

CUD

“Cows Under Discussion” or “Something to Chew On”



April 2024

Clinic news

April has come and with it the promise of rain that comes in Autumn. Much of the practice area is feeling the dry and needing a change around to help set up for winter feeding. Owaka and Southland appear to be the area to be in this year and they are worrying what to do with the extra feed!

We bid farewell to two of our locums who have been helping us out, Dana Marais and Sophie Harding who are heading off to other adventures.

Eckard Abrie who has been with us for 3 years and has done well in all areas of vetting is heading off to the UK to begin the adventure of being a vet locum. One great thing with our young vets beginning at Clutha Vets, they are set up to be able to practice in all areas, which is a plus when they want to locum. Eckie has all the courage and ability to give anything a go. He has never hesitated to give something a go!

We have a couple of our vet nurses also away on OE journeys we have got a couple of new faces to help us get through. Sam Scott and Michaela Houliston are both trained vet nurses and have done practical work.

Teatsealing / Dry cow season has begun for us with our first jobs completed already. Always a reminder that another season is drawing to a close and the decisions we make now affect how next season fares.

Dry Cow Therapy—misconceptions

- 1) Sometimes we hear the aim pre-dry off is to reduce milk production to less than 5 litres per cow per day before drying off, but this is actually too low! If there is not enough milk in the udder at drying off, the antibiotic cannot diffuse through it to all of the parts of the udder it may need to reach, to treat any existing infection. And if the antibiotic is not well distributed, it increases the risk of an inhibitory substance grade in spring, because it may not all be removed from the udder in the first 8 milkings. Ideally, milk production should be between 5 and 10 litres at the time of drying off.
- 2) When to move cows from the platform to the runoff? A commonly held belief is that the best time to move cows from the milking platform to the runoff is when they are no longer seen to be dripping / leaking milk or DCT. Actually, the aim is to move the cows at a time when teats are closed. After dry off, as the cow continues to produce milk, pressure in the udder builds, and she can start to leak milk again. So, the best practice advice is to move her either within an hour or two of dry cow treatment (before udder pressure builds and opens the teats up) or after ten days, by which time they will have had plenty of chance to close, and a teat plug to form.

3). Not every low cell count cow should be given only teatseal without any antibiotic. Cows with teat end damage are not suitable candidates for “teatseal only” treatment. Inserting anything up the teat requires absolute cleanliness, and never more so than with teatseal. Rough and damaged teat ends are almost impossible to get clean enough to insert teatseal, and so should be treated with antibiotic. Also, damaged teat ends are a significant risk factor for developing mastitis, so these cows should probably get the highest level of protection, involving an antibiotic.

Cows down on crop

We are starting to see a few cows going down on the crop – there are likely to be a number of factors at play, but it is surprising how many respond to treatment with calcium. At vet school they used to say “Every down cow deserves the benefit of a bag of Calcium!”. So, as drying off approaches, the weather can turn a bit nasty and some strange things are starting to occur in the crop, make sure you have plenty of metabolic bags on hand. If you have a cow down that is not in imminent danger of death (blown up etc.), give a mixed bag (glucalpos brown bag) in the vein and one under the skin, and see what happens in half an hour. If she needs to be lifted

Lifting down cows

Using the hip clamps alone to lift and move a down cow, is neither very humane nor very easy. These pictures show a much better way. Lift her by the hips so you can slide a long rope, or better still a trucking strop (keep it in the cab of the tractor), under her brisket. Lower her back down and tie the strop to the grabs / forks a metre or so (the length of the cow’s back) from where the hip lifters are attached. You can then lift her in a natural, horizontal position, and you don’t need to lift her hips nearly so high to get her nose off the ground.



Retail Autumn Promotions

Zoetis:

Buy 2 x Dectomax V and get a Gun & Holster Set

Alleva Cattle:

Get a Mastercard \$50 or \$40 with every Boss/Turbo Pour On 5lt or 2.5lt

Buy a Special Turbo Pour On 7.5lt and get a Cordless Sabre Saw!

BI Cattle:

Get DeWalt cordless Tools on selected products

Things to do in April

- Lepto vaccinations—calves, yearlings and herd
- Body condition score herd and separate cows into mobs to be dried off at different times (light cows now)
- Weighing and drenching calves (including for lungworm)
- Johne’s testing on milk samples from autumn herd tests
- Book in your Autumn consult for dry cow therapy prescriptions, or your vet will contact you
- End of season preg testing, to make sure you are not carrying any unknown empties through winter

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