

## Renovations Ahead

If things go according to plan, we expect to start major renovations to the old courthouse part of the clinic early in the New Year. This has come about for 2 reasons: it's time for a facelift which will include a new reception desk, extra consulting room and more floor space for retail sales. And, given the age of the original building we are obliged to do something about earthquake strengthening. Currently this part of the clinic is rated at a measly 20%. We need to get it close to or above 70% ideally, which requires a bit of cunning engineering. Since that involves stripping away the internal walls to get at and secure the brick work it made sense to use the opportunity to freshen up and modernise the reception/sales area.



So, for a few months early next year things will be a bit chaotic. The whole front part of the clinic will be a no-go zone and we'll need to operate from a temporary reception desk out the back, where we will also need to convert an old store room into a temporary consulting room for people's pets. We last did this in 1999 and we managed with your help. We ask for your continued understanding and patience when this work does get underway in the New Year. We are confident that the finished product will make all the hassle worthwhile and hope that you will feel the same when you see the end result.

## Pain Relief for Disbudding

The Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018 state in article 57: **"A person must not disbud a cattle beast unless throughout the procedure the cattle beast is under the influence of an appropriately placed and effective local anaesthetic that is authorised by a veterinarian for the purpose of the procedure."** This rule takes effect on **1<sup>st</sup> October 2019**.

You all have to comply, so only two options – for those of you using a contractor (or vet), the anaesthetic is their issue; those of you who disbud your own calves will need to get trained up on local use by us. It's not a hard procedure, but after training up a couple of farmers already this disbudding season, here's a few observations:

- The local has to be effective right through the procedure, which means you have to wait 3 – 5 minutes after giving it before using the iron. You can afford to wait as the local, once working, lasts well – it will give good pain relief for the disbudding and for a couple of hours afterwards. If they are feeling it, you **must** either wait a bit longer and/or give a little more anaesthetic.
- To make best use of your time and thus avoid laborious double catching and handling, it works best if you have a race where you can run in 10 or a dozen calves, get in there and local them so that by the time you've done the one at the back, you should be able to start disbudding the one up the front. Or, if your facilities and staff are up to it, you could run the whole mob through and local them, then put them through again for disbudding.
- Catching well grown and very lively calves in a loose pen to inject them one by one through a single head bail then letting them go and repeating the procedure one by one to disbud them is a great way to stress and tire both calves and people. (I've tried it.) You may not need a major rebuild of your pens – gates and rope may enable you to make temporary races or small pens so you can work on small mobs at a time. Give it some thought now so you are ready next year.

Some general points:

It's easier and better for the calves if you do them younger: 2 – 6 weeks old is best. Do large numbers in small batches to make it easier and better for you and your staff. Calves do not have to be sedated by a vet before disbudding – judging by enquiries we received this year, some of you thought that is what the new rules meant. No, local anaesthetic in the standing conscious calf is fine – provided you give it time to work. NB: We (Eltham Vets) do all our disbudding with sedation and local, and we are pretty much at capacity with our existing clients.



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get 2 hams  
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get 3 hams



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## NOVEMBER 2018

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I was lucky enough to visit Wisconsin and Minnesota early in October to attend the World Dairy Expo and visit a few 'typical' US dairy farms. While interesting, there's not a lot that you can bring back and apply to a typical NZ dairy farm. The Dairy Expo was a little underwhelming; in fact I reckon it's got nothing on our National Field Days (although I've never found a stall at Mystery Creek where I can buy a nice jacket with a concealed carry pocket...). To me it seemed like a really big, old-fashioned A&P Show attended mostly by Trump Supporters (I made sure to bite my tongue). A lot of the industry stalls were displaying stuff that we've had here for many years and much of the rest was around bedding materials for housed cows & calves. I did meet a very interesting chap from Texas whose wife was a rattlesnake wrangler though.

The farms themselves were fascinating. One farm was milking 800 cows through a twin 13 aside herringbone shed using Mexican workers. It ran 21 hours a day. Everyone there washes, dries and pre-dips teats before applying the cups and they have a huge green bin in the pit full of freshly laundered rags to dry the tits. Cows live their whole life in the shed and the only exercise they get is the twice daily stroll to the milking parlour and a once a year visit to the birthing shed. Calves are reared in a separate shed and are stalled individually for the first 4 weeks or so to prevent spread of disease and slowly put into bigger pens with other calves as they get older. While that is effective in limiting disease, you do see a lot of very bored looking calves keen for some company.

