

Calf Meal and Dogs do not go together

A seasonal reminder that calf meal often contains ionophores such as Bovatec & Rumensin used in small amounts to control coccidiosis. These products can be fatal when eaten by dogs (and pigs & horses too). Dogs that have ingested ionophores generally present with muscle weakness and a staggy gait (i.e. they collapse). Your dog will probably appear to be having breathing difficulties. Diarrhoea may be present too. Ionophores can cause massive muscle damage in dogs. The muscle weakness starts in the legs and progressively gets worse becoming fatal if it affects the heart and respiratory muscles; once it reaches this stage death can occur very quickly.



There is no specific antidote and treatment is supportive only as we try and keep the dog alive & encourage elimination of toxins. If we get to them early enough, we can try & make them vomit but the ones we've seen recently were too sick for that & needed long periods of hospitalisation before going home. Because of potential damage to heart muscle dogs can end up having heart issues for the rest of their lives.

So please do not let your dogs roam unfettered all over your farm (for all sorts of reasons - remember Neospora?) and keep them away from the calf sheds and potential access to dangerous feeds that have the potential to either kill them or leave them with life-long health problems.

EPRINEX



Did you know that EPRINEX is the only lactating dairy cattle product that has repeated, peer-reviewed evidence to show that it increases milk production and reproductive performance when cows are treated at/or around calving time? This is because EPRINEX is different to other drenches in that it was specifically formulated for its potency against gut worms in cattle. In fact, several hundred different molecules were tested before EPRINEX was discovered and found to be the most superior both in potency and in food safety – it's the only product that has a worldwide nil milk withhold.

Studies in New Zealand, including an independent study last year from Massey University, consistently show an average of 0.03kgMS/cow/day following treatment for the rest of the lactation. Therefore, if you treat at calving, you'd expect on average 8.22kgMS/cow/lactation extra over 274 days in milk. No other product can show data even close to this.

You may well think that adult cattle don't actually have worms and in a way you'd be right. So why do we see a productive benefit when we treat with EPRINEX? The reason that adult cattle carry a very low worm burden is because their immune system prevents the parasite from establishing in the abomasum (stomach) in the first place. The larvae from the pasture are still eaten so the immune system has to stop them from becoming adults. It's this immune response to the parasite larvae in the glands of the stomach that disrupts the feedback mechanism to the brain that controls appetite. The gut tells the brain that it's full and the cow spends more time lying and idling and less time eating (almost an hour a day). If you treat with a potent drug such as EPRINEX it seems that appetite can be significantly increased, increasing grazing time and food intake, which of course eventually leads to better performance as shown in many trials.

To get an idea of how much a post-calving treatment of Eprinex could be worth to you, have a go on the "profitability calculator" included with this newsletter. Cost of treatment for a 500kg cow is \$4.83 ex. GST.

TRAVEL VOUCHER WINNERS

**Karl & Tracey Berquist And
Bryan & Leanne Bailey
each won a \$1000 voucher
courtesy of Boehringer & Alleva**



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Spring 2019

What a month for sports lovers! First the most amazing game of cricket possibly ever played and then the netballers pulling off the ultimate sporting resurrection. A great example of what can happen when top level management sabotage their own organisation through stupid "policy" decisions. I'm thrilled for the netballers but can't help feeling we managed to waste 4-5 good years getting to this point.

As for the cricket? Well, for a self-confessed cricket tragic I'm strangely at peace with the end result. We can argue about the way the trophy was finally awarded but before we become too indignant don't forget there is probably a Pakistani supporter (actually thousands of them) in Lahore with his hand up saying "hold on a minute; you only made the last 4 through run-rate. We beat you in round robin play so rightfully we should have been in the top 4". I'm mostly very proud of the way our team handled the situation and accepted it in good grace. And the NZ public have largely accepted it the same way. I'm not sure we will be quite as forgiving if The All Blacks don't come home with the Webb-Ellis Trophy in a few months' time. Need I remind you that the last time the netballers won the World Cup was in 2003. Remember what happened to the ABs that year? ("Four more years lads; four more years").

