

The Vet Link



Newsletter to Clients of

Issue:

April 2017

Extreme weather events have dominated our area recently. A 500 year flood followed by a 40 year cyclone - hard to believe. Those farms affected have been hit hard, while many others got off almost unscathed.

The response to help each other in the farming community was impressive - fast, effective and coordinated. After the initial shock, there was a time of accurate assessment of the situation and then thoughtful decision making. It was a sobering, but rewarding experience to spend three days rescuing animals from within the evacuated areas of Edgumbe. The SPCA rescue team came from Wellington, the Massey University emergency response team from PN. Karen Gow, Gillian and myself provided veterinary expertise for the Whakatane Emergency Response Team(rural Fire). WERT was most impressive - especially as they kept us safe! Many images will stay long in my mind; wading chest high into an enclosed back yard with grave fear for the welfare of a trapped foxy, to find him alive, shivering and standing on a boggy board - his only dry land for 3 days! And two pig dogs, unhurt, within the last 15 cm of their run, after it had travelled 30 metres to be crushed against the garage next door. Our clinic in Landing Road provided triage and emergency care for those rescued. To Anna and nurses Becs, Pippa, Jess, and Mel - thank you. I am so proud of our clinic. The Whakatane SPCA staff worked long and hard as a relocation centre. So many volunteers worked so hard, and still are, to help Edgumbe through this crisis. Our community has done well and Edgumbe is already on the mend. CHRIS

Hang on to our tools

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is driven by exposing bacteria to antibiotics. As managers of antibiotic use, we can only slow down the rate at which resistance occurs (we cannot prevent it). Improper management and over-exposure will speed our way to resistance and reduce our options for curing disease.

Utilising alternative non-antimicrobial products helps preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics.

In mastitis management, ITS (internal teat sealant) protects uninfected quarters during the dry period and at calving.

ITS in combination therapy for infected quarters markedly extends protection provided by DCT (dry cow therapy), reducing clinical cases through to calving and 100 days beyond.

So which to use?

Cure rates are maximised with blanket dry cow therapy. Reduction of new cases is further enhanced by adding teat sealants.

Balance these gains with the issue of AMR.

Options to consider

- Teat seal alone in animals with a SCC <120,000-150,000
- Short acting DCT in animals with a SCC >120,000-150,000
- Long acting DCT in 'repeat offender' animals, or SCC consistently high, or >7 years age
- Combination DCT and ITS for maximum results – blanket or selective.
- Short acting DCT and ITS if overall farm mastitis profile is good, and long acting DCT and ITS if mastitis is a problem.

Your best choice?

Come and chat - a mastitis WOF with your vet will highlight your opportunities and start you towards a personalised management programme to fit your philosophy, goals and resources.

5 Good reasons...or maybe 6 now

Warm, wet weather suits worm growth and leads to an increase in levels in the pasture. Spring born calves are approaching nine months of age now and are still susceptible to intestinal parasites.

Maintain a sound drenching and/or management programme through autumn.

Calves are larger now and some people prefer not to oral drench, so if you switch to a pour-on ensure it is a dual action product. Young stock need levamisole to treat *Cooperia* worms.

What do you gain??

- Young animals take several months to develop natural immunity so are more susceptible in the meantime to the effects of parasites
- Your calves need to grow steadily, however worms suppress growth rates thus youngstock may not reach age related target weights in time
- Calves with worm burdens have suppressed appetites and may become ill-thrifty, develop coughs and/or die in extreme cases
- Paddocks that are used almost exclusively for calves year after year develop artificially high parasite levels—challenging your youngstock with high worm burdens every season
- Integrating drenching with management techniques such as cross-grazing optimises the benefits of both
- Above all, consistent high quality nutrition underpins minimising the impact of parasitism, regardless of your drenching plans.

BCS MAKES GOLD

Last summer/autumn DairyNZ launched a BCS project in the Bay of Plenty. This involved monitoring BCS on 115 farms from January/February until calving. Our vets were involved in the project, scoring 36 of our clients herds. An autumn feed budget was developed along with management advice to achieve the industry target of a herd BCS of 5.0, with no more than 15% of cows below this at planned start of calving (PSC).

While the full analysis is still to come from DairyNZ we have crunched the numbers on the 36 herds Veterinary Health Centre was involved in and made the following observations:

Only 3 out of 36 herds achieved an average of BCS 5.0 at calving

More than half of cows across all the herds were less than BCS 5.0 at the PSC

The herds average BCS at PSC ranged from 4.2 to 5.2

The average gain from January to PSC was 0.6 BCS

The average gain from dry off to PSC was 0.4 BCS

Cows gain minimal BCS while milking. The average gain in late lactation was 0.2 BCS.

