

CLUTHA VETS DAIRY FARMER NEWSLETTER



April 2022



Clinic News

In these crazy, mixed-up times we are glad to have been able to get the pregnancy testing out of the way without major COVID disruptions. Most farms seem to have done a little better this year than last (see the article inside this newsletter), but it's a great time to sit down and look at your results and work out what is worth doing again, and what new approaches will be worth trying next season. We're happy to do this with you.

The focus now needs to be on a successful dry-off, leading into a successful calving in August. Cow condition and paddock management are the key things to focus on, but neither is very easy when it remains dry across much of the district, and difficult to get cows away. Get your autumn consult booked so we can help you with your end of season planning.

And think about getting your winter holiday booked too! It's been a tough couple of years, but now things are opening up give yourself and your family a reward to look forward to! It will help everyone to stay positive and motivated through these last couple of months of the season.

In this issue

- Clinic News
- Benefits of M bovis testing
- Dry cow therapy—approach for this season
- Getting what you want
- Repro performance benchmarking
- Vet certs
- Intramammary withholding for 16hour milking
- Checklist for April

Mycoplasma testing—benefits for your local school

MPI are still looking for more herds of heifers to blood test, as part of the ongoing surveillance for Mycoplasma bovis. Clutha Vets is proud to be supporting this industry-good initiative, and now we would like to use it to benefit local schools as well.

- For every animal we blood test for the scheme, we will donate \$1 to a local school of your choice.
- If we are coming out to do another job (pregnancy testing, weighing, vaccinating) MPI will also pick up the cost of our travel, if we blood test as well.
- The blood samples can be used for other tests (trace elements, BVD screening), so all you end up paying for is the lab test.

The only stipulations are that the heifers must be away from the dairy farm, and there must be at least 25 in the group (and they have to have EID tags!). Give us a call if you'd like to jump on board.

BALCLUTHA 03 418 1280

MILTON 03 417 8032

CLYDEVALE 03 415 9121

LAWRENCE 03 485 9008

Dry Cow Therapy— the approach for this season

No-one in the dairy industry is immune to the pressure on us all to reduce the use of antibiotics. Of most significance at this time of year, as we approach drying off, is the maxim that we can no longer justify putting antibiotics into the udders of cows that do not have an intramammary infection (IMI), or that are likely to acquire one. This throws a bright spotlight onto the practice of using antibiotic dry cow therapy across whole herds at drying off, when many cows do not have significant infections in their udder. Blanket DCT has been a widespread practice for many years, and is no doubt in part responsible for the excellent mastitis control and milk quality that most New Zealand dairy herds have. But times, and the market's expectations, are changing!

Blanket dry cow therapy can only be justified when there is a high proportion of cows likely to be infected at drying off, or there is a high risk of new infections developing over the dry period. There are five key indicators of this:

- Season average bulk cell count greater than 250,000
- Clinical mastitis last dry period in greater than 2% of cows
- Clinical mastitis last spring in greater than 10% of cows in the first month of their lactation
- More than 25% of the herd had individual cow cell counts (ICSCC) greater than 150,000 in the first 6 months of the season
- More than 15% of the herd had a significant rise in ICSCC between last season and this (from below 150,000 before last dry off, to over 150,000 in the first spring herd test).

All farms have access to the first three pieces of information, but obviously herd testing is required for points 4 and 5. If you have herd test info you really need to tick ALL FIVE of those boxes (NOT just ONE of them!) to be able to justify blanket antibiotic dry cow therapy. If you do not have herd test records, you should tick All of the FIRST THREE boxes before blanket antibiotic DCT is warranted.

For Fonterra suppliers, one of the components of the Animal Wellbeing Plan (that contributes to you accessing the Co-operative Difference bonus payment) is your approach to “anti-microbial stewardship”. A voluntary move away from blanket use of antibiotics at drying off, before it is forced upon the industry, would be a very positive step in this direction. Other processors have similar aims in mind.

Use of Teatseal without antibiotics in cows that are not infected, is a great way to protect them from new infections over the dry period, but correct insertion is essential. This year, we are required to make sure that all farmers doing this know how to use Teatseal safely, and we will be asking you to sign off that your staff having been fully trained in “best practice administration”. Alternatively, we can do it for you.

