

# **DAIRY NEWSLETTER**

# All things spring





CLINIC NEWS

Every now and then, a staff member who has been an integral part of Clutha Vets, hangs up their vetting gumboots and stethoscope and leaves us.... When this happens, it feels like an end of an era.

Rob began his career at Clutha Vets, Balclutha 23 years ago, moving to Balclutha with his wife Louise and their two daughters (later joined by two sons). Starting as a mixed animal practitioner, he eventually specialized in dairy work but remained versatile. In 2010, Rob became a founding member of the Executive Management Group (EMG), tasked with managing the Vet Club daily. His 'big picture' thinking was crucial in establishing the current stable structure, providing a clear succession plan and strong leadership, which attracts excellent vets to our team.

Rob, has not only contributed greatly to Clutha Vets, he and his family have contributed hugely to the South Otago community with volunteer work in all sorts of different aspects. And thinking of the community, as he always does, Rob spearheaded and was responsible for the Clutha Vets dog park. Rob, in his wanting to do things right mode, ensured that Clutha Vets and Balclutha has a dog park that is excellent in all aspects.

Rob, has always been a great teacher and has enjoyed a good rapport with young people, and this fits in very well with his new role he is moving to at the Otago Polytechnic as a teacher and organizer of the Rural Veterinary Technician course. Rob was also integral in assisting with the Telford technician course that is now up and running when there were issues there.

Rob, in his modest way, has not wanted any fuss or fancy farewells....and so he will be leaving at the end of July. It is always really hard at this stage to sum up 23 years in one little paragraph and say thank you for all one person has so generously contributed to Clutha Vets and his local community. Thank you so much Rob, for all that you have done, we wish you absolutely all the very best for your next chapter!

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# **RECENT SEMINARS**



It was a pleasure to see a mix of familiar and new faces at our recent Calf Rearing and Spring Workshops. Hopefully, everyone took away some valuable insights to enhance their farming skills. Below, you'll find a summary of the topics discussed during the main presentations.

# >>> MASTITIS CONTROL

- Mastitis only occurs once a bacteria enters the udder.
- Good teat defenses are critical to stopping bateria from entering the udder. These include:
  - a healthy teat canal oriface (aka the teat end).
  - a soft supple teat that can stretch inside the milk liner without cracking.
  - a fatty layer to prevent bacteria replicating on the skin.
- Direct damage to the teats from the milking plant, through high vacuum settings or over-milking, is a major risk factor in developing mastitis.
- Teatspray has a duel role, firstly, the active ingredient kills any bacteria left on the teats, transferred there from the previous cow(s) via the cups, and secondly, the emmolient keeps the teat soft and supple, plus allows for the fatty layer to thrive.
- Occasionally teatscoring your cows is a great way to check on your cows defenses and fix your system if the teats aren't optimal.

# >>> SALMONELLA

- A bacteria that lives in the gut of animals.
- Causes cows to get very sick. Symptoms include: diarrhoea, dehydration, milk drop, abortion, or death.
- It is zoonotic, meaning humans can catch it from animals, and 60% of human cases are cow-associated serovars.
- Often an underlying issue affecting the gut first, such as an overdose of oral magnesium.
- Cows need prompt and effective treatment with; fluids, antibiotics, and anti-inflammatories.
- Vaccination is a cost-effective way to minimise the risk to your herd

### >>> COLOSTRUM

- Antibodies (Ab's) are unable to pass through a cow's placenta; therefore, calves are born without them.
- Colostrum is full of Ab's, and if we get this into calves before the pores in their intestines close, then we can protect calves from most diseases.
- Consider colostrum management as the 4 Q's:
- **Quickly** the younger they are, the more Ab's they absorb. Pores start closing after birth, all closed by 24hrs of age.
- **Quality** the higher the Ab level per ml of colostrum, the more the calves can absorb. Can measure this with a Brix meter. Milk dilutes colostrum, so collect as soon as possible after calving.
- **Quantity** the more colostrum you get in, the more AB's the calf gets. Aim for 10% bodyweight within 6-12 hours of birth, i.e. 3L for a 30kg calf.
- **sQueaky clean** bacteria/poo in the colostrum will risk adding the wrong bacteria into the gut, as well as binding up Ab's.

These next pages deliver some knowledge from us to you on some key animal health issues we see over the spring time.

