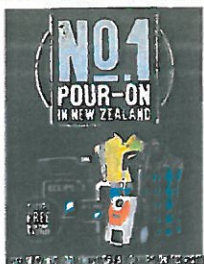


# The Vet Link

Bill Clinton went out the front door of the white house to pick up the morning paper when he noticed someone had written "Clinton You are a Loser" in pee in the snow. He was furious stormed inside and rang the chief of the FBI and demanded to know who was responsible. The FBI sent over a team of experts to do every possible test on the message. At 4pm that afternoon the chief went to the White House to brief the President. Well what is it asked the president. "I have some bad news and some very bad news Mr President" said the chief. "What's the bad news?" asked the president. Sir the bad news is the DNA test revealed the urine was Al Gores. "WHAT" shout the president "after all the support I have given him." "That's not all sir" said the chief "there is even worse news" "What is it asked the president?" Its Hillary's hand writing !!

## COMMERCIAL NEWS



**Purchase 12.5 Litres of Eclipse Pour on and we will give you a Stihl RE 119 Waterblaster FREE**

**WIN a Stihl Water blaster**—Purchase Eclipse pour and go in the draw to win - Drawn 1st May 2016



### BOSS Pour on

Purchase a 5.0 Litre and get 1 Litre FREE  
2.5 Litre \$660 + Free Giveaway



### REFLEX Pour on

Abamectin Nil Milk withholding  
5.0 Litre ONLY \$295

**Eukanuba**  
Make a Good Dog Great

**BUY 1 Bag of Eukanuba Premium Performance 25kg**  
Receive a FREE Hessian Dog bed



## DAIRY COWS

**Eprinex** Pour on Nil Milk Nil Meat withholding 5 litre \$565.00 - Save \$186.00

**Genesis** Pour on Nil Milk 35 day Meat withholding 5.5 Litre \$535.00

## Liver Fluke

- Genesis ULTRA** Pour on Abamectin + Triclabendazole 90 Day Milk/ Meat withholding \$890.00
- SWITCH FLUKE** Oral Abamectin/Levamisole + Triclabendazole 35 Day milk, 49 Day Meat withholding



### Vets:

Chris Peterson  
Sandra Hegh  
Joanne Allan  
Martine Murtagh  
Mark Howell  
Gillian Hogarth  
Sally Gummer  
Anna Cochrane  
Ben Miller  
Heather Wise  
Carolyn Hamill

### Support Staff:

Bridget Malcolm  
Kat Nelson  
Janet Evans  
Carmen Donner  
Allister Watson  
Maryanne McLay  
Kathryn Palmer  
Jude Anderson  
Rebecca Wright  
Lisa Ross  
Melanie Goodburn  
Sam Looney  
Sarah Bailey

91 Waioka Road • PO Box 349 • Opoitiki, 3162 • Phone 07 315 8474 • Fax 07 315 6845 • Email: vet@opoitikivets.co.nz  
23 Landing Road • PO Box 2074 • Whakatane, 3159 • Phone 07 308 7479 • Fax 07 307 0672 • Email: whakatane@opoitikivets.co.nz  
www.opovets.co.nz

# The Vet Link



Newsletter to Clients of

Issue: MAR 2016

Grass, grass, more grass – this is certainly the wettest drought I've ever seen. Great for Dairy farmers - Summer production has held; along with cost savings 1)Not having to buy in supplements 2)Reduce nitrogen use 3)Keep young stock at home 4)Avoiding the summer dry BCS loss in the herd.

In early January, pasture covers did get low – a great thing as it turns out. The regrowth has been of (relative) high quality. But for sheep and beef farmers, this did mean a lot of stock were slaughtered early. The wrong move! Now we have grass, the store cattle price has soared. Normally a procurement war starts and the schedule rises sharply. Unfortunately, meat companies know there is a huge shortage of killable cattle – high prices won't draw out more cattle so the schedule remains moderate.

On the dairy farm, key decisions will be made this Autumn. "Can I get cows to BCS 5 by calving?" "DCT – Yes / No?" "Do I cull cows now or later?" "Shall I stay on twice daily milking's?" "Shall I milk well into May?" "Do I need to winter off?" etc. Fortunately, we (Ben, Sandy, Chris) will be doing FREE BCS assessments in March, May and July through a Dairy NZ initiative. For many of you this will help these decisions

Mastitis Control – prevention is better than cure. The cost of a clinical case of mastitis is \$200 – even at \$4.15 milk price. Dry Cow Therapy (DCT) is all about protecting your assets. Like Facial Eczema prevention, or oil changes for the John Deere! DCT is an essential spend. Discuss this now at you DCT Consult. Plus moolah for cash back price.