Getting what you want

In these times of global shortages and supply issues with everything, we have done our best to source the dry cow therapy and Teatseal that we foresee club members needing this season. Lisa's photo here shows the first consignment in our bulk store.

However, there is always a risk that if you leave things to the last minute, we may have trouble sourcing the products that have been prescribed for your use. The way to avoid this is to get what you need (or at least the bulk of it) safely onto your farm now.

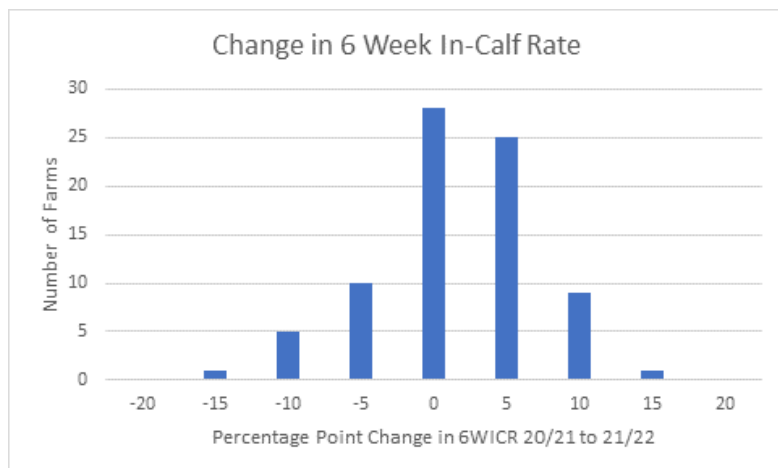
To aid this process we are offering a discount of 2% on all prescribed DCT and Teatseal that is uplifted from Clutha Vets (or delivered to your farm) before 22 April.

Deferred payment is available. To take advantage of this offer, phone the clinic now to book your Autumn consult. We can go over all those end of season tidy up jobs — body condition scoring, Lepto vaccinations, trace element testing, Johne's disease, young stock pre-winter weighing, heifer Teatseal arrangements, scours vaccine orders, as well as your DCT prescription.



Pregnancy testing bench marks

At the end of pregnancy testing a herd, we are usually asked how things have been on other farms around the district. The graph below shows that this season's results have, on average, been a little better than last. We believe that 6 week In-Calf Rate is the best measure of reproductive performance. Of the farms in the sample, "no measurable change" was the most common result. However, there were nearly as many farms that had a 5% improvement in 6 week ICR, and there were a group who had a 10% improvement, which is a pretty impressive achievement. One farm even managed a 15% improvement! At the other end, smaller numbers of farms had 5 and 10% decreases, and we are working with the farm that had a 15% decrease to work out what went wrong for them.



We would love to sit down and go through your pregnancy testing results with you, to understand what went well, and where you can make some gains.

If you are less than happy with this season's results, one thing you can do TODAY, is check on your in-calf heifers. Even though they may have had a good in-calf rate, if they are behind live weight targets going into winter, they are likely to be in the group that struggles to get in calf next November.

With grass supply tightening, and quality dropping with each rainless day, there is a real risk of a feed pinch and reduced growth.

What options do you have for some high quality supplementary feed? Some farmers have sourced lucerne hay, others are looking at reintroducing some grain or nuts, the way sheep farmers do to flush their ewes when faced with a dry lead up to mating. Introducing these feeds now, even in small quantities can also be used to help transition the young stock on to winter feeds, by keeping one element of the diet constant throughout.

Intramammary withholding periods for 16 hour milking

As the season enters its final couple of months, and the ongoing dry makes feed tighter and tighter, more and more herds are reducing milking frequency to preserve cow condition and push the round length out. However all of the intramammary antibiotics used to treat mastitis are licensed to be used either every twelve hours, or every 24 hours. So what should you do when you are milking the cows every 16 hours?

To make sure that there is enough antibiotic present at all times to kill the offending bugs, you should strip and treat mastitis cows every milking—leaving them 32 hours between treatments would just be too long, and get too complicated on alternating days. But this use is "off label" and so great care must be taken with milk withholding times, generally adding extra time and milkings to the recommendation on the box. Below are some guidelines for the products used most commonly at this time of year, but as always, please discuss with your vet, when you are going "off label".

