



DAIRY NEWSLETTER

End of Season



CLINIC NEWS

Heifer Teatsealing is now well & truly underway. We're hoping for some good, dry days to get through the bulk of the workload before winter arrives. May is looking like a busy time for us, with our team fully engaged with drying off cows. If you require assistance with Dry Cow Therapy/Teatseal insertion, please get in touch a.s.a.p. - we will do our best to accommodate your needs, but we cannot be in all places at the same time!

Congratulations to Emma, who tied the knot with her partner, Sam, on 29th March. Emma returns to the team as Mrs. Young. We have 2 new graduate vets now working out of Balclutha - Rebecca Everingham & Mikey Sole. Please make them feel welcome if they turn up on your farm. Unfortunately, we are saying farewell to Zoe, who joined Clutha Vets as a Technician in March 2024. Zoe is taking up a position with CRV, where we are sure she will thrive. She has been a great asset to our team and will be missed by staff & clients.

Planning continues for our clinic in Outram. We have purchased a site at 60 Bell Street and have consent to build a vet clinic on that property. We hope that building will start later in the year...

These next pages deliver some knowledge from us to you on some key animal health issues over the autumn and through the next period.

➤➤➤ DRY COW THERAPY 2025

Cows that may receive antibiotic DCT include:

- Cows treated for clinical mastitis in the last dry period or in current lactation.
- Cows or heifers with 1 or more high individual cow SCC or,
- Cows with a positive RMT result.

Other factors that may influence DCT use:

- Other test results, e.g. culture results or information about the pathogens present in the herd.
- Cows over 4 years old and milk production over 15 L at the last herd test of lactation.
- Cows with visible teat end damage.

Most of our dairy clients have been using Selective Dry Cow Therapy (DCT) for some time now, with good results. With Selective DCT, the only cows that will get Antibiotic DCT (e.g. Cepravin, Dryclox) will be:

1. Cows with evidence of (probable) existing intramammary infections
2. Cows at higher risk of developing mastitis after drying off.

The tables above pretty much cover off these situations. All other cows are dried off without Antibiotic DCT, usually (and strongly recommended) with Teatseal.

The NZ dairy industry is fully committed to this approach, which will help reduce the volume of antibiotics used in dairy farming. As vets, we are coming under increasing scrutiny from our governing body (Vet Council), to prescribe Antibiotic DCT only to cows that meet the criteria listed above. There is no evidence that Whole Herd Antibiotic DCT results in better outcomes than Selective DCT in subsequent seasons, so it is hard to justify this approach, except in exceptional circumstances.

There are risks associated with using Teatseal alone, and poor cow selection or poor hygiene at administration can certainly lead to severe cases of mastitis and possible death.

However, these risks can be minimised. Clutha Vets can help at all stages of the process:

- Formulating lists of cows for different treatment options
- Discussing management strategies (e.g. nutrition) to minimise any risks
- Training you & your staff for best practice administration of DCT (Antibiotic &/or Teatseal)
- Administering DCT (Antibiotic &/or Teatseal) to your cows

If you have not already taken this important step towards reducing antibiotic use, please “take the plunge” this year, and speak to your vet about ways to minimise the risk.

>>> TURNING OFF THE TAP

A successful dry-off will cure infections that exist in the udders of some of our cows and reduce the number of new infections occurring after dry off, both during the winter and for the first 30 days after calving.

One of the most critical things that we need for this to work well is for the cow's milk production to be at the right level. If volumes are too low (<5L per day), the antibiotics (if she needs some) won't distribute through the udder that well. Therefore, decreasing our chances of curing any infections and increasing our chances of having residues next season.

Conversely, cows with production levels >10L per day have a higher chance of milk leakage post dry off, which will lead to more mastitis. This is a worry for cows with and without a sealant product in their teats.

How do we achieve success?