Dairy farming in the US is in the doldrums and has been for 5 years now according to the farmer we spoke to. Milk consumption is down 25% and one of the big reasons apparently is the reduction in families sitting down for breakfast these days and kids pouring milk on their cereal. There is a movement there to reclaim the word "milk", so it applies only to stuff that comes out of a mammary gland. That seems fair to me. Let's face it almond or soy milk isn't milk. If it was called "almond juice", would it be as popular? The word "milk" does generate feelings of nurturing & well-being. So why should soy extract be allowed to have that name? I think they may be on to something.

The message about responsible antibiotic use doesn't appear to have got much traction (well not on the farms we visited anyway). I snuck into the drug room of one of these farms and saw more antibiotics there than we have in our drug room at the clinic. And all the drugs I saw were the ones we are being told we can't or shouldn't use. Go figure.

My biggest takeaway from this visit was that it should be a doddle selling our products to consumers overseas. Simply show them a photo of a US dairy cow (or most European countries for that matter) in a stall poking its head through bars to get at its feed and then show them a photo of a Taranaki cow eating pasture on a paddock with the sun on its back and the mountain in the background. Then ask them "which cow would you like to get your milk from?" I know which one I would pick.

Things have been slowing down here for the last month or two; a reflection of the season so far. The weather has largely behaved itself (so far anyway) and that means cows are under a lot less stress and therefore able to concentrate on producing milk and getting in calf rather than keeping warm. Lameness for September/October were down 75% on last year, which probably underlines just how wet it got last spring and all the problems that resulted from that. Let's hope it doesn't suddenly go dry like last season. This year I've been held up on the road by contractors and I'm seeing a lot of pasture down waiting to be bailed. I saw very little of that last year. We have a new (but probably familiar to many of you) vet starting in January. Michaela Abbott will join the team as a new graduate after a well-earned post-exam holiday. We look forward to her joining us and will get her to introduce herself in the next newsletter.

**As this is the last newsletter before Xmas it is time to thank you all for your service and loyalty over the last 12 months, wish you all a very merry Xmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year**

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Jill Watson CVN/RAT  
Nicola Childs CVN/RAT  
Helen Snook



**Join us at the clinic for  
an end of year celebration**



**WEDNESDAY  
19th December  
5 -10pm**



**FREE XMAS HAM  
WITH PURCHASES OF SELECTED  
BOEHRINGER AND ALLEVA  
PRODUCTS  
SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS**

## Parasites in Replacement Calves

As we start to welcome spring and warmer weather, so too do gut parasites, keen to get their teeth into some fresh new Rising 1 year old calves (R1s). Worm larvae that overwintered on pasture will be eaten by R1s and grow into adult worms causing gut damage, inappetence and poorer growth rates

From ingestion of larvae to adult worms producing eggs in faeces is about 3 weeks.

The first new worm infections in weaned calves may or may not cause clinical disease, but they will produce large numbers of worm eggs which can heavily contaminate pasture, meaning heavier infections later in the season, and typical scoury wormy calves.

Thus, it's a tactical move to drench calves early in the season in order to prevent the build-up of larvae on the pasture. Never drench a mob and move them to a new paddock. There will always be a few worms that survive a drench, these worms mate with each other because there's no one else left and they produce drench resistant offspring - you don't want a new pasture full of these. The old pasture will still have larvae on it that are not resistant to the drench, so leave your calves on here for a few days to let them eat some parasites that can mate with the resistant ones to mix up the gene pool before you move them on.

If you had last year's R1s on the same paddocks that you've got your R1 calves this year it's likely to be heavily contaminated with infective larvae. In this situation you may find it necessary to drench at or just before weaning. Testing for worm eggs (FEC) when calves are 3-4 months of age is a good idea in this situation. It's an easy test to do and it can give us indications as to whether you need to drench early to prevent large amounts of contamination. Arrest C and Corporal are both drenches that are safe to use in calves under 120kg, but check first that a drench is necessary. These are oral combination drenches that will kill both *Cooperia* and *Ostertagia*.