Intracillin—10 milkings (7 days)

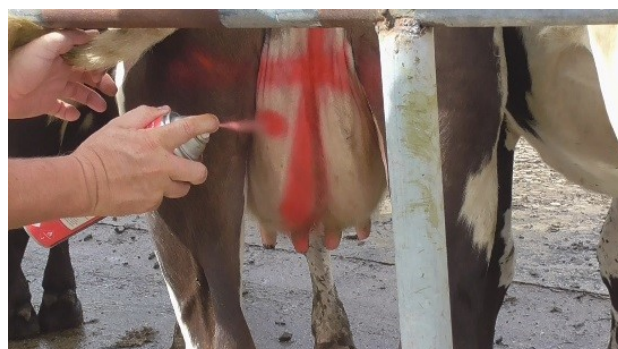
Penclox 1200—9 milkings (6 days)

Orbenin LA—9 milkings (6 days)

Albiotic—4 milkings (3 days)

Mastiplan LC—11 milkings (7 days)

Ultraclox—7 milkings (5 days)



Veterinary certificates for transport and slaughter

Any cow that is showing an abnormality and is sent for slaughter should be accompanied to the freezing works by a “Vet Cert”. The markets for our meat have ever increasing expectations for the way animals are managed on farm and on the way to slaughter, and this is front of mind when we are certifying stock.

When we certify an animal, we must specify which works it is going to (not just the processing company, and under most circumstances this will be the nearest one. We can only issue a certificate for a maximum of seven days, in case the condition deteriorates after that. The best thing to do, is to make sure your stock agent knows this, and get us to give the cert within a day or two of departure.

The cow will most likely have to travel direct from your farm to the plant (“first on last off”) and be killed on the day arrival, so will need to leave your farm mid-morning at the latest. This needs to be co-ordinated with your transport firm.

Finally, we may have to put some special conditions around the transport—bottom deck (lame), pen on its own (bulls) etc. If you’d like to discuss the suitability and logistics of getting an animal to slaughter please feel free to call and speak to a vet at the start of the process.



Check list for April

- Sit down with a vet to go through your repro results from this season while they are fresh in your mind. Look for the wins you can get next season.
- If your shed inspection is yet to come, make sure you have your Animal Wellbeing Plan (for the Co-Operative Difference) and Red Light Antibiotic (Excede, Tylo, Mastalone) authorisation up to date. The latter needs to be renewed every 4 months.
- Book your Autumn Consult to sort out DCT and other end-of-season reminders.
- Weigh calves and heifers, plan for winter.
- Get all Lepto vaccinations tidied up.
- Body condition score the herd, get light BCS, early-calving cows dried off.
- Trace element testing on cull cow livers.
- Decide on your springer, calving and colostrum paddocks for August, and manage appropriately.
- Get space booked for cull cows—a few every couple of weeks from now till drying off, so you don’t get caught out with extra mouths to feed and less grass to give them

Retail

Earlybird 12% Member’s Discount on DCT and Teatseal taken before 22nd April, after consultation with a vet. With uncertainty around the coming season’s supply and prices you may want to lock in your orders early—this includes your shed chems, milk powder, minerals, drenches and more. Call your Clutha Vet Retailer at Milton or Clutha, or Shannon on 027 485 6015.

“Best Practice” DCT and Teatseal administration kits (cotton wool buds, meths etc) **\$50** (excl)

Late season drench - don’t wait till drying off, get the benefits of maintaining production and cow condition in late lactation, and having worm-free cows going into winter.

For more promotions and specials call in to your local store.

Jason’s Cows Rock

Last month featured some good ol’ Canadian C & W, with Corb Lund’s “Cows Around”. Not too much to say about this, but it does list a few different cattle breeds, and has some great guitar licks from Grant “Demon” Siemens. This month:

Buildings are rooks

Nature’s a vice

Rattle of diesels

Snakes eating their own tails

Pretty girl, milkin’ a cow, oh yeah

Pretty girl, milkin’ a cow, oh yeah...

Song title & Artist for a chance to win beer/wine. Extra stubby for the Album title.