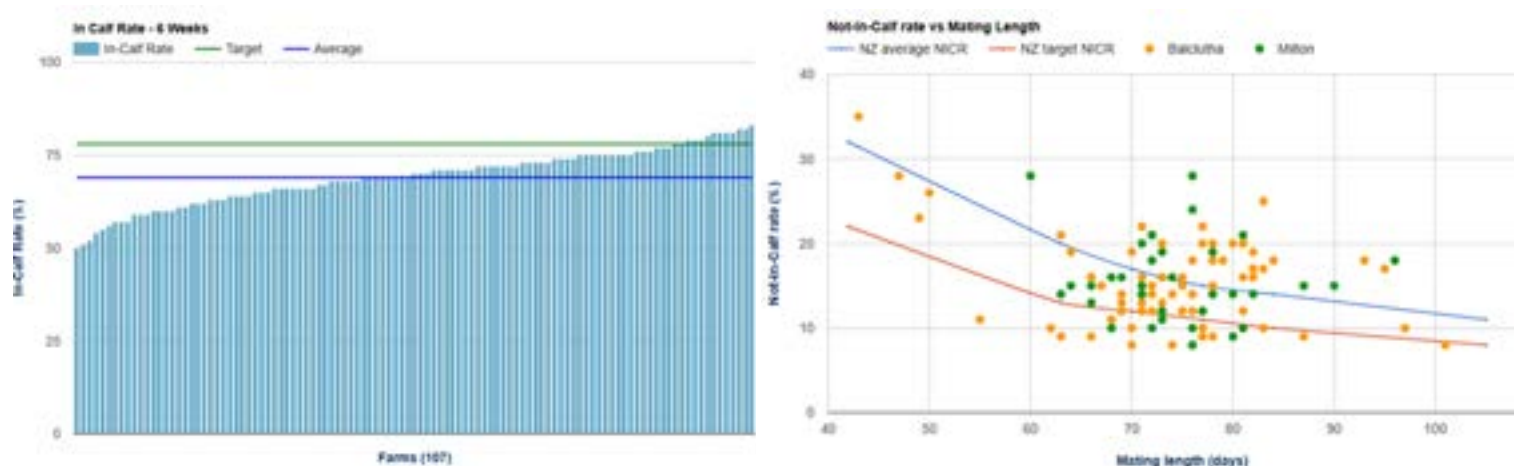
- Dry off low producing cows early, do this before we wind down the rest of the cows' production.
- Lower production through lower quality feeds, especially lower protein feeds, rather than through starvation of cows:
 - a. Cut out in-shed feeding of PKE and grains.
 - b. Reduce the amount of green grass being fed.
 - c. Feed poorer quality/high fibre supplements such as hay/straw/high fibre silage/high fibre baleage.
 - d. Cows can still be given up to 5kg of fodderbeet as long as the rest of the diet is very high in fibre.
- Reduce volumes over a period of about a week, can really increase the fibre in the last couple of days. For cows that were milking hard, trying to shut them down with only a couple of days of doing them hard is not going to work well.
- Maintain the lower quality feeding for a week after dry-off so they don't bag back up.
- Don't bring them back near the cowshed for at least a week after dry-off, otherwise you will stimulate milk let-down.
- Either truck them to grazing immediately after drying them off, assuming the drive isn't more than a few hours, or you'll need to wait a least a week after dry-off to truck them.

>>> REPRO WRAP UP

Most of the pregnancy testing is now complete, signalling that the season's end is approaching. Despite poor weather conditions before mating, reproductive performance hasn't been significantly impacted. Across 107 clients with data recorded in Infovet, the average 6-week in-calf rate was approximately 69%, while the average empty rate stood at around 15%.

The first graph illustrates the range of 6-week in-calf rates observed, with the top 13 clients meeting or exceeding the target, and the highest result reaching an impressive 83%. However, there is still room for improvement among the lower-performing farms.

The second graph presents the empty rates recorded and highlights the limited effect of extended mating periods. Some clients have achieved low empty rates with mating periods under 70 days, while others, mating for 77+ days, have empty rates nearing or exceeding 20%. The four yellow dots on the left represent farms that have yet to complete their final scans, explaining their shorter mating periods and higher empty rates.



What are some of the key things that are done by those achieving the top results?

Firstly, submit a high percentage of the herd:

- Need lots of early calving cows.
- Need to look after cows at calving time; once a day milking for ~8 days, generous feeding levels, plenty of calcium, young cows in their own herd etc. This includes getting the correct feeding in the period just before calving.
- Early intervention of those cows not cycling early enough.

Secondly, get good conception rates:

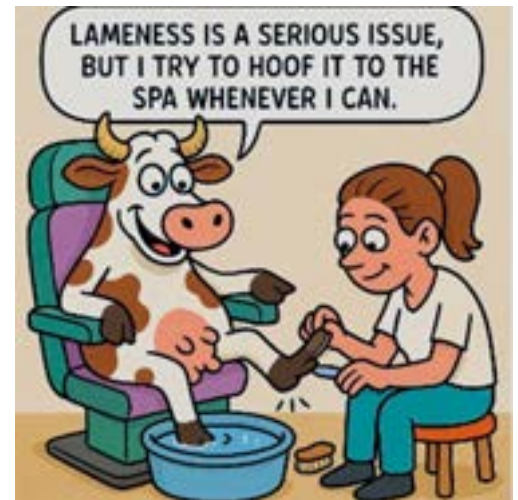
- Need lots of cows having heats before mating begins.
- Need good quality feed in the lead up to and throughout mating.
- If using bulls, have plenty of bulls + semen test them.