## Are you a "chubby chaser"?

Yep, that's right, Body condition scoring! A farmer said to me recently "If I can measure it, I can manage it!" Managing the body condition score of your herd is key to getting good milk production and a good 6 week in calf rate.

The DairyNZ method uses a 10 point system, to score the "fatness" of the cow, 1 being a walking skeleton and 10 being a hippopotamus. By assessing each of 8 body parts for "fatness" an overall score is given to the cow. Simply weighing cows to get an indication of their overall condition is not satisfactory. Breed differences, size variation within a breed, gut fill, stage of pregnancy, growth of young cows etc, make interpreting live-weight data difficult. Body condition scoring better tells us how much fat cover she has.

### When to score

The most important time to body condition score your herd is during the summer and autumn. This could be even more important if the predicted El Nino summer arrives.

A pre-Christmas assessment determines if cows have gained BCS since the start of mating, and a management plan for the coming months can be set up. Mid Feb to mid March; condition score cows to determine if your management plan is working or whether some cows are struggling and need, for example, to be dried off or milked once a day.

Precalving BCS determines how well you managed the previous autumn! Does your plan for the following autumn need to be revised?

Premating BCS gives you an indication of how much condition the cows have lost between calving and the planned start of mating. If cows have lost more than 1.0 condition score, getting good numbers of cows in calf early could be jeopardised.

There are screeds of information available about Body Condition scoring, more than can be fitted into this article. But there are some interesting facts that you may or may not know.

Fatter cows produce more milk solids but over 5.0 CS, the risk of metabolic disease increases. Fatter cows eat less than thin cows and lose more BCS after calving.

Cows that are fatter at calving will cycle earlier and are more likely to get pregnant early. Cows that lose more than 1.0 CS after calving are less likely to get pregnant.

First and second calvers are less likely to be submitted in the first 3 weeks and should be fatter than mature cows (5.5 at calving) to improve their chances of getting pregnant early.

Thin cows, less than 4.0 at calving, have an increased chance of uterine infections and mastitis, especially if they are young.

Very thin cows and very fat cows have more metabolic disease.

Cows that are thin at calving are more likely to have bull calves the following season. Calving cows between 5 and 5.5 means more heifer replacements!

The daughters of cows that lose too much BCS in early lactation produce less milk and are at increased risk of reproductive failure when they mature.

At Veterinary Health Centre, Opoitiki and Whakatane, we are committed to helping our farmers to achieve body condition score targets. Chris, Ben and Sandy are all certified to assess Body Condition score in dairy herds. If you have any further queries or wish to condition score your herd, give our



RIGHT ADVICE • RIGHT PRODUCT • RIGHT PRICE





**Drying off** Farming is a constant balance between earning income now, and setting yourself up for next season. Dry off date is feed dependant and this year feed quantity is good but the last few months have proven how inaccurate predictions can be and the quality may get away on us if not managed. Many of our farmers push as long as they can into May, but often at the expense of cow body condition, and therefore next seasons production. Your priorities right now should be your first calvers i.e your 2013 borns. Drying these animals off early is recommended and they should already be on once a day if they are behind. Any other skinny cows should be dried off or culled also. The reduction in feed requirements of these cows then frees up more feed for the remainder of the herd which they can divert into production and condition.

We have the usual dry cow therapy options available which we discuss in our annual DCT Consults, offering a range of treatment lengths and prices. We will help you come up with the most appropriate plan for you individual circumstances and goals. Drying off selected cows early requires specific strategies to manage the extended dry period. In your 2013 born heifers it may be a case of teat sealant only as these young animals are least likely to have been exposed to contagious mastitis organisms and often have low cell counts. In older skinny cows you may need a long acting product or a short acting product plus teat sealant (Combo). Remember to look after your young ones and be kind to the skinny ones. Book your dry cow consult with us nice and early so we can formulate a plan (to combat whatever the weather throws at us) and be ahead of the game this season.

