

# CUD

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



**February 2024**

Christmas has become a distant memory and, hopefully, you have managed to have a break / refresh with friends and family and it is now back to the grindstone!

We have had a change in weather where we are now very grateful for the showers of rain that are still coming through to keep everything fresh.

On the staffing front, we have welcomed Hayden Linton (Massey Uni new graduate vet) to the Balclutha team. Hayden spent quite a bit of time “seeing practice” with us last year, and realised what a great place South Otago is! Chase Jordan, our second Massey new grad is also beginning on the 5<sup>th</sup> February. Our new grads are trained to do everything and they begin their journey in our small animal clinic first, getting that part sorted.

With our new grads, I would like to acknowledge our awesome farmers who are so encouraging and supportive of our younger team. It is your support in this area that helps get them started on their journey. It is a big journey for them, especially the first 6 months.

We also recently welcomed Sophie Harding, who has joined us from the UK to give us a hand in the dairy and sheep and beef worlds Sophie has previously worked in Southland. She also has a special talent in the social media field and we are looking forward to her helping us to upskill in this area... follow us on Instagram to see what we are up to!

As always, we are here for all of your animal health needs, enquiries etc. So please don't hesitate to call!

## **Hot & Flustered Cows**

Data from DairyNZ suggests that in summer, even in this part of New Zealand, each day cows get hot enough to reduce their milk production for 1-2 hours, probably totaling 1-2kgMS per cow over the season. The three simplest strategies to minimise the impact of heat stress are:

- Install water troughs on the exit race, so that every cow has ample opportunity to get a good drink when she is likely to be hottest
- Hose the yard shortly before the cows arrive. As the water evaporates, it cools the concrete
- Change milking times to avoid the hottest part of the day. 3-in-2 with cups on at 5am, 6pm and 11am works well on many farms



## **Putting Cattle Out To (Past The) Pasture**

As mating is finishing up and scanning is underway, now is the time where many bulls and cull cows are up for the chopping block. In some cases, these animals need vet certification to be legally fit for transport. Sending pictures and videos of the animal to your vet if you're unsure whether it needs a cert can be very helpful. The animal also needs an area it can be adequately examined and restrained for video recording. A hard surface will help assess lameness and will mimic how they will look at the works. The animal will also need to be able to be clearly identified, spray paint goes a long way. It's important to book in a vet as soon as you can after securing a spot on the truck as it can take a day or two for a certification to be approved by the meat works vets when it's not clear-cut case. Vet certs can be valid for up to 7 days. The truckies also appreciate knowing there will be a cert on board a head of time as it can change their run with specific vet cert conditions.

These conditions can include;

- Direct to slaughter premises
- Last on the truck and first off
- Reduced stocking density
- Lower deck only

It's important to remember that a cert for transport does not guarantee fitness for consumption, that call is made at the works. If the animal is unfit for transport, other options include;

- Vet treatment (e.g. dehorning ingrown horns, removal of cancer eyes and masses) or euthanasia
- Pet food or home kill



## **Things to do in February**

- Weigh the calves, to ensure weight gains are maintained on dry feed. Supplements may be required
- Maintain regular worm drenching of calves
- Lepto vaccinations—calves, yearlings and herd
- Condition score the herd, and adjust feeding and milking strategies for light cows
- Pregnancy testing, to allow early dry off or culls
- Vet certs for bulls or cows heading to the works with any abnormality (within a few days of them going)
- Book in for our lame cow workshop on 1st March
- Get all of your RVM paperwork in order for shed checks—this will also be necessary for upcoming autumn consults and DCT discussions

## **Merchandise promotions:**

- *Zoetis: 'Buy local support local' buy 4 x Dectomax or Dectomax V and you get a local butchery voucher worth \$50*
- *BI Cattle: HERE SOON! Get Dewalt cordless tools on selected products. LED work lights, circular saw, and impact driver—all cordless*