

A FEW WELFARE REMINDERS

Broken tails seem to be all the rage right now with at least a couple of recent cases reported in the paper. To be honest we don't see a lot of this ourselves but there is the very rare occasion when we see things that should probably be reported. So this is a reminder of some of your obligations under the Animal Welfare Act.

Broken Limbs. This seems to apply mostly to bulls that have suffered a fracture at some stage earlier in their lives, it has healed & they get sent to the works. Seems legit except almost certainly you will receive a nasty letter or phone call accusing you of all sorts of acts of cruelty & questioning why you didn't do anything about it when you first saw the injury occur.

Now I've seen a few bulls with what I would term "stable fractures" and the truth is that often the best thing to do is give them pain relief & leave them alone & you would be amazed how they can heal. But the key thing here is that you need some sort of record that you got a vet to take a look at the time. Some fractures can be left with little or no animal welfare concerns while others can't & the powers that be will need a record of some form of interaction with a vet at the time of injury to avoid trouble a few years down the track when that bull goes to the works. So if you've got a beast with a suspected broken limb please give us a call.

Tail docking. At our last board meeting a couple of directors told me that there are still a surprising amount of cows getting their tails docked. Some farmers are quite open about it apparently. This is a reminder that tail docking is now banned & you could face prosecution if you choose to continue with this practice.



In-grown horns. We see the occasional cow & bull where a curving horn has gone all the way round & is growing into the face. This clearly ends up as a welfare issue if not dealt with. Do not send an animal like this to the works. Get us to fix the problem first (& preferably before it actually becomes a problem) & then give the resulting wound time to heal before you send the animal to the works.

Cancer eye. Again advanced cancer eye is an obvious welfare issue & only a fool would consider sending a cow to the works with a cancerous eye. Get us out before cancer eye develops into something that is too big to fix.



Advanced cancer eye inevitably ends in euthanasia. Eye removal is no guarantee that a cow won't be condemned at the works because the cancer may already have spread into lymph nodes & surrounding tissue. A small cancer of the 3rd eyelid can normally be sorted with a bit of local, a working head bale & some antibiotic ointment.

Weeping wounds or sores. You know those cows that have a weeping open wound at the point of the hip after some kind of injury?

Or you have eczema cows with open skin lesions?

Or perhaps a draining abscess?

In all these cases any discharging wound means an animal cannot go to the works.

Sounds obvious right? You would be surprised!

See John for dry-off pour-on options



Reflex Poupon is our new cost competitive option

Gateway Requests

From time to time we get requests from students & parents regarding doing the "Gateway" program with us at the clinic.

So as to avoid an awkward conversation & deter future requests please note that we do not take Gateway students at the clinic. We have no work for them and to be frank if you're looking to become a vet you will not be taking part in a Gateway program anyway.

Any secondary school students keen on becoming vets are always welcome to come & spend some time seeing practice with us, but we do not enter into any Gateway program arrangements with students or schools.

Prince Charles takes up walking

Prince Charles decided to take up walking. At the same street corner, he passed a "lady of the night" standing there every day. He learned to brace himself as he approached her for what was almost certain to follow. "One hundred and fifty pounds!" she'd shout. "No! Five pounds!" He would say from the side of his mouth, just to shut her up. This ritual between him and her became a daily occurrence. She'd yell, "One hundred and fifty pounds!" He'd yell back, "Five pounds!" One day, Camilla decided to accompany her husband. As the couple neared the lady's corner, Prince Charles realised she'd bark her £150 offer and Camilla would wonder what he'd really been doing on all his past outings. He figured he'd better have a good explanation for his wife. As they neared the lady's corner he became even more apprehensive than usual. Sure enough, there she stood. He tried to avoid eye contact as she watched the pair pass. Then, she yelled: "See what you get for five pounds, you tight bastard!"