The following is our recommended application technique for dry cow therapy and should be used for ALL products:

- Work on ONE teat at a time and complete the whole process before moving onto the next.
- Begin with one of the front quarters. Always do the quarters in the same order so if you forget where you are up to you can figure out by how many tubes you have left in your belt/pocket (start with 4).
- Use a teat wipe to clean the teat, making sure the teat end is thoroughly clean. You may need to use more wipes if it is particularly dirty. Throw used wipes away.
- Use a small cotton ball dampened in a 70% meths solution to dab the end of the teat for extra sterility. Use one cotton ball per teat.
- Break the cap off the dry cow product by bending the nozzle with your thumb. Preferably do not use your mouth. Do not let the tip of the nozzle touch anything.
- Insert nozzle into the teat canal carefully ensuring it doesn't get contaminated and push the plunger in.
- Massage the product from the teat up into the mammary tissue so it's not sitting in the teat canal. Remember the product needs to be in the gland itself to treat any infection.
- Repeat process for the next teat.
- If the cow kicks or flicks tail at any time and compromises sterility, start again.
- Do not use a dry cow syringe if you have removed the cap and it is dropped or touches anything.

We prefer to help/train on-farm when teat sealing only.

## Liver analysis of culls

Pregnancy testing gives farmers valuable information required for culling choices and is an essential management tool. But as we all know, cows are culled for many other reasons other than being empty: udder conformation, 3-titters, (2-titters?), skinny, poor production, mastitis, high cell count, old, she's a b#%\*h.....etc. all valid reasons for culling a cow. Analysis of the livers of these cows while at the works is logical and in my opinion is a great aid in the management of your herd. It gives you feed-back on the presence of liver fluke, facial eczema and other illnesses which we can interpret for you and treat as required e.g. choosing an appropriate fluke drench. Many farmers also utilize the copper, selenium and B12 testing provided which is a useful annual screen. However the results must not be used as complete tool in management decisions due to the following:

Cows are sent to the works for a reason (as mentioned above) which is usually associated with illness and age. Therefore they are not a *true/fair* representation of your healthy milking herd. Is it likely that the 14 year old cow you culled with a liver abscess and chronic facial eczema has the same levels of B12 and selenium as your average cow? Probably not

Also, the timing of most farmers culls is post scanning, and right in the midst of facial eczema season and thus peak zinc supplementation. Zinc interferes with copper absorption and storage so analysing the levels while zinc is still going in is not extremely useful.

My recommendation is to utilise the works liver analysis every year, as it is a useful annual check and can alert you to sudden changes. But above all, liver biopsies *after* zinc has finished is the most accurate information you can get in regards to copper, B12 and selenium. If you have never done liver biopsies on your farm before – do it this year. If you have stable management practices, biopsies every second or third year in conjunction with annual works livers would provide an excellent portfolio to work with. If you have done biopsies before and reacted to the results with a change in supplementation then a follow up biopsy the next year is a good idea to gauge the success and ensure you don't go too far the other way.

## TIPS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

- Facial Eczema monitoring
- Zinc treatment + Testing
  - Lepto vaccinations
  - Condition Scoring
  - Pregnancy testing
  - Works Liver reports
- Bulk milk testing - Liver Fluke/Internal Parasites
  - Drench Young stock
  - FREE Dry cow consult

## Yersiniosis

If you see your calves scouring, then this bug could be responsible.

Yersiniosis is a bacteria that most commonly affects animals between 6 and 12 months of age.

Signs of Yersiniosis can be:

- Diarrhea (that can contain mucous and/or blood)
- Depression and dehydration
- Poor growth/ wasting

Not surprisingly, infection is caused by the faecal to oral route. Birds and rodents are blamed for being reservoirs of infection.

The *interesting* fact about Yersinia is that it is also present in the intestines of healthy animals. Therefore, there needs to be an underlying problem affecting the animals before Yersinia will cause disease. Examples of underlying problems include:

- Poor weather
- Management stress (e.g. transport)
- Feed shortages
- Parasites
- BVD infection

Yersinia infection can be diagnosed with a faecal test.

This disease can be successfully treated with antibiotics and by correcting dehydration. Also, the underlying problem that initiated the disease must also be addressed.