As your calves grow you can continue to drench orally or you can choose to either use a pour-on such as Boss or Eclipse or inject with Dectomax or Boss, depending on your preference and labour skill levels. Don't forget that you're aiming for your calves to be 60% of their adult body weight at 15 months of age (mating). Calves that hit these targets have greater longevity in the herd, produce more milk in their first two lactations and are more likely to conceive. Being free from disease (BVD/worms, etc.), having adequate copper, selenium and B12 and, most importantly, good quality feed means a healthier, productive future herd.



## Taking Liberties with Antibiotics

Over the course of the season we start noticing patterns of behaviour with regard to antibiotic purchases. When we issue an Authority to Supply Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVMs) for the season we base that on previous use, farm history and so on. Sometimes we clearly get the numbers wrong and adjust accordingly. Sometimes though it becomes apparent that a client has decided that a certain product is the one he or she is going to use for the whole season whether it is the recommended one or not. Often that comes down to convenience.

At the start of the season when we sent out your annual prescription for RVMs we attached a letter explaining the changes that have come in recently with regard to responsible antibiotic use and the re-classification of antibiotics into green, orange and red categories. Tylan and Tylofen fall into the red category so by definition shouldn't be used routinely and only when there isn't an alternative option available. We chose to continue to put them on your prescription in limited quantities because they are very useful for multiple quarter mastitis and effective against some staph infections. However, there are other options that also work, and we asked you to be responsible and only use them for those occasions where an intramammary product was likely to be less effective (such as a hard-swollen quarter or multiple quarters).

It looks like some of you either have had a lot of hard swollen quarters or whole udder mastitis cases this year because in a few cases it appears that Tylan or Tylofen has been the only product you have used. I can only draw the conclusion that you have chosen to use them for every case of mastitis because it is convenient. Convenience is no longer an acceptable justification for antibiotic use (otherwise we would still put Excede LA on your script because it's a convenient one-shot non-withhold antibiotic) and those of you who have already used up your allocation for Tylan or Tylofen will find we won't be able to increase your allocation this season without milk samples to show that no other product will work. Continued routine use of these products will inevitably lead to them being withdrawn for veterinary use completely.

So please, try and use these products judiciously, or we won't be able to use them at all very soon. Thanks for your on-going co-operation.

## Hi from Helen

My husband Bruce and I have been living in the Waikato for the past 23 years where I was employed as an administrator for Matamata Vets. We are both originally from Eltham and it has been fantastic to be able to come back to be closer to my family and also to virtually have the same job which I love.

My favourite hobby has always been in Theatre so I'm looking forward to being involved with a local group again soon. Eltham has changed a little over the years, but it's great to come back and see familiar faces around town and catch up on local gossip.

**What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?  
A rebel without a Claus.**

**Why is Santa so jolly?  
Because he knows where all the naughty girls live.**

**What do you call Santa's helpers?  
Subordinate clauses.**

**What's the difference between Tiger Woods and Santa?  
Santa stopped at 3 ho's.**

## Facial Eczema – time to plan ahead

With the way the weather is going these days we can no longer sit back smugly and think we're only going to get a bad eczema season once every 10 years; like it used to be. It seems every summer is getting hotter and more humid, which provides ideal conditions for facial eczema to thrive. Three of the last 4 years have brought FE to varying degrees and we don't get through a season now without someone in our district getting hit. So, from our perspective spore counting of monitor farms will continue after Xmas for as long as necessary so we can at least have an idea when things are heading into danger territory.

From your perspective, expect to start zinc supplementation by the end of January at the latest if you do water treatment, and drenching as soon as spore counts go over 30,000. Young stock are best protected by administration of zinc capsules (Faceguard, *see back page*, or Time Capsules), especially if they are going away grazing. It takes capsules about a week to become protective, so you need to watch spore counts and be proactive. And remember to re-administer before they run out (roughly every 4-5 weeks until danger has passed).

If you are running a high input system with high producing cows, you may have found that despite maximum zinc supplementation you still are getting hit so you're going to have to think about extra protection. High producing cows eat more grass so proportionally will eat more spores. If they get lots of PKE on top of that the copper in the PKE "potentiates toxicity" of the spores. In other words copper makes it even worse. That's why we generally recommend you don't supplement copper during facial eczema season. Zinc and inorganic copper compete for absorption so most of the copper you supplement doesn't get absorbed anyway and the circulating copper that is there makes the facial eczema spores more toxic. The only exceptions are products like Solutrace FE that "contains so-called "organic" copper, which is considered safe to supