

# The Vet Link

## Spontaneous Humeral Fractures

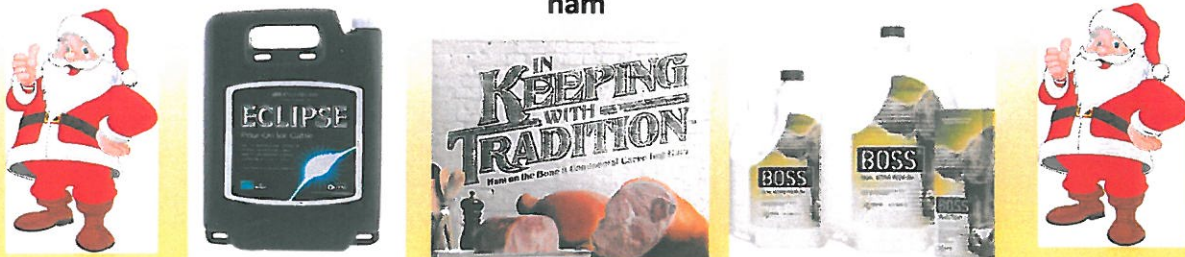
Since appearing in 2008 the incidence of spontaneous humeral fractures in dairy heifers has been increasing. It presents as severe forelimb lameness (non-weight bearing) and swelling in the shoulder area. Affected animals are usually first calvers but can affect 3 year olds and it occurs in the first few months after calving. More often than not I have found farmers dismiss it as a "dislocated shoulder" or "bulling injury". In actual fact it is a fracture of the humerus, the bone between the shoulder and elbow. It occurs spontaneously, requires no external trauma, the bone has an abnormality and snaps under the animals body weight. It usually only affects the odd animal but have seen it affect 15% of a herds first calvers this season. While we do not completely understand this condition the majority of affected farms in a nationwide survey had low copper levels. Not all the farms had low copper levels at the time the fractures were occurring and it is postulated that they were low at a critical time in skeletal development pre puberty.

With the increased feeding of PKE copper supplementation of herds has required less input as the copper levels in this feed are very high. However it is important not to forget copper supplementation of young stock. Copper bullets are a safe and effective way to maintain adequate copper levels in calves. It is important to maintain good levels right through until puberty. Talk to us about the best way to ensure your young stock has adequate copper levels.

## COMMERCIAL NEWS

### CHRISTMAS HAMS

Purchase selected Merial Ancare or Alleva products until 21st December 2015 and get a FREE Christmas ham



### TIPS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

- Facial Eczema monitoring
- Weigh Calves
- Condition score cows
- Trace element testing
- Parasite treatment young stock
- Lepto vaccinations
- Pregnancy testing
- Flea, tick and worm treat all your small animals
- Enjoy xmas with family and friends

### Specials

- Genesis Pour on 5.5 \$580.00
- Reflex Pour on 5.0 \$295.00
- Eclipse 2.5 + Arrest C 5.0 Calf pack  
Save \$100.00 - FREE HAM
- Boss pour on 2.5 \$660.00 + FREE HAM
- Flumethrin Pour on 10 litre - Tickicide  
\$530.00—FREE APPLICATOR
- Faceguard - Put your order in before 20th December and beat price rise in January

#### Vets:

Chris Peterson  
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Martine Murtagh  
Mark Howell  
Gillian Hogarth  
Sally Gummer  
Anna Cochrane  
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Newsletter to Clients of

Issue: Nov 2015

Every now and again you come across something truly remarkable. Something that makes you reassess your perspective on life. It is worth viewing Jake Bailey's speech [www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/73725295](http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/73725295) delivered at prize giving as head boy of Christchurch Boys High. He has wisdom beyond his years; but what is truly remarkable is that after writing the speech, and a week before Jake was due to deliver it, he was diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma and given 3 weeks to live (if untreated). He left his hospital bed and delivered it from a wheel chair. Amongst many things he said- "Here's the thing, none of us get out of life alive. So be gallant, be great, be gracious and be grateful for the opportunities that you have". "Take the opportunity to learn from men who walked before you and those who walk beside you."

What is amazing is not so much the words (as good as they are), but the grit this young man showed to focus on others from a position, of what would be for us all, a place of deepest despair.

Jonah Lomu was also in similar places at times in his life. As we mourn his passing, we note his accolades also centre on his selflessness and kindness to others. He is remembered for the way he conducted himself and how he treated others, at least as much as for his inspired rugby. It is true, the year is challenging for farmers (and farm servicers), but Jake and Jonah both show us that real grit focuses not on the reason for despair, but outwardly on what we can do for those about us.

For the 90 odd of us able to make it to the AvenueQ evening I look forward to celebrating with you. See you on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

CHRIS

## HOW WELL DO YOU MATE; MATE?

These days the level of information at your fingertips is greater than ever. With herd recording programs such as MINDA and the number of reports it can generate, especially on the web based version, you have the data available to be able to analyse your herds mating performance.

Right now you can already go and check your 3 week submission rate and even identify age groups that may be lagging behind. As returns start to come in these can be used to assess heat detection accuracy.