If you aren't achieving the results you want, now is the time to catch up with one of our team while everything is still fresh in your mind.

VETERINARY ADVICE

>>> LAMENESS IN OUR COWS

Lameness is a significant welfare concern in dairy cattle, affecting the health, productivity, and longevity of animals. One aspect in preventing lameness is ensuring that cattle maintain normal hoof structure. A well-formed, normal-shaped hoof plays a vital role in preventing the many foot problems that can lead to lameness.



A normal hoof in dairy cattle is designed to absorb shock, support the cow's weight, and facilitate smooth movement. A normal-shaped hoof is symmetric, with the front and back of the hoof aligned and the weight evenly distributed across the sole. This helps in reducing excessive wear on any one part of the hoof and prevents the development of deformities or conditions. When a hoof is normal in shape and properly maintained, it is more resilient against common hoof issues.

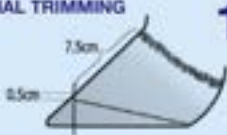
How do we maintain a normal hoof structure?

1. **Nutrition:** A diet rich in essential nutrients, including minerals like zinc, copper, and biotin. These nutrients support strong hoof walls and soles, helping cows avoid common hoof issues.
2. **Prevent wear and tear:** Staff should be educated to minimise pressure applied to cows on lanes and in the yard, as twisting and turning on these surfaces dramatically increases the risk of lameness, plus cows need space to see where sharp rocks/objects are. Rubber matting at high pressure areas (such as cups on/off on a rotary shed) can help reduce wear and tear.
3. **Genetic issues:** Cull out repeat offenders and any cows with corkscrew feet.
4. **Regular Hoof Trimming:** Hooves should be trimmed whenever they are noticed to be overgrown and it's a good idea to tackle a few of these feet before we get to winter. The table below serves as a helpful reminder of the most commonly used trimming method, with the photos to the right showing a before-and-after of what we are trying to achieve.



5 Step Trimming Process

FUNCTIONAL TRIMMING



- 1 Make the inner claw 7.5cm long. Leave 5-7mm thickness in the tip. Spare the heel.

- 2 Make the outer claw equally long and make the bearing surface at the same level as the inner claw (if possible).

- 3 Make a slope (scallop out) in the sole.



CURATIVE TRIMMING

- 4 If the outer claw is damaged, make this claw lower towards the heel, so that the weight is transferred partly to the sound claw.

- 5 Remove loose horn and trim down hard ridges.



>>> VACCINATIONS

Vaccinating lactating dairy cows protects not only their health but also milk production, animal welfare, and farm worker safety. Diseases like **Leptospirosis**, **Clostridial infections**, **Salmonella**, and **calf scours** can reduce yields and cause serious harm. Strategic vaccination helps control these threats.

Leptospirosis - **ZOONOTIC**

Highly contagious bacterial disease that spreads via urine, causing abortions, mastitis and a drop in milk production in cows. Lepto is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can transmit from animals to humans

Risk period – beginning of autumn through to the end of spring or early summer (wet conditions).

Vaccination schedule – provided your cows have been vaccinated and boosted appropriately earlier on in life as a calf, they should be re-vaccinated annually, usually done after summer to line up with risk period.



Clostridial Infections

Clostridial bacteria are widespread in the environment and produce toxins that are responsible for causing the following diseases: blackleg, pulpy kidney, malignant oedema, tetanus and black disease. The most common presentation seen with these diseases is sudden death.

Risk period – higher risk for youngstock grazing crop or high-quality feed, or management activities that risk causing wounds, such as castration.

Vaccination schedule – two initial doses, 4-6 weeks apart then single annual booster dose (similar protocol to Lepto, hence can use Ultravac 7-in-1 to cover both diseases).



Salmonellosis - **ZOONOTIC**

Salmonella is the leading cause of acute diarrhoea in adult dairy cows. The bacteria can also spread from cattle to humans, posing a serious health risk.

Risk period – autumn and spring, especially around calving. However, outbreaks can occur year-round, particularly during periods of stress or poor management.

Vaccination schedule – two initial doses, minimum 4 weeks apart then single annual booster dose. Avoid giving at stressful times (near calving/mating) unless dealing with an outbreak.



