

CUD

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



November 2021

Clinic news

With the sun shining, grass growth going mad, milk production at its peak, and the mating season now in full swing, it's go, go, go on all the farms around the practice. We have been busy synchronising heifers and cows, and treating non-cyclers. While the greatest financial payback comes from treating non-cyclers right at the start of the AI period, the surest way to make sure any non-cycling cow gets submitted is with a CIDR treatment. Cows treated by mid November should still have time to get a couple of shots at AI, so give us a call to make sure every cow gets a decent chance to get back in calf.

On the staff front we are very sad to be farewelling a couple of vets who will be well known to dairy clients. Andrew Comerford (Irish Andrew) will be heading back to the Emerald Isle in early December. In the time he has been with us, Andrew's quiet manner and gentle Irish humour (along with his ever-increasing veterinary skills and knowledge!) have made him very welcome on farm. Matt Buckley has been at Milton for the last year or so, and is returning to his roots in Whanganui. As well as dairy work at the northern end of the practice, Matt has been active on the equine front, especially with the dental gear - exemplified by a recent day when he performed dental maintenance on no fewer than 14 donkeys!

The AGM of your vet club will be held at the Balclutha Clinic at 8pm on Tuesday 16 November. You are most welcome to attend, to discuss how the practice is running and ideas for the future. Anne-Marie Wells is stepping down from the board, and Mark Sheppard has been nominated for the vacancy created. We thank Anne-Marie for the contribution she has made since she joined the board. Enclosed with this newsletter are excerpts from the annual reports of the Board Chair and the Executive Management Group.

Animal Wellbeing Plans

At Clutha Vets we are always keen to help you head off animal health issues, rather than trying to deal with problems that could have been prevented. This usually comes down to having a sound plan for how you are going to look after the stock in your care. Fonterra have recently included this planning in the requirements for their suppliers to reach the Co-operative Difference incentive payment, and we have already produced Animal Wellbeing Plans for a number of clients.

This documentation needs to be ready at the time of your shed inspection. If you are pursuing the Co-operative Difference, and would like a formalised Animal Wellbeing Plan, prepared in consultation with your vet, please get in touch sooner rather than later, so we can help get this sorted for you.

Life and death

A wee quiz! We recently went to a cow with a life-threatening emergency. Fortunately it ended well. A day or two later when I was talking about it with another client, they pointed to a yellow spring clothes peg that they keep in their treatment area, that they said was there for exactly that reason!

What is the condition? (the colour of the peg is irrelevant!)



Bull time

Just as the 6 week in calf rate is determined by the cow submission rate x the conception rate; the success rate of the bulls can be thought of as being determined by the number x the quality of the bulls.

Bull numbers - there are not many farms where we find the recommended number of bulls have been sourced, and when we discover a problem with the pregnancy rate in the late mating period it's often down to lack of bull power. The table below shows the DairyNZ recommendation for the total number of bulls required on your farm, based on your herd size and the likely success of AI. This allows for a ratio of 1 bull per 30 non-pregnant cows, two teams that can be rotated, and a couple of spares to allow for duds, lameness etc.

No. of cows in herd	Likely % of herd pregnant at start of bull mating			
	Very low (50%)	Low (60%)	Moderate (70%)	High (80%)
300	12	10	8	5
400	16	14	10	8
500	20	18	14	12
600	25	20	15	10
800	32	26	20	14

Bull quality - Surveys have shown that about one in five bulls used on NZ dairy farms are subfertile. They will serve cows, without getting them pregnant, but effectively blocking them from the fertile bulls. The impact of infertile bulls is not neutral (and able to be overcome by increasing bull numbers) but actually negative.

Fertility testing bulls is easier and quicker than you probably think. We perform a physical exam, and then collect semen by electro-ejaculation for sperm evaluation. For sperm we look at overt motility of the sample, and then individual sperm to assess the percent who are "straight swimmers" or who have abnormal shapes. Give us a call if you'd like to make fertility testing your "step-wise improvement" for this mating season.

Things to do in November

- Monitor daily submission numbers. What is your target number of cows each day (herd size x 0.9 x 0.05)?
- Deal with non-cycling cows, to achieve 90% submission in the first 3 weeks
- Sort out the bulls - source, and make sure they are blood tested (it's ok to ask for proof) AND vaccinated against BVD. Fertility test on arrival.
- Get the last of the calf disbudding tidied up, and vaccinations underway (5 in 1, Lepto +/- B12 and Se)
- Book LeptoVac+ consult on farm, with your staff
- Check BVD bulk milk test results, coming through now
- Book in a consultation to get your Animal Wellbeing Plan sorted, for Co-operative Difference. Things to have ready - your target and current mastitis rate, lameness rate, mortality rate (cows and calves); and your plans for genetic selection to improve animal wellbeing, and adverse weather event mitigation (hot, cold, flood, wind - power and water loss)

Merchandise promotions:

- **Turbo** - the drench range that includes a coccidiocide for weaned calves - promos include the chance to win a "Man Cave" Petrol bowser beer fridge (be the envy of your friends!) And Christmas hams or Barker's chutneys with selected sizes.
- **Boehringer Pour-on** - Christmas hams and your chance to enter what might be the last ever Clutha Vets Take-a-mate fishing trip to Stewart Island, with qualifying purchases
- **Prolaject B12** - Berroca to get you up and going when you are getting the calves up and going!