Another spring is upon us and hopefully it will be as kind as last year. The weather people were saying the other day that the long-range forecast is pretty good right through August. Having just completed the first weekend in August on call in appalling weather I'm not so sure about that but let's hope they're right because it certainly removes a whole other level of stress for both people and animals if they don't have to spend most of their energy reserves trying to stay warm. With that in mind, please remember this season that any sick or downer cow is going to burn up most of her energy reserves trying to stay warm, let alone trying to get better. You can help that situation by putting a cover on any sick or struggling animal and reduce the amount of energy being re-directed to keeping that animal warm. Covers really don't cost much and every farm should have one or two of them waiting to be used when needed. Think of them as a cheap insurance policy. If you're not convinced, try standing outside when a strong northerly combined with cold rain is blowing straight off the mountain in just your underwear, see how long you last. And one more thing - late night calvings in bad weather are tough enough without getting the old "sorry I haven't turned the water heater on" excuse. Invariably the house is a few minutes away so if you've called us (remember we don't generally call you late at night offering to do a calving) then please, please go to the house if there's no hot water at the shed & bring over a couple of buckets of hot water so we have something to clean up with afterwards. Your consideration will be warmly appreciated.

To finish, we have received reports from the Waikato (who start calving a month or so earlier than us) about increased rates of milk fever occurring up there. A likely explanation for this comes courtesy of renowned nutritionist Sue Macky and could just as easily apply here thanks to the very mild winter we have had so far: "This year pasture growth rates and composition are unusual for July, more like mid-September. Grass is very high in protein but low in fibre and sugar and this is causing milk fever problems on some farms. Covers are higher than normal too and springers may be getting higher intakes than they usually do and making more milk before calving. Making more milk increases calcium depletion, which in turn increases the risk of milk fever. What can you do?"

- Make sure your springers are getting enough magnesium. For dusting that's 100g Causmag per cow per day. You could also replace some of the problematic pasture with hay.
- Make sure your colostrums are getting enough magnesium AND 300g/cow/day of lime flour.
- Consider using the milkers to nip off the most problematic leafy tops. Reducing cover to about 2300kg DM will give your springers a stalky, safer pasture and much more space."

Certainly worth thinking about as the new season begins.

Best of luck this spring. Don't be afraid to give us a call if something is bugging you.

Clinic & Farm Supplies
Railway Street, Eltham
Ph . (06) 764 8196
info@elthamvetservice.co.nz
Trading Depot
Hollard Engineering,
Victoria Street, Kaponga
Ph. (06) 764 6686
J Larkin BBS 0274 482 585
D Kidd 0275 479 261

Veterinarians

Alistair McDougall BVSc - CEO
Giles Gilling BVSc BSc MRCVS
Andrew Weir BVSc, PGDip, PhD
Jim Robins BVSc, BSc, DipPharm
Polly Otterson BVSc, MSc,
Teresa Carr BVSc
Adrian Clark BVSc
Lindsay Lash BVSc
Leon Christensen BVSc
Erika Pieper BVSc
Michaela Abbott BVSc

Office

Joan Hughes Sue Morresey
Jill Watson CVN/RAT
Nicola Childs CVN/RAT
Helen Snook Lisa Bartley

Calf disbudding local anaesthetic training

The recent updating of Animal Welfare Legislation has brought in new laws around the disbudding and dehorning of cattle.

From October 1st this year, all calves being disbudded and cattle being dehorned must be under the influence of an appropriately placed and effective local anaesthetic pain relief.

Local anaesthetic is a Restricted Veterinary Medicine (RVM). There has also been a tightening up of rules around prescribing local anaesthetic for disbudding.

We can teach you how to do it and sign individuals off so that local anaesthetic can be added to the farm RVM list. This will require an approximately 2 hour theory and practical session in the clinic and then on-farm assessment when you are doing some calf disbudding. The on-farm assessment will be required to be completed every year before the RVM can be renewed. Cost will be \$75 ex GST for the in-clinic portion and the on-farm portion will be charged based on time but is expected to take approximately 30mins.

