

# CUD

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



**December 2022**

## Clinic News

Managing the grass this Spring seems to have been even more challenging than normal. Small, regular rainfalls created phenomenal growth that made it really hard to maintain quality, but also really hard to get grass cut and baled or into the silage pit. And now, temperatures that seem more like September than December have caused grass growth to slow right down in some areas. We must be due for some fine, warm days around Christmas and New Year!

On the staff front, this month we will be farewelling Jillian Clark from our Milton branch. Jillian came to Clutha Vets as a new veterinary graduate from Massey 33 years ago. She is well known not only to the dairy famers around Milton and on the Taieri, but also to many at the southern end of the practice—33 years is a lot of afterhours calls here, there and everywhere! Jillian’s main passion however is sheep, and she has made an enormous contribution to sheep farmers in the area, and for the sheep part of our veterinary practice. In the last couple of years she has also taken responsibility for the Lawrence clinic. A farewell was held at the Toko RFC rooms, and if you missed that one there will be another chance to catch up at the Lawrence clinic on Thursday 22 December. Please come along to join us in acknowledging her and wishing her well!

At the recent AGM of your vet club, two long-serving directors stepped down from the board. Bruce Lowery (Table Hill) and Peter McNab (Owaka) have both made significant contributions to the governance of Clutha Vets. We all thank them for their years of service, during which time your vet club has risen to meet some significant challenges and expanded in many areas, all the while aiming “to provide top quality and up-to-date animal health services, advice and products, 24/7, to members and the community”. In their place Suzie Corboy (Owaka) and Simon Davies (Toko Mouth) will join the board table, and Garth Shaw (Wharetoa) retains his seat. We wish the directors an enjoyable and rewarding time on the board.



## Those “Twisted guts” - Haemorrhagic Bowel Syndrome

Cows that are presented to us as having gone suddenly off feed and milk with a range of gut-related symptoms (bloating, blood in the dung, pings, sloshes etc) are often put into the bucket of “twisted gut”. In fact this bucket contains many different varieties of “gut catastrophe”. The most common, which also happens to be the easiest to diagnose and fix, is the left- or right- displaced abomasum (LDA, RDA), but there can be twists, impactions, dilations and entanglements of all the other sections of gut as well.

At this time of year we occasionally come across cases of “Haemorrhagic bowel syndrome”. The disease is not understood at all well, but as its name suggests, the main feature is massive bleeding into the small intestine. Blood loss causes shock—dehydration, pale membranes, very rapid heart etc; and when that blood clots in the gut, it causes a complete physical blockage. These combine to create a sudden and dramatic collapse. Diagnosis is made by opening the cow up, usually post mortem(!), and there is no simple treatment. The cause is unknown—seasonality may point to a feed related source, but several microbes have also been implicated. Vaccination with Covexin 10-in-1 against the clostridials may be protective.

## What are the collars telling us?

As we make our way towards the mid-way point of mating, cow collars, and similar technologies are giving a good indication of the success of the early part of mating. Cows that are pregnant obviously don't return to cycling, and the collars can generate a report showing exactly which cows these are (equivalent to non-returns). However non-returns can also be generated by cows slipping back in to anoestrous (non-cycling).

Some farmers ask us to confirm these pregnancies with “early” pregnancy testing—35 to 40 days post mating. Any cows that are not in calf can then be targeted for treatment to give them another shot or two at AI. For cows mated before 15 November, and not remated since then, we can do them after about the 20th December.



## Things to do in December

- Enjoy a Christmas break!
- If you happen to have any “red drugs” on farm, discuss renewing your 3 monthly prescription with a vet
- Get calf lepto vaccination underway, and clostridial vaccination if not already started (10 in 1 is best)
- Weaning drench and trace elements for calves
- Remove bulls from heifers, for a nice compact calving (New Year's Eve mating gives 9th Oct calving)
- Keep on top of lame cows with early treatment

## Ham for Christmas?

Major changes in the New Zealand drench market means give-away Christmas hams are no longer as widely available as they have been in the past. However, it is calf drenching time, and there is ham to be had with Turbo pour-on, Boss pour-on, and Eclipse injection!

