

CUD

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



December 2023

Merry Christmas

Recent rain has been welcome with ground starting to dry out, and many of you will be looking to the 2nd / 3rd cut coming up.

On the staff front we welcome two new grads beginning in the new year—Hayden Linton and Chase Jordan will join us fresh out of Massey. Connie Waddingham, Milton nurse, has left for the bright lights of Christchurch; we were pleased to welcome Anna Ramsay back from Scotland. Vets and techs will be taking the chance for a break between the repro madness and upcoming preg testing. And after 25 years Sue McNutt will be hanging up the phone for retirement on 21 December. If you are round in the afternoon (or anytime) pop in to say goodbye, with a barbecue from 3pm.

With another year drawing to an end I am sure you will all be looking forward to a well deserved break. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas, catching up with loved ones, kicking the feet up and getting ready for the new year.

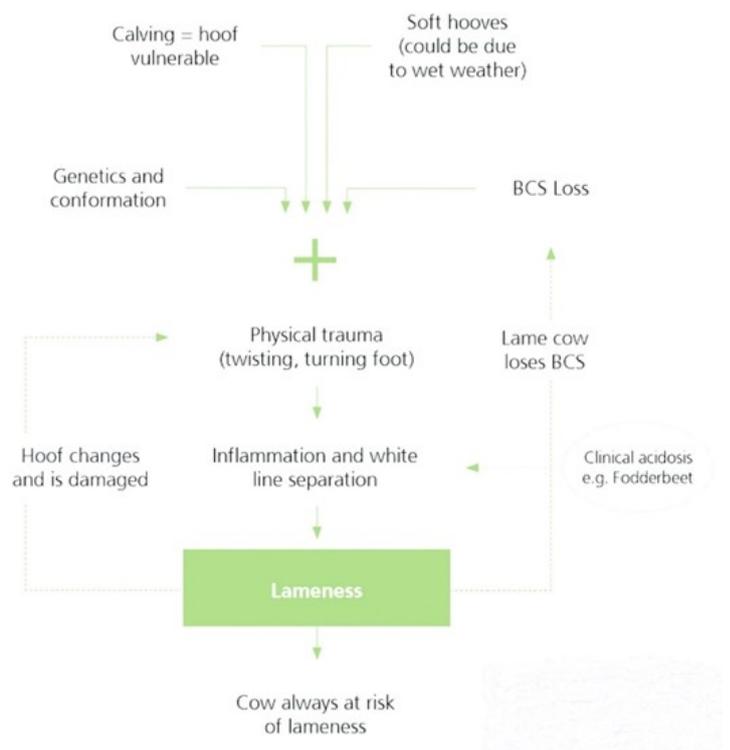


Breaking the lameness cycle

Lameness remains to be NZ's most production limiting health disease and can result in significant welfare issues. Severely lame animals are easy to identify in the herd, unfortunately these animals have likely been lame for a while and underlying damage is likely to have occurred, predisposing these animals to future issues. Training your staff to regularly look for lameness in your cows is still the main way to identify issues early. Scoring cows range from 0 (no lameness) to 3 (very lame). It is recommended to lameness/mobility score the entire herd at least once a month and record the observations.

Recording

Identifying and recording lame cows distinguishes if a problem is present and ensures prompt action is taken. Pain relief is one of the mainstays for reducing inflammation and therefore damage to the delicate underlying tissues. It isn't a magic fix as lameness is a complex condition, however it aids in achieving lasting improvement. Recording also aids in addressing the potential risk factors on your farm as well as assists in moving the focus from treating lame cows to preventing it, therefore saving you time and money.

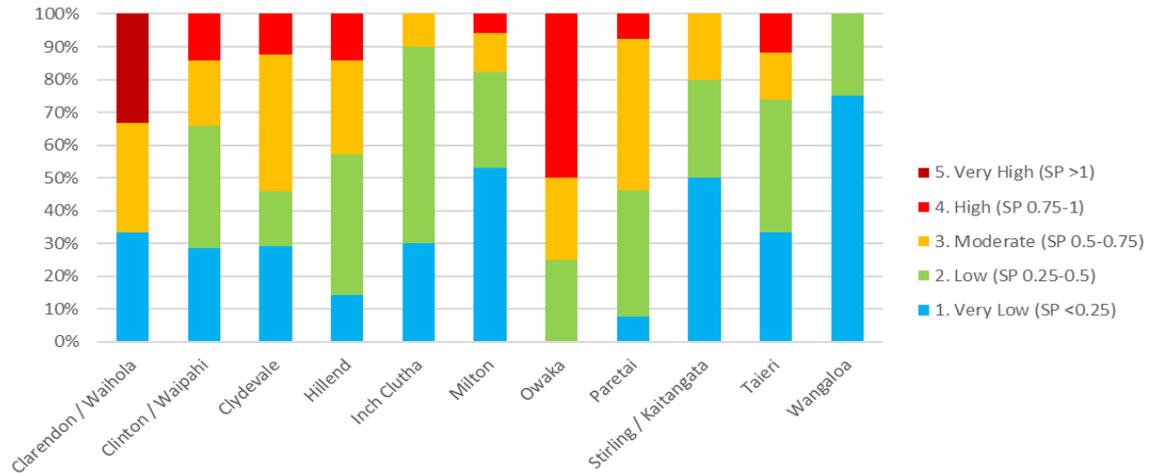


BVD... or not BVD?

We have completed our post-calving rounds of BVD bulk milk testing for 2023. Most of you will have some familiarity with BVD and what your results mean for your herd... so here's a results round-up and brief refresher.

Antibody levels give us an idea of how much exposure there has been within your herd to the BVD virus. The higher the exposure, the more recent and/or greater number of cattle that have been exposed to the virus. This is how the different Clutha areas compare:

BVD Antibody Exposure Levels by Area

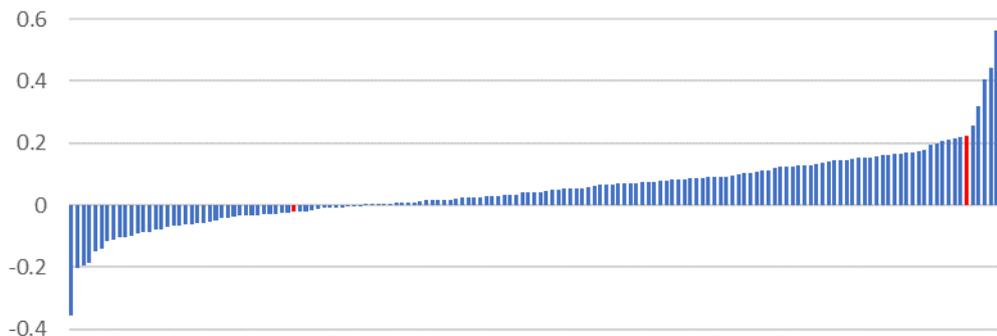


The antibody levels above give a snapshot at a point in time, but we can also look at trends over time to help us assess the exposure of BVD in your herd:

- An increase from last year can suggest more recent exposure to the virus, brought-in animals with BVD exposure, or vaccination. There can be an increased risk of BVD in calves.
- A decrease from last year suggests that animals coming into your herd have a lower exposure to BVD than the rest of your herd.

These are the changes in BVD antibody levels for Clutha Vets dairy farms:

Change in Antibody Levels for Herds Compared with Last Year



Each vertical line represents an individual herd's result... and if there has been an increase or decrease in levels compared with last year. The red lines are for herds where we have either found BVD virus in the bulk milk, or calves – an indication that the BVD infection is active within a herd.

Things to do in December

- Make the most of your Christmas break!
- Get calf leptos 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)
- Deal with the last cows waiting to be mated
- Keep on top of lame cows with early treatment