The date will be:

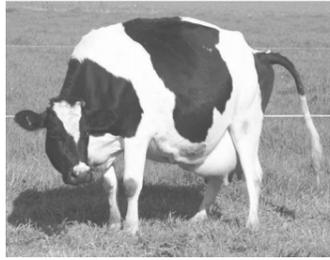
**Thursday 15th August,
11am - 1pm** at the clinic.

Please register your interest.

ASSISTING AT CALVING

You should provide assistance to calving heifers and cows when any of the following occur:

- Heifers not making progress within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- Cows not calved within 2 hours after the first signs of abdominal straining
- Calving has not occurred within 3-4hrs after membranes have ruptured
- Delivery has commenced; the calf's legs or head are (just) visible externally and it is obvious the presentation is abnormal
- Delivery has commenced; the calf's legs or head are (just) visible externally and the calf is not delivered within 30 minutes for cows, 1 hour for heifers
- If you see the calf's tongue hanging out
- If you think that a cow may have calved (e.g. she may have placenta hanging from the vulva) but you have not found the calf, perform a vaginal exam to ensure that she has in fact calved.



If you assist too early, the cervix and vagina may not be fully dilated and by pulling you risk severe damage to the cow and more difficulty in removing the calf.

If you cannot feel the calf's head, do not presume that the two legs presented are hind limbs. They may in fact be front legs and the head is twisted back (our most common presentation when called). Check to make sure you can positively identify the hocks of both back legs and the calf's tail before attempting to pull a backwards calf.

If a cow shows signs of discomfort during the course of the day (e.g. getting up and down, licking or kicking flanks, etc) bring her in and examine her. If the cervix feels closed but things are 'tight' and 'not right' she may have a twisted uterus and need immediate veterinary attention.

If you cannot bring the calf into the correct position within 10 minutes, or if you are not sure what you are feeling or how to proceed, stop and seek immediate assistance.

Make sure you keep things as clean as possible by using plenty of hot water, disinfectant and soap plus plenty of lubricant. Always have a clean bucket available to use when calving cows – a quick rinse of a bucket that has been used to carry milk or colostrum is not suitable.

Key Point: if it's calving season & you see a cow that looks "not quite right" the most likely reason for her looking like that is that she is trying to calve so get her in and check her out. If you don't know what you're feeling, get us out to take a look.

MASTITIS STUDY SHOWS CURE RATE AND FERTILITY GAINS

Treating mild clinical mastitis with an anti-inflammatory as well as an antibiotic can have a big impact on both cure rates and reproduction. Published in January 2016, the "Fertile Study" involved over 500 cows across 6 countries, and found cows treated for early season mastitis with the long-acting anti-inflammatory **Metacam®**, in addition to an antibiotic:

- Had a 16% improved cure rate.
- Had a 10% increased first service conception rate.
- Were 10% more likely to be pregnant 120 days post calving.

The negative effects of inflammation from mastitis on udder health and milk production are well understood, and it is now becoming clear that it also significantly impacts on the ability to become pregnant. Cows which have had clinical mastitis have poorer reproduction than their herd mates. It is thought the inflammation caused by mastitis affects:

- ◆ The ovary and its ability to produce high quality eggs for fertilization and,
- ◆ The ability of the cow to maintain an early pregnancy.

In addition to this, the study demonstrated the additional use of Metacam significantly improved mastitis cure rates – a world first finding. Using a single dose of Metacam in combination with your standard post-calving mastitis treatment not only makes the cow feel better, but also has the potential to provide significant long term performance and economic benefits for your herd.

To find out how Metacam might fit into your mastitis treatment plan, or to get it added to your RVM authority for the season get in contact with one of our team.



7-day rule no longer applies

No antimicrobials to bobby calves!!!

If a bobby calf or a pen of bobby calves is fed milk from a cow treated with an RVM and that milk is still within the withholding period then that calf or calves are now no longer suitable to be bobby calves and the 91-day meat withholding applies. i.e. they can no longer be bobbies.