## Johne's Disease Update

Johne's disease (JD) is caused by bacteria that are related to tuberculosis bacteria. The disease causes a gradual thickening and inflammation of the gut that prevents the uptake of nutrients. Cows get very skinny and have watery diarrhoea. There is no cure and affected animals basically starve to death. The cow is infected as a calf, typically less than 6 months old, but the disease doesn't manifest itself until the animal is several years old.

JD is widespread in New Zealand dairy herds. The incidence within individual herds is usually low, but in some herds JD can cause significant animal health problems and production losses. Affected cows can excrete massive numbers of bacteria. So called "super shedders" excrete 1 million bacteria per gram of faeces!

## Infection Source

Adult cows are the main source of infection and begin shedding large numbers of Johne's bacteria in the faeces before any clinical signs appear. In advanced cases JD can infect the unborn calf and get into colostrum and milk. The first sign of JD is likely to be a production drop. Infected cows produce 15% less milk than their uninfected herd-mates.

Johne's bacteria can survive for several months in effluent, water and pasture especially when dark, damp and cool conditions prevail.

Calves less than 6 months old are the most vulnerable to infection but even older calves can be susceptible. Repeated ingestion of high doses of Johne's bacteria, at a young age, increases the progression and severity of the disease (calves that are continually exposed to a high level of JD in faeces and effluent can develop JD as early as 2 years old!). The calf from an advanced stage mother is likely to be infected. Reducing contact with faeces from infected cows is the key to reducing the risk of JD.

Diagnosing Johne's disease is easy and accurate in advanced cases of the disease but in the early stages when no clinical signs are present the animal will usually test negative!

Some farming practices such as effluent management may lead to a gradual build-up of Johne's bacteria in the environment and a higher proportion of young stock getting infected. Over a certain threshold, the disease starts to spiral out of control. A farm that has a 1% incidence of clinical Johne's disease diagnosed in any given year is likely to have many more cows infected.

## Control of Johne's Disease

Eradication of the disease is not feasible at this point in time. Control of JD is difficult and potentially expensive because of the previously mentioned factors. Control of JD in herds with high annual losses should be aimed at trying to reduce the risk of infection. Crucial to this, is preventing calves from being infected in the first place.

Control measures might include;

- Test and cull positive cows. Milk from herd testing can be used to identify positive animals.
- Feeding only uncontaminated colostrum and milk to calves. Milk replacer can be fed. Milk may be pasteurised or sourced only from test negative cows or alternatively only from cows less than 4 years old.
- Pick up new-born calves twice daily to reduce contact with infected faeces.
- Use separate paddocks for calves away from the milking platform on the home farm or take calves straight to a runoff. Don't graze adult stock or other ruminants on the heifer block.
- Avoid paddocks for at least 3 months after grazing by adult stock.
- Avoid buying in cattle from unknown sources (eg. sale yards) especially if in poor condition.
- Provide clean drinking water and fence off waterways that could have faecal contamination.
- Prevent any contact of calves with effluent.
- Cull the calf from any cow that is diagnosed with JD, it has a high chance of being infected.

Any exposure to effluent and adult faeces is considered high risk. Set stocking of calves on the milking platform is a common and effective practice for calf rearing, calves usually grow really well and have no trouble making industry target growth rates. But, calves are in contact with fresh faeces on a regular basis and the effect may be compounded if effluent is sprayed on their paddocks. On a farm with a high incidence of JD, there may come a day when the cost of Johne's infection and production loss outweighs the heifer growth advantages.

**20 FARMERS WILL WIN!**

# WIN YOUR MOOLAH BACK

WITH dryclox DC, dryclox Xtra & the NEW drySeal

Buy dryclox DC, dryclox Xtra or drySeal for your chance to be one of 20 lucky farms to WIN your season's spend on Bayer dry cow therapy (up to a max of \$7000) back in cash!

dryclox DC

dryclox Xtra

drySeal

Book a milk quality consult with your vet today and ask them how dryclox and drySeal can help your herd.

"LOL" Donal Trump was driving around NZ. He was a bit tired and thought he needed somewhere to stay the night before getting to Queenstown. Then out of the darkness ran a bull, he couldn't avoid it, drove into it and killed it. He was still able to drive the car, so feeling guilty he drove to the farm house. He knocked on the door, The farmer answered the door. Donald said 'Im very sorry but I've killed your bull and would like to replace it.' The farmer said 'No dramas mate, go around the back you'll find all the cows in the shed, go for your life'