# >>> CALVING-TIME METABOLICS

Want the secret to fewer diseases in spring, more milk production for the season, and more cows in calf? We have got the magic pill for you... well, not really, but we've got a good idea as to what should help, and it involves focusing on two things: Energy and Calcium, i.e., calving-time metabolics. In severe cases, we see what everyone hates to see, sick/down cows from Ketosis (low energy) or from Milk Fever (low calcium).

But what about mild cases? Glad you asked.

Milder cases of metabolic disease show no outward signs, known as sub-clinical disease. But these cases are often far more numerous and contribute to a whole host of issues including:

- Lower food intakes.
- Increased mastitis
- More retained membranes
- More dirty cows.
- Displaced abomasums.
- Delayed cycling.
- Lower milk production.



The exact systems you use to ensure enough energy and enough calcium will depend on your farm, but in general cover the following:

- Ensure cows receive adequate energy (100-110 MJ per cow) in the 10-20 days pre-calving, don't overfeed. Cows need to return their rumen flora to normal to digest fibre efficiently, so get them off crop early enough.
- Feed magnesium for 1-4 weeks pre-calving, we recommend salts like chloride and sulphate over causemag in this period. Can be useful to add gypsum (calcium sulphate) into this pre-calve mix, just don't add limeflour.
- Get them eating as much as possible post-calving, i.e. get them out of the springers and onto grass asap plus entice the colostrums to eat more by offering new breaks/supplements a few times a day.
- Get lots of calcium into them post calving. If you are dusting, then use 200-300g of limeflour/cow/day for colostrums. A calcium bolus is a useful tool to give you a buffer until they are eating well, especially in higher risk cows.
- Don't take too much energy out of them post-calving. Once a day (OAD) milking helps cows recover from the stress of calving as long as they get about 8 days of it. This won't increase the risk of mastitis and unless they get 20+ days of OAD, they won't decrease their seasons milk production either.

There are lots of different systems out there, and many of them work well so you don't need to copy what your neighbour is doing. If you feel like spring metabolics might be decreasing your productivity, gives us a shout and we can offer ideas on how to improve in this area.

# >>> NSAIDS

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID for short), such as Ketomax and Rheumocam, is a type of medication that helps reduce pain and inflammation without using steroids. It's like the stuff you take for a headache or sore muscles, like ibuprofen or aspirin. For animals, including cattle, NSAIDs do the same thing they help with pain and swelling from injuries, illnesses, or surgeries. They make the animals heal faster and feel better, by feeling less sore or sick or both. NSAIDs also enhance productivity by ensuring that cattle remain comfortable and active, which can result in better feed intake.

Consider using NSAIDs any time your cows might be feeling unwell or sore, such as: After a hard calving, lame cows, mastitis cows, unwell calves with scours, etc.

### ANNEKE AFTER A SOLID ASSIST WITH THIS COW



# <image>

# >>> WHEN TO ASSIST A CALVING COW

When to intervene in a calving relies on first noticing she is calving. Recognizing that a cow is calving involves observing several key signs. As calving approaches, the cow may become restless, frequently standing up and lying down. You might notice her isolating herself from the herd and appearing more nervous or agitated than usual. These behaviours indicate the first stage of labour has begun and the calf should be out within 24 hours. Once the second stage of labour has begun, you'll see the cow's tail head appear raised, and she should start to show visible contractions. Another clear indicator is the appearance of the amniotic sac or feet of the calf emerging. The second stage of labour should take less than 2 hours.

If the cow is not progressing in the expected time, get her in and have a feel of what is going on. Just remember, if in doubt, check her out.

# >>> UNUSUAL CASE

What could be causing this cow to have a huge belly, but be losing weight? Bloat, rumen stasis, twisted gut, twins, something else?



Any cow that is this wide and losing weight before she calves needs to pulled out of the mob and checked out. In this case, the cow had a condition called hydrops.

Hydrops in cattle is when too much fluid builds up in the uterus during pregnancy. There are two types:

- 1. Hydrallantois: This is when the fluid collects in one of the membranes surrounding the fetus. It's the most common type and usually happens because of problems with the placenta.
- 2. Hydramnios: This is when the fluid gathers in the amniotic sac, which directly surrounds the fetus. It's less common and often caused by issues with the fetus.

