. Other cows do not become pregnant and come back on heat 18-24 days later
3. However, the absence of a heat 18-24 days later does not guarantee she is in calf – sometimes the heat will be missed, or it will be a very weak heat. Or she might be pregnant but then lose the embryo and come on heat 4 or more weeks later. The cow might not become pregnant and she might not cycle again. And just to complicate it further, some cows may be pregnant and still show signs of heat down the track!

I have looked into our NRRs that I have data for from Minda Live. Some herds have no information available due to a short AB mating or being a split calving herd.

NRRs this 2019 mating (over 33 farms), ranged from 31% to 74% with an average of 60%

Comparing this to the data I can get for 2018 (26 farms), NRRs last year ranged from 60%-88% with an average of 76%. As mentioned earlier, normally you can estimate a CR from the NRR, and for these farms our first service conception rates ranged from 25% to 62%, with an average of 47%. The graph below shows this more easily. The blue line is the NRR as a percentage, and then the orange dot is where the conception rate ended up for that farm. You can see that farm 1 had a NRR of roughly 70% and a very low CR of 25%, which is quite a drop. Farm number 26 only dropped 16% but all farms dropped more than the 10% suggested typically.



The crux of this is that NRRs in 2019 are lower than what they were the previous year, and if you have been looking at your NRR and seen this, you are not alone.

While there isn't anything you can do to change your NRR rate now, it will give you an idea of how AB has gone. If you are at all worried, early aged pregnancy testing can be carried out to give you more solid information. The timing of this is 6 weeks after the end of AB. Give us a ring if this is something you would like to consider.