

# CUD

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



August 2022

## Clinic News

“The sun did not shine, it was too wet to play; So we sat in the house all that cold, wet, wet, day” begins the Cat in the Hat by Dr Seuss. Unfortunately, with cows coming home from grazing, and the first calves on the ground, there’s not much sitting in the house to be done in this awful winter weather. The vets and techs have been lucky to be able to use this time to get on top of Spring Consults, providing an opportunity not just to prescribe RVMs for the upcoming season but also make plans for minimizing metabolic issues, planning calf rearing, and even looking ahead to mating (metrichecking!).

We’ve enjoyed bringing you a range of educational events over the last couple of weeks, and we thank you for your support of these— Get Ready for Spring (at Outram, Clydevale and Balclutha), Calf Rearing, and “Tayloring Dairy to the Future”, to mark Sid Taylor’s 40 year veterinary career. Hopefully these will have put everyone into a good frame of mind for the onslaught.

## Avoiding Metabolic Issues

By now, magnesium supplementation should be well underway for your early calvers. With so many alternative water sources currently available, it can be hard getting anything into cows via the water, and dusting is next to impossible. Direct spreading onto supplementary feed is likely to be the most reliable method of ensuring adequate mag intake. In recent years, we have seen quite a move towards magnesium chloride or sulphate pre-calving, with the aim of lowering the DCAD in the diet. In turn this acidifies the blood, making it easier for the cow to mobilise and use their on board calcium. This is the principle underlying the “Springer Mix” products that are now on the market, and many farmers have seen real improvements from using these brews.

At point of calving, some people have seen great success with the CalPro bolus—a slug of calcium given down the throat, particularly to cows at risk of Milk Fever. Not only is clinical milk fever reduced, but also subclinical milk fever (blood calcium is measurably greater). From first principles, and overseas studies, we would expect this to lead to higher milk production and better reproductive outcomes in those cows.

Once cows are calved Mag Oxide (Causmag) and lime flour are the key macro mineral dietary supplements for preventing milk fever and grass staggers. However, cows that have calved in awful weather, leaving them cold, wet, tired and sore are at risk of reduced energy intake, and heading down the ketosis spiral. This season, with conditions the way they are, might be the year to give the cows a “Starter Drench” at point of calving to get them through the energy low point. Jump Start is a great option, with high content of Monopropylene Glycol (MPG/Ketol) + other goodies.

## Post calving care

All cows become dehydrated during calving, and probably to a greater extent during a prolonged or assisted calving. As well as pain relief (Ketomax), calcium, oxytocin and possibly antibiotic; it is worth considering helping them with rehydration after calving. Once again, our aim is to get them through the crisis, and quickly up and running. The Selekt Rumen Pump is a great tool for rapidly and safely getting 20L of warm electrolytes into any standing cow. Have a look next time you are in the store! We can also offer a free demo on farm.



## Spring Mastitis

Preventing spring mastitis is largely about teat condition. Teats that have been caked in mud from the last few weeks on crop, or that are exposed to continual wetting by rain, are at risk of becoming dry, chapped and cracked. This creates nooks and crevices where bacteria can hide from teat spray, and cracks and sores that create udder discomfort and can lead to poorer milk out. All of these are risk factors for mastitis.

When cows come in for their first milking, we should work to get their teats up to a healthy standard as soon as possible—soft, supple, free of cracks and with a light greasy layer on the surface.

- Clean muddy teats with a low pressure hose
- Strip for mastitis
- Use grease (from a tube, not a dirty bucket!) on teats with cracks
- Spray the teats pre-milking (**Colostrums only - these products are not licensed for use**)
- Teat spray post-milking : generous (use a paper towel to check full coverage), use a handsprayer if necessary to achieve this, and be prepared to top up to 15% emollient, with extra glycerine.

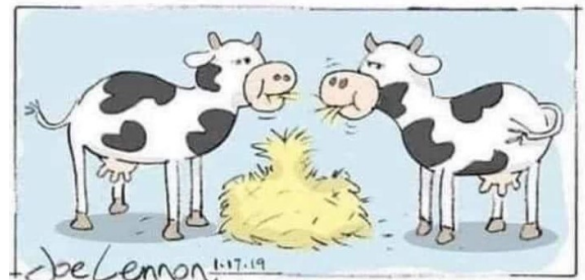
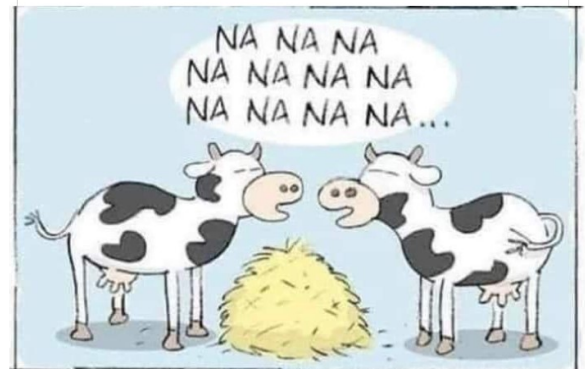
## What are the collars telling us?

At this time of year, cow collars (and other similar technologies) can be particularly useful for identifying cows that are in distress. Using their complex motion sensor technology, they monitor the sort and type of movements each cow is making, and can compare these to the known patterns associated with particular conditions.

Calving is one such pattern. While there is no complete substitute for old-fashioned spending time with the springers and watching them, the monitoring system can generate reports suggesting which cows in the springer mob to have an especially good look at—maybe rotten calvings will become a thing of the past!

Collars are also able to let you know when cows are in trouble, with alerts for those who are spending too long on the ground—maybe cast, maybe in a ditch, maybe with metabolic disease. Prompt attention to these alerts may be the difference between life and death for these cows.

Rumination monitoring is being used more and more to guide cows through the colostrum period into the milkers. There seem to be distinct advantages to moving cows into the twice a day milking herd only when their gut function is maximized. Dietary adjustments can be tailored to suit.



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## Things to do in August

- Look after the cows, get them calved and milking
- Look after the calves, get debudding, vaccination (consider 10 in 1) and Multimin underway
- Look after the paddocks and the waterways
- Look after each other and yourselves!

## **Merchandise promotions:**

- **Elanco Prolact B12 precalving boost : Chance to win one of two Air Fryers.**
- **Virbac Multimin strategic trace element top-up : Enter the draw to win an UBCO electric work bike**
- **CalPro boluses—clinical and subclinical milk fever prevention : great discounts on orders over 120**
- **Blue Cross 4in1 Metabolic treatment flexis. Bonus deal. Super cheap for a limited time!**
- **BI Eprinex Pour On – Proven to increase milk production : Price or Promo (for a limited time) - either buy 5 x 5ltr and save over \$100.00, OR get one of the last few DeWalt 18V Cordless Drills with 25ltr**