April 2016

By April most of us are thinking about the end of this season, a winter break & hoping for better things next season. I'll drink to that; let's just say this hasn't been one of the great ones - memorable but not for any good reason I can think of and then topped off with the first major Facial Eczema outbreak in this district since the 1999/2000 season. So let's write this one off & look forward to a much better one to come. That may be a little optimistic but what are the alternatives? The long term outlook remains positive (or so we're told constantly) so we may as well go with that, stick to the basics & wait for better times to return around the corner.

Certainly it's a very long time since this clinic made a loss & we've had to give some thought to how we reduce or minimise costs, save money & so on while still maintaining an experienced veterinary force & continuing to concentrate on our core business, which is provision of good, sound professional advice & service. And we need to do that without increasing fees because that's a sure-fire way to encourage you to use our services more isn't it?

One problem we don't have is debt which means we can continue to maintain our fleet vehicles, upgrade scanners & other assets & carry on supporting local sports & community groups.

So you will still see some new vehicles replacing old ones this winter and you will continue to see us support & sponsor schools, sports teams, community groups & organisations as we should as a community based organisation ourselves. Our on-going sponsorship of The Rotokare Trust will continue & we still look kindly on requests for assistance with things like the recently installed new diving board at the Rawhitiroa Pool. My belief is that it is easy to sponsor things when times are good but you'll see an organisation's true colours show when times are bad. We want to be there through thick & thin & hopefully many of you (and your kids) will continue to benefit from our support in the coming year.

One of the reasons why our loss was as large as it was this year (other than the obvious ones) is that during the good years we were conscious of not being seen to capitalise on record pay-outs by upping prices & costs of services. For a start we didn't really need to because when you're making money, so are we. But as a result of not increasing prices regularly by small amounts we found that this year things fell way behind. That's fine; we're supposed to be 'not for profit' anyway but of course no business, community-based or not, can survive for long if it isn't making a profit most years. So, this is a gentle way of letting you know that when the good times do return we will need to address our prices & fees & make some changes. They won't be severe & for now they won't be happening at all but eventually we will need to look at our pricing. Just warning you in advance ...

Clinic news: Leon is back from his 2-month sabbatical & it's wonderful to have him back. He's obviously grown up a bit because he's finally realised that he's never going to find anyone more lovely than his beautiful girlfriend Jenna so while they were away he asked her to marry him & (incredibly) she said yes! We're thrilled for both of them & wish them a long & happy marriage.



Adrian & his partner Desiree welcomed a bouncing baby boy, Kyle, into the world about a month ago & other than the usual problems of lack of sleep they are all doing well. Our congratulations to the two of them; we couldn't be happier. Finally, if you're coming to our **golf day** this year (**Thursday 2nd June**) we have an old friend coming to cheer you up after prize-giving. Phil Kingsley Jones has made himself available at late notice & at a greatly reduced fee just to make you smile in the face of what has been a very tough year. Even if you don't play golf you're very welcome to come along afterwards to hear Phil speak. You won't regret it!

Farmers Golf Day at Eltham Golf Club Thursday 2nd June



Entry Fee \$10.00. Entries limited.
Entries to the clinic by 27th May
Ambrose format—teams of three
Guest speaker (after dinner) -
Phil Kingsley Jones

Invoice/Statements by Email



Due to increasing postage costs we intend to email our monthly invoice/statement to all clients whom we have an email address for commencing with our May invoice/statement.

If you do not wish to receive by email please advise joan@elthamvetservice.co.nz

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Railway Street, Eltham
Ph . (06) 764 8196
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Hollard Engineering,
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Veterinarians

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Adrian Clark BVSc
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Office

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Frank Suter

PRESCRIPTION TIME AGAIN

It's around the end of the current season that my attention turns to your prescriptions for next season - to be exact your "Authority to Supply Registered Veterinary Medicines (RVMs)". Most years this is simply a "roll-over" exercise after considering your drug use for this season & historical use. However sometimes it's not a bad idea to have a chat to me or one of the vets about what you use & why. Sometimes there are drugs on there that really just sit there & hardly get used. Maybe it's time to take them off or discuss alternatives?