These cows have no space left to fill the rumen and do poorly. We need to see these cows, inducing them to calve asap before they deteriorate too much.



### >>> JOHNE'S DISEASE

To tackle Johne's disease in cows, it's all about playing defense against the bacteria Mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis (MAP). You may have heard of similar bacteria called Mycobacterium bovis which causes TB in cows!! From strict biosecurity checks, to testing herd members, keeping calving areas squeaky clean, and regular herd health check-ups, the goal is to spot and manage infected animals. Bye-bye, sick cows!

Maintaining a tight ship with closed herds, proper poop management, and making sure calves get colostrum from healthy mums are key moves. Educating the farm team on disease prevention is also a must. Remember, beating Johne's is a marathon, not a sprint, so buckle up for the long haul!

Working with one of our vets to create a solid herd health plan can really help reduce Johne's disease in cattle. Check out the progress some of our farms have made in fighting this disease:



## >>> INFECTIONS OF THE UTERUS

Ending up with an infection in the uterus is a reasonably common outcome for our dairy cows in New Zealand. There are two types of uterine infections, called Metritis and Endometritis. Metritis is a more severe, affecting the whole uterus, while endometritis is a milder infection confined to the uterine lining. Metritis is the very smelly version, with a reddy-brown discharge, and a very sick cow. Endometritis is the one with white pus as discharge, and we often can't tell from the outside that the cow has a problem.

If the uterus doesn't shut down properly after calving, and/or expel the membranes properly, then the rates of these infections go up. Prevention of these issues involve:

- Nailing the calving-time metabolics, as discussed on page 3.
- Preventing prolonged calvings by early identification of cows having trouble.
- Being clean when assisting with a calving, and giving antibiotics at the time if the calf was not fresh/if you spent quite a long time inside the uterus while assisting. Give oxytocin + NSAIDs to these cows too.
- Giving pre-calving selenium to reduce retained membranes (retained membranes can also occur secondary to metabolic issues or when cows have had issues giving birth).

### Metritis:

- Metritis in cows is often detected by smell before sight.
- Affected cows typically have discharge on their udders or tails.
- If a cow appears off-colour after calving, check for metritis by examining internally with a long glove.
- Internal checks are necessary, even if external signs are there, to ensure no calf is retained.
- Treatment involves antibiotics and NSAIDs, +/- removing the rotten calf if one is still present.
- Early detection is crucial to prevent weight loss and infection spread.
- Cows may develop endometritis even after treatment

### Endometritis:

- Cows with endometritis aren't sick, but those that are/have been sick have higher rates of endometritis.
- The issue with endometritis is that pus in the uterus interferes with conception.
- Endometritis is more common than metritis, affecting 10-20% of cows on average.
- Diagnosis is challenging due to the lack of external signs; a "Metrichecker" (a rubber cup on a rod) is used to check for uterine pus.
- Delayed checks make detection difficult as more cows close their cervixes.
- Treatment involves passing antibiotics through the cervix directly into the uterus.
- Most cows take about 14 days to clear post-calving discharge, so checks are done after this period. An example plan is a follows:
  - Check cows that calved in weeks 1-3 on week 5.
  - Check cows that calved in weeks 4-6 on week 8.
  - Check the rest of the cows 2 weeks after calving has finished.

An easy way to identify groups is with tailpaint. Apply one colour to all cows as soon as they calve in weeks 4-6, using a different colour for the late calvers. Week 1-3 cows will be the ones with no tailpaint, though some people opt to paint those too.



# **SPRING RETAIL**

### SPRING SPECIALS - BE QUICK!

- Calol 400ml buy 24 get 25% members discount.
- Calpro Bolus buy 48 get 25% members discount
- Eprinex Pour-on (PO) NIL Milk/Meat/Bobby W/Hold
  - Get a 25lt Eprinex Gun Pack and get a great Oil Skin Vest
  - Best buy—Eprinex 5 x 5lt only \$5.11 per 500kg dose.
- Eprisure 20lt + 5lt FREE
- Eclipse PO 5.5lt-still the best price out there!
- Boss / Turbo PO 5ltr get a Ledlenser Headlamp
- Boss / Turbo PO 2.5lt get a warm Puffer Vest





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Analysis of more than 80 trials shows a consistent increase in milk productivity and improved reproductive performance.

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