6 week in-calf rate is the best measure of overall herd reproductive performance. However this is still rarely measured and empty rate is still the most common measurement used to determine reproductive success.

6 week in-calf rate is the percentage of cows in your herd that become pregnant in the first 6 weeks of the mating period. The target is 78% which is possible if you are achieving 3 week submissions of over 90% and good conception rates. Herds with high 6 week in-calf rates have more days in milk, more heifer calves and less late calving cows (regardless of the length of the mating period!). Obviously knowing which cows are not pregnant is still important and so empty rate is still a key measure of reproductive performance.

To get the most out of the data you already have on hand and be able to see how your mating actually stacks up you need early aged pregnancy testing. Once you know how your herd is performing, then you are in a position to make the changes to increase performance.

Early aged pregnancy testing involves two visits to pregnancy test the herd. The first 12-14 weeks after the mating start date. The second 6 weeks from the end of mating (bulls out) date.

The more information you feed into your herd recording program the better e.g. any treated non cycling cows, metricured cows etc. Some of these interventions are large investments both of money and time, it is worth measuring the performance of them.

Give us a call to work out the best dates for your early aged pregnancy testing. If you early aged pregnancy test this season you will get a free one hour consultation with one of our In-Calf trained vets to walk you through the data that comes from it!



RIGHT ADVICE • RIGHT PRODUCT • RIGHT PRICE





#### New flea treatment products and their Benefits.

**Cats- Flea and Worm:** Most owners can identify with the challenges of getting their cats to swallow pills, so we all welcomed the recent launch of 'Broadline'. Broadline is an all in one topical treatment that treats pretty much everything, including fleas, roundworms and tapeworms. Tapeworm segments look like sesame seeds and are sometimes seen under cats' tails. Roundworms are less visible and are common in cats that hunt. Humans can also become infected with young children most at risk. Broadline is cost effective, so is well worth considering if your cat is due worming with their next flea treatment.

**Collars: Seresto** was launched last year bringing back the outdated flea collar but in a very new form. This collar provides safe and effective continuous protection against fleas and ticks for eight months. It's easy to apply, comfortable for the pets and water resistant. The product has been popular for working dogs especially those with hypersensitivity to fleas or in tick prone areas. For adventurous cats the collar has a quick release safety feature, which is triggered by the animal's weight. This product has been competitively priced. Our staff can provide more information or bring your pet in and we can fit them with their new collar.

#### Identifying and treating flea allergies -Skin Disease

We frequently see patients that don't have obvious fleas but are suffering from flea allergy dermatitis causing large patches of thinning coat. A good rule is if you can draw a line down the middle of your pet, and you notice the back half is affected but the head end isn't affected, fleas are at the top of the list even if you can't see any! Fleas are sometimes found when you carefully flea comb. The condition improves with regular flea treatment and we are having good success at controlling it with the longer acting products Seresto and Bravecto.

#### 'Still finding fleas after you have treated your pet?

Often owners are dismayed to find fleas on their pets despite having treated them recently. Live fleas indicate a massive environmental (indoors and outdoors) contamination of flea eggs, pupae and larvae. These provide an on-going source of young adult fleas that will die within 24 hours of jumping onto a treated pet without breeding which breaks the life cycle of the flea and will in time cleanse the environment of new eggs and pupae. It is essential to treat all animals in the household regularly, on the same day and to their correct weight. Washing pets bedding, vacuuming and blocking off access to under the house will help also. Read the products packet insert; sometimes they advise more frequent application under conditions of a heavy flea infestation. Come in and see us if you are still seeing fleas and we can help advise the best treatment for your pets.



**Frontline Plus :** Products, such as these not only treat the adult fleas on your dog or cat, but are also effective against eggs and larvae which make up around 90% of the total flea population (the adult fleas which we see are only the tip of the iceberg!). These products are easy to apply and long lasting. The main point to remember is that the animal must stay dry for 48 hours after application - no baths or swimming (or jumping in the trough for your dogs!). This is because the product is absorbed into the sebaceous (sweat) glands of the skin where it remains as a reservoir, being constantly released over 1-2 months depending on the product used. It is also important that all cats and dogs in a household or on a farm are treated together for the most effective control.

**Oral:** The new oral treatments for dogs are "Bravecto", a chewable tablet lasting 12 weeks and "Nexguard" also a chewable lasting 4 weeks against fleas and ticks. Obviously can't be washed off and getting dogs to eat it as a tasty treat is a cinch.

## TIME TO "WEIGH" UP YOUR OPTIONS

It's a big step for a calf the day she is weaned off milk and begins the next phase in life. A LIC survey from all of their MINDA weights data showed that nationally our replacements are behind industry targets as early as weaning. It is unrealistic to expect to grow a heifer adequately if they are already behind right off the start line!

#### What are the advantages of monitoring the weights of your replacements?

The reproductive performance of replacement heifers is directly related to liveweight at mating and calving. Well-grown heifers produce more milk in their first lactation. They survive longer in the milking herd than poorly grown animals. We can weigh your calves for you.