The "7-day clean milk rule" will not manage the risk in all cases so no longer applies.

Medicated Feeds: Medicated milk replacers/meals, e.g. Coccidiostats, must not be fed to bobby calves at any time.

BUY A REFRACTOMETER

I often get asked my opinion on the various products you can feed to your calves to make them grow better. The number of these products seems to get longer every year. There are prebiotics, probiotics and every other kind of biotic you can imagine. Most of them claim to boost the calf's immune system, and therefore disease resistance. None of them is cheap.

It is much, much better to give your calves a good immune system to start off with than to try and boost a poor immune system later. Calves are born with no immunity; they get all their immunity from colostrum drunk in the first 24 hours of life. The key to a good immune system is **colostrum**; enough **quantity**, enough **quality** and **quick** enough.

Quantity is easy 10% of body weight.
Quick enough is before 24 hours old and better still, before 12 hours old.
Quality is Brix reading of 22 or above. What's this?



A Brix refractometer is a handheld gadget which measures the concentration of aqueous solutions. The higher the reading, the more concentrated the solution. With colostrum you are measuring the concentration of antibodies to disease. 22 or above is best. They are simple to use, robust and available from the clinic for \$109.

Less than half of all first milking 'gold' colostrum has a Brix reading of 22 or above. The variation between cows is astonishing. I thought I could tell good from poor colostrum just by eye. I was wrong. Using a refractometer to find the best colostrum to give your keepers the best start in life is one of the best investments you can make in your calf rearing.

BOBBY CALF WELFARE

Bobby calf welfare is important and farmers, transport operators and processors all have a role to play. These guidelines will help you meet the welfare needs of animals in your care and to comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and the industry agreed standards detailed in the animal welfare codes.



On the farm bobby calves must be given the same degree of care as every other calf on the farm.

- ◆ Colostrum – bobby calves must be fed colostrum (2-4 litres/calf) within the first 24 hours of life, preferably within 6 hours. To provide immunity, colostrum should be fed to them twice daily for the first 4 days of life.
- ◆ Handling – handle calves gently and with care at all times.
- ◆ Weather protection – bobby calves must be protected from extremes of weather, especially wind, rain, cold and heat. They should be moved to a sheltered, draught-free calf shed as soon as practicable after birth.
- ◆ Housing – a lying area that is well drained, covered with comfortable material that is regularly topped up to keep it dry and odour free. Exposed concrete and bare earth are not acceptable. There should be no hazards likely to cause injury to the animals e.g. sharp objects, slippery floors.
- ◆ Water – calves must have free access to clean drinking water at all times.
- ◆ Age – calves must be a minimum of four days old before being transported off farm.

In addition to being a minimum of four days old before transport, the following signs will indicate if a calf is fit for transport:

1. Healthy – eyes are bright, not dull or sunken. Ears are upright. No visible disease (e.g. scours), deformity, injury, blindness or disability.
2. Strong – able to bear weight on all four legs. Able to move freely around the pen.
3. Hooves – firm and worn, not rounded or soft.
4. Navel – dry and withered, not pink/red, raw or fleshy.

Feed – at least half the day's ration of colostrum (or colostrum substitute) is given on the day of transport within 2 hours of pick up.

If your pet had a toothache or had painful receding gums, could you tell?



Most pets show no outward signs of any issues with their teeth or gums until the problems have become quite advanced. 80% of dogs have some form of dental disease by the time they are 3 years old.

Bacteria build up on teeth in plaque and can multiply if the plaque is not removed. These bacteria invade the gums and cause infection, eventually leading to tissue and bone damage and tooth loss. All of this damage leads to pain. Another issue, particularly in working dogs is broken teeth resulting in tooth root infections.

Although this is very common and painful your dog will not tell you it is sore. Chronic infections due to dental disease are bad for long term health. In fact, dental disease can potentially impact heart, liver, lungs, kidneys and bladder health and pets that have regular dental care live on average 2 years longer than pets that don't.

We will be running free dental checks for a month from the 20th of September. Ring the clinic to book your appointment.

(Terms and conditions apply)