If you would like to discuss your RVM authority for next season, please feel free to make an appointment with one of us at the clinic or ask the girls to put aside 10-15 minutes after a farm visit to go over your RVM authority in the shed with the vet.

DRYING OFF MANAGEMENT

Dry cow therapy (DCT) is a significant investment in your herd so we have put together a few pointers below to help you get the most out of it. For further information, there is an Administration Guide available from the clinic or from www.dairywellness.co.nz. This website also has a video demonstrating how to correctly administer dry cow therapy and Teatseal® tubes and a short online training course with a certificate which is suitable for anyone who will be administering dry cow therapy or Teatseal.

PREPARATION

Recommendations for a DCT programme suitable for your herd will be made during your Milk Quality consult. Also, check out the new SmartSAMM tools on www.smartsamm.co.nz to see what your best options are.

Once the programme is established it is wise to get all product on farm, ready to be used when required. You will need to make sure to have plenty of gloves, paper towels, teat wipes, teat spray and spray paint.

Groups of cows should be selected for dry off based on milk volumes, SCC, body condition score, and calving date. Guidelines around this can be found in the SmartSAMM plan, or can be discussed with one of the vet team.

DRYING OFF

It is important to make sure you have plenty of help on hand and plenty of time to do the job properly. If it is cold, the intramammary products can sometimes be harder to administer. If this is happening, the bucket of tubes can be placed in a larger bucket of hot water to gently warm the syringes up without getting them wet.

Do not put the syringes directly into the water because water can carry bacteria which may cause mastitis if transferred into the udder on the syringe.



The udder should be clean and dry. Disinfect the teat end using **at least one teat wipe per teat**; making sure the wipe comes away clean when you are finished. When removing the cap from the dry cow syringe, be sure not to touch the end of the nozzle (and don't use your mouth!). **Partially** insert the nozzle into the teat end up to 3mm and infuse the product (full insertion can damage the delicate inner lining of the teat and reduce effectiveness). If using an antibiotic, massage it from the teat up into the udder. If using Teatseal in combination or alone it must NOT be massaged into the udder, but must stay in the teat. One way to help the Teatseal stay in the teat canal is to gently squeeze the top of the teat where it attaches to the udder while inserting. Disinfect and treat one teat at a time, starting with the front left teat and working clockwise round the udder. Treat all four quarters and follow with freshly mixed teat spray of the correct concentration. Immediately after treatment, mark each cow and record the id number and treatment given.

AFTER TREATMENT

Once the mob has been treated and clearly identified, they should be walked quietly back to a clean paddock, preferably away from the milking shed and the milking mob. The cows should have access to water and a maintenance ration. Avoid activity that may encourage excessive soiling or movement of the udder during the dry period.

The dried off mob should be checked daily for the first week or so for any swollen udders that may need investigating. It is best to keep the treated mob away from the dairy shed for the first week to avoid milk let down, which can slow down the process of udder dry off and affect the teat plug formation.

If you or your staff need any further information or training on dry off management, please contact one of our vet team.

HEIFER MASTITIS

Your heifers are the future of your herd and you have invested considerable money and time in them before they start milking. The quickest way to devalue this investment is calving mastitis, which often leaves heifers with light quarters and a high risk of being culled.

Heifer mastitis traditionally occurs at or within 7 days after calving when udders can be oedematous (swollen), and the teats open and dripping milk. At this time the udder is much more susceptible to infection with environmental bacteria such as *Strep. uberis*.

Heifer mastitis is costly. A recent Dairy NZ study showed that *Strep. uberis* infection in heifers reduced milk production by 7% over the first 200 days of lactation, regardless of whether the infection developed into clinical mastitis or not. The overall cost of heifer mastitis was measured in a 2011 NZ study that found a case costs on average \$215! This was based on a \$7.50 payout, but some cases in this study were really expensive to treat – up to \$450. Have a look at the SmartSAMM gap calculator (www.smartsamm.co.nz) to see what gains you could make by reducing your heifer mastitis levels.