#### When weaning calves, remember:

**Liveweight trumps age** - Wean on liveweight, not age! Be accurate and use scales. Weigh bands and eye appraisal just aren't accurate enough for this important decision.

**Weaning targets should be based on their expected mature liveweight** - This is approximately 95-100kg for Friesian calves, 85-90kg for crossbreds and 75-80kg for Jerseys. Stick to this! Keep lighter animals at home to focus on getting them to target and prevent a tail end of poor-doing calves.

**Feed meal for at least 1 month post-weaning** - A gradual change in diet from one feed to another helps the rumen microbes to adapt. A secondary benefit is the coccidiostat present in most meals will help to protect calves from coccidiosis.

**Have a sound drenching and vaccination program** - Check that your drench guns are delivering the correct dose and working properly before you start. Internal parasites are the most common production-limiting disease in young stock. Give us a call about the best drenching and vaccination program for your replacements.

#### When raising replacements, remember:

**Weigh them regularly** - Weigh them before they leave home and then at least every 3 months at grazing to help monitor performance. Check them against MINDA™ weight's liveweight BV-based targets to see if they're still on track. Detect issues early and manage them to avoid problems.

**Feed Preferentially** - Feeding groups of heifers according to their weight can help ensure that smaller, lighter heifers reach their target liveweight for mating

**Looks can be deceiving** - Heifers may look like they are in good condition, but you will not know if they are reaching target weights until you weigh them.

## Facial Eczema Trial Work

I'm sure you all vividly remember my article from April 2014 about the Facial Eczema trial work being conducted on 105 North Island dairy herds....? We as a practice agreed to participate in the research project which involved the testing of 10 randomly selected farms from our client base. A range of cows were then weighed and blood sampled, pasture spore counts were collected, and the farmers completed a comprehensive questionnaire. The report has now been published and the results show some relevant findings:

Only 29% of cows that received zinc supplementation had levels in the range thought to be protective against Facial Eczema.

Drenching; zinc in feed; and a combination of zinc in feed + water treatment were the only methods of administering zinc that resulted in cows having zinc levels in the recommended range for protection. In other words - using water treatment alone does not provide protective levels of zinc.

Farmers did not weigh their stock to calculate an accurate dose rate, and furthermore the majority of farmers are inaccurate when estimating weights of milking cows.

Opotiki had the highest spore count of the study.

The majority of herd managers think that because they don't see clinical signs of Facial Eczema, their control efforts are working - however FE has subclinical production effects that may not manifest as physical symptoms.

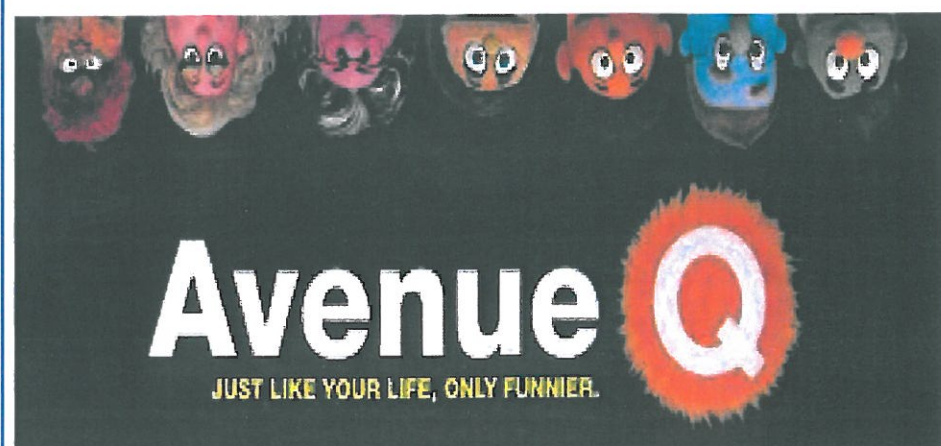
Some farmers were over dosing and cows had nearly toxic levels of zinc.

Pasture spore counts varied dramatically across the same farm and even the same paddock.

The key conclusions I draw from these points are that there is a lack of monitoring and a lack of understanding. Our recommendation is that you increase your surveillance by spore counting on your own farm, and most importantly by blood sampling your cows to see whether the zinc is providing protection. This blood sample can also tell us whether your cows are suffering subclinical facial eczema damage (i.e. production effects). As mentioned in the weighing programmes article this month, we provide a weighing service and would be more than happy to weigh some of your milking cows. If you are interested in weighing your young stock - and they are on farm - why not put 10 of your milkers over the scales at the same time? It is particularly important to have an accurate weight on your young stock if using extended periods of zinc bullets.

For more information on Facial Eczema, control strategies, and monitoring, pick up one of the handouts at the clinic or book an appointment with one of our vets.

Kind regards from your favourite vet, Martine!



We have had a great response to our  
**FREE NIGHT OUT**  
and are fully booked out. We are looking forward to a great night out.  
Just a quick reminder that this is at the :  
**GATEWAY THEATRE**  
30 GATEWAY DRIVE  
6.30pm  
10th December 2015