Contrary to common farmer belief, achieving rapid BCS gain over the dry period does not occur. The results from your herds are supportive of the current science, which is based on over 30 years of NZ and international research. It is realistic to expect a well fed dry cow to gain 0.5 BCS in the dry. However, there is no BCS gain in the last 30d of pregnancy or the 10d post dry off. Therefore drying off in May and feeding cows well, you should not expect to be able to gain more than 0.5 BCS before the PSC. Only 42% of the 36 herds gained 0.5 BCS or greater during the dry period.

In a summer with an abundance of feed, what were the barriers to achieving target calving BCS?

- Farmers unwilling to make change. Only 50% of farmers made any changes to management based on the BCS/ feed budget information provided.
- Farmers either don't believe they will get a net benefit from calving at target or feel it is too difficult to try and achieve.
- Inadequate time dry for necessary BCS gain.
- Absence of dated pregnancy information/ calving dates or not utilising this info.
- Mob organisation and drafting.
- Drafting based on BCS was either not accurate or not frequent enough. Further drafting is then required based on calving pattern.
- Low feed quality in autumn pasture lead to a slow rate of BCS gain

This is a large opportunity for Veterinary Health Centre clients. Cow BCS is a cornerstone of high milk production and herd fertility, as well as its importance for general animal health and welfare. Our vets have the skills and knowledge to do more than treat animal disease and provide intervention to avoid reproductive disaster. Talk to us about our BCS service and set your herd up now for a more productive, more fertile 2017/18 season.

Preg Test results 2017

The average empty rate for the season was 14.8% of the cows presented for pregnancy testing. This is a crude figure for all the cows tested by our clinic. It doesn't take into account the length of the mating period, or any suspect cows culled before testing. It is exactly the same as for last season.

6week Incalf Rate

A more reliable figure for comparison is the 6 week incalf rate (ICR). We now have enough data across enough farms to make this a useful comparison.

For our clients the average 6week ICR was 61%. The national average is 66.5%. We lag behind significantly. The target is 78%.

Do the Maths

A 15% empty rate is exactly what you would expect from a 6 week ICR of 61%. **Meaning that if you don't improve your 6 week ICR your empty rate won't change either.**

Again do the maths- 61% in calf leaves 39% not pregnant.

About 50% get pregnant each cycle. If you take our bulls out at Christmas time, you will have one and a half cycles left of mating for the 39%.

The 3 weeks halves this to 20% and the half cycle reduces it to 15%. This works for a 10-11 week calving spread. Of course if you mate into January then your empty rate will reduce below the 15%. but your calving spread is long. **Real progress will come from improving the 6 week ICR.**

Facial Eczema

Are you confident that your facial eczema prevention program is working for you? If you answered "yes" to this question, then you would also know what your herds blood zinc levels are.

It is very important that your animals have protective levels of zinc circulating in their systems. If they don't, your herd is still at risk of developing facial eczema. One study showed that only 31% of cows supplemented with zinc had high enough serum zinc concentrations to protect against FE. It is not too late this season to take control of this issue. The ideal number of cows to test for zinc levels is 10. Remember that 95% of cows do not show outward signs of facial eczema, only their liver is being affected. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security just because you are giving zinc to your cows and not seeing any signs of facial eczema.

The other important thing to remember is not to stop treating with zinc too early.

When the local spore counts start trending down to 30,000 spores/g pasture, then monitor your own farms spore counts until they are consistently at 10,000 or less for three weeks, with cooler temperatures. There are many farmers that have been caught out by facial eczema at the end of the season because they finished treating with zinc too soon.

FREE Cat Carry Cage with every purchase of Frontline Plus 6 pack



COMMERCIAL NEWS

BOSS®



Buy a
2.5 or 5
litre Boss
Pour on
and Get an
**OIL SKIN
VEST
FREE**

- **Dual abamectin/levamisole active ingredients**
- **Innovative DMI-Sorb™ 'liquid gel' formulation for superior absorption**
- **Broad spectrum activity - 100% effective against natural parasite infestations in NZ studies.**
- **Effective against resistant species including endectocide resistant *Cooperia***



An elderly man in Louisiana owned a large farm for several years.

He had a large pond in the back. It was properly shaped for swimming, so he fixed it up nice with picnic tables, horseshoe courts, and some apple and peach trees.