Calf Scours

Calf scours/diarrhoea, may lead to severe dehydration and potentially death. An outbreak of scours in your calves can add immense stress to an already busy time of year on farm. Vaccination, combined with good management techniques, can prevent this common and frustrating occurrence from playing out.

Risk period – calves can get infected with scour causing pathogens anytime from birth to around three weeks old and above. Ensuring calves receive sufficient antibodies from colostrum and transition milk is essential. Vaccination of cows improves the antibody levels in this colostrum.

Vaccination schedule – one shot to all cows and heifers annually (some products require a sensitizer dose). Vaccinate cows 3-12 weeks pre-calving (July for early calving cows and August/September for later calving cow) to ensure adequate antibody levels are present in colostrum at time of calving.



>>> BRAINS, BEEF, AND BIOSECURITY: THE NZ BOVINE BRAIN SCHEME

Mad cow disease, formally known as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), is part of a group of rare but serious brain disorders called transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). These diseases are caused by abnormal proteins known as prions, which can be transmitted through contaminated feed or inherited genetic mutations. TSEs affect both animals and humans. Other examples include scrapie in sheep and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and wapiti.



BSE first emerged in the United Kingdom during the 1980s and spread rapidly due to the use of contaminated cattle feed. The outbreak reached its peak in the 1990s, prompting strict regulations on livestock feed and international trade. Scientists later discovered a link between BSE and a deadly human disease, raising worldwide alarm.

Thanks to stringent monitoring and feed bans, the spread of BSE has been largely contained, though isolated cases still surface around the globe. While New Zealand has never reported a case of BSE, continued vigilance is essential to keep it that way.

The Growing Concern of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Described as a "slow-motion disaster in the making," Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is the deer version of a TSE that is rapidly spreading across the United States. In 2025, CWD has been detected in 36 states, a staggering increase from just two states 25 years ago. While no human cases have been documented, the disease's long incubation period raises concerns about potential risks in the future. The spread of CWD highlights the importance of strict biosecurity measures and continuous monitoring of prion diseases worldwide.

How Does the NZ BSE Surveillance Program Work?

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) runs BSE surveillance by testing certain cattle. These animals must be between 30 months and 9 yrs of age and show one of the following:

- Progressive, non-responsive nervous system issues
- Cows with non-responsive metabolic disorders
- Dairy cattle culled for behavioural issues
- Abnormal gait or stance, without obvious injury

The best part?

Testing is free for farmers and they receive \$250 plus GST with a maximum of two animals to be collected from any one farm per season. If you have questions or need advice, reach out to your friendly vet at Clutha Vets. Let's work together to keep New Zealand BSE-free!

Clutha Vets has a new winter mineral loose lick!

A customised lick designed for those on winter feeds that meets her dry cow trace element requirements

>>> WINTER CROPS ARE GREAT! BUT....

Winter is fast approaching and it is always useful to have a reminder on why we can't fall off the 'mineral bandwagon' during this time, particularly the trace elements.

A cow performs best when fed a complete diet, and therefore, to gain the final body condition score required pre-calving, trace elements should be included in the diet. Plus, the 3rd trimester of pregnancy is the most crucial stage for placenta nutrient transfer from dam to foetus.



Contact your vet, Roly, or Lisa today to find out more!

Winter crops & the South Otago winter weather create some trace element complications

Goitrogens
Limits uptake of Iodine

Increased soil intakes
Increase iron from soil which inhibits copper intakes

Wet soils
low iodine

MUD MUD MUD
Increased risk of dermatitis & soft hooves – zinc required

Red water/ SMCOS/ Kale anaemia
Increase selenium & copper to balance excess sulphur in kale.

Product Information	Pack Size	Dose Rate	Doses Per Pack	Bag Price Ex GST - RRP	Price Per Dose Ex GST
Option 1 – Clutha Vet Winter Minerals Each 20g dose offers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cobalt - 4mgCopper - 100mgIodine – 15mgSelenium - 5mgZinc - 250mg	25kg	20g	1250	\$106.00	8.5 cents
Option 2 – Clutha Vet Winter Minerals Each 20g dose offers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cobalt - 4mgCopper - *60mg organicIodine – 15mgSelenium - 5mgZinc - *180mg organic	25kg	20g	1250	\$120.00	9.6 cents
Clutha Vet Transition/Springer Mix	25kg	200g	125	\$102.00	81c
Clutha Vet Transition/Springer + Levucell®	25kg	200g	125	\$112.00	89c

Organic vs inorganic... what is the difference between option 1 & 2?

In simplified terms, organic substances are not bound to other substances and therefore more bioavailable to the animal.