There are a few ways you can reduce the amount of mastitis in your heifers. Management tools such as twice daily removal of calves and bringing the heifers in for milking from the springer mob have been shown to reduce clinical mastitis by 45%. You can also reduce heifer mastitis by approximately 70% by using Teatseal® at around 4 weeks pre-calving. The Teatseal treatment of all heifers quickly pays for itself with this dramatic reduction in costly mastitis cases. We have a cost benefit calculator available on www.dairywellness.co.nz to work out the return on investment on your farm.

Dealing with the issue before calving by treating heifers with Teatseal also means a smoother run during calving when time is always at a premium. It also gives your heifers the best chance to remain uninfected as they enter the milking herd, so they produce to capacity and have a reduced risk of getting culled.

Teatsealing heifers pre-calving is a surprisingly achievable job, especially when performed by our experienced team. Farms that have already tried Teatsealing heifers are repeating the treatment year after year in their first calvers. Call the clinic now to discuss heifer Teatsealing with your vet, or to book in our heifer Teatsealing team.

SCANNING & HEALTH & SAFETY

As you will be aware the new Health & Safety rules kicked in this month. From our point of view nothing has changed much because we already have a H&S plan in place & are continuously monitoring & identifying potential risks and trying to mitigate them.

Some of the bigger risk areas we have identified include: driving (obviously), handling animals (hard to eliminate this as a risk if you're a vet) and a topical one at this time of year with great potential to do harm - scanning. In case you hadn't already noticed scanning is a dirty, physically demanding & potentially dangerous procedure, particularly in rotary sheds. Thankfully the vast majority of you now have facilities that enable our vets to do the job efficiently & (most importantly) safely without risk of platforms collapsing or cows coming off the back of the platform & taking them and a \$20,000 scanner with them.

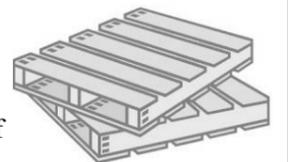
However, a small minority of you (including I'm ashamed to say a couple of board members) continue to provide facilities for scanning that are simply not up to standard & are not safe. Our dairy caddies are designed for rolling up & down the pit in a herringbone shed, not to be a fixed platform in a rotary shed. Empty bloat drums with a plank between them are also not suitable to provide a safe platform for a vet to scan and/or take evasive action if a cow slips back off the rotary platform (which happens every year).

Under the Health & Safety Act we are required to ensure safe working conditions for our vets & to mitigate risk as much as we can. By the same token, you as a farm owner or operator are required to provide facilities fit for purpose for your employees and, if required, contractors (in this case us).

If you aren't lucky enough to have a purpose built platform for your rotary you should still be able to construct something that is solid, safe & stable for our vets to work from. Next season we will not use our dairy caddies as fixed platforms because for one, they move, they are too small & they aren't designed for that use.

The most rudimentary platform that is acceptable is one made from wooden pallets nailed or lashed together slightly higher than the level of the rotary platform so that if a cow slips back she feels the raised edge. Surely that's not too much to ask? After all our accuracy has to be compromised if we are worried about collapsing or having a cow land in our lap at any time. And what's more pallets are free if you ask nicely at umpteen places in the district so you can't use the payout as an excuse.

The worst offenders will be getting a letter from us before the next scanning season but if you know you're one of them why not just sort it out now & save us all the hassle?



Late for a Lecture

An old man is walking unsteadily down a country lane late one evening when a police car pulls alongside "Evening Sir, it's a bit late to be out isn't it? Everything okay?"

"Yes officer I'm fine. I'm just on my way to a lecture on the effects of alcohol abuse, smoking & lack of sleep and I'm running a little late"

"Really? At this time of night? Who's giving the lecture"

"My wife ..."