One evening the old farmer decided to go down to the pond, to look it over, as he hadn't been there for a while.

Before he went, he grabbed a five-gallon bucket to bring back some fruit.

As he neared the pond, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he got closer, he saw it as a bunch of young women skinny-dipping in his pond.

He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end.

One of the women shouted to him, "We're not coming out until you leave!"

The old man replied, "I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim naked or make you get out of the pond naked."

Holding the bucket up, he said... "I'm here to feed the alligator!"

Some old men can still think fast.



20 Litre Reflex Pour on \$690.00 GST Inclusive
-\$0.75 per dose GST Excl (\$0.86 GST Incl)

5 Litre Reflex Pour on \$198.00 GST Inclusive
- \$0.86 per dose GST Exl (\$0.99 GST Incl)

- Abamectin Pour on - Nil Milk Withhold

Price based on 500kg animal



In an elementary school lesson, a little girl in the class raised her hand and said: “I just learned that Jonah in the bible was swallowed by a whale.”

The teacher explained that it is physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it is a very large mammal, its throat is very small.

The girl did not believe him and replied, "I am almost certain Jonah was swallowed by a whale."

"I am telling you, it is not possible," replied the teacher.

The little girl raised her hand again. "My Sunday school teacher told me Jonah was swallowed by a whale and she would not lie to me."

Frustrated, the teacher replied, "That is a 'story' from the bible, it is not factual, and I will not argue with you anymore."

After a little thought, the girl finally responded, "Well, when I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah myself".

In an attempt to fluster the little girl, the teacher replied, "What if Jonah didn't go to heaven?"

The girl quickly responded, "OK, then YOU ask him."

The Vet Link

Target weight heifers make money for life

Generally under target heifers become poor milkers, late calvers and/or empty culls.

Want to pay that price?

Solution

- identify the mature weight for your herd
- identify the target weights for your youngstock
- weigh them at set intervals
- recognise that 'eyeball' weighing is expensive
- identify and manage underachievers early
- identify growth limiting factors across the mob early
- dose accurately for parasite and facial eczema treatments
- use resources across the best animals
- identify and cull non-responsive animals

Results

- milk weights appropriate to their genetic potential, in first and lifetime lactations
- early conception to AB in first and lifetime lactations
- longevity in herd
- elective culling for improved herd performance

Relish the satisfaction of calving down high performance cows, year after year

Copper Supplementation during Zinc Season

Copper and Zinc compete for absorption from the gut. This means that while we are giving zinc to prevent facial eczema from January to May, the uptake of copper from the diet is going to be reduced. This can leave cows with low copper storage levels going into late pregnancy and calving; a time when copper demand is at its highest. Many people simply withhold copper supplementation during this time. Others prefer to use organic copper, a form of supplementation that can still be absorbed despite zinc. However, remember that not all organic copper sources are created equal; some working better than others. Regardless of what you do, it is advisable to check copper status at the end of zinc season in May.

Blood sampling for copper levels can highlight current deficiencies, however liver biopsies provide the most valuable information about copper storage levels and allow us to predict potential future deficiencies. This helps us to advise you about the most appropriate supplementation options for your herd. Remember that supplementation requirements for trace elements can vary from season to season, and twice annual testing is the best way to ensure your stock do not become low in these important minerals. Want to know more? Call the Opotiki clinic on 07 3158474 or Whakatane clinic on 07 3087479

TIPS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

- Facial Eczema monitoring
- Condition score cows
- Trace element profiles including liver copper
- Parasite treatment young stock
- Dry cow consult
- Flea, tick and worm treat all your small animals
- RVM consult
- Review 6 week in calf rate
- Plan transition diet
- Review mastitis management
- Review what went well this season
- Review what didn't go as intended and make plans to change

A man was seated next to a kid on an aeroplane. The man turned to the kid and asked "Lets talk"

Kid: Ok, what do we talk about?

Man (making fun of kid): How about nuclear power?

Kid: Very interesting topic. But let me ask you a question...Horse, cow and deer, all eat grass. Yet deer excrete pellets, cow flat paddy and horse clumps. Why?

Man: I don't know.

Kid: Do you really feel qualified enough to discuss nuclear power issues when you don't know shit ????



Vets:

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

Support Staff:

Bridget Malcolm
Kat Walsh
Janet Evans
Carmen Donner
Allister Watson
Maryanne McLay
Kathryn Palmer
Jude Anderson
Rebecca Wright
Ashley Lepper
Melanie Goodburn

Pippa Clark
Jessie Perkins
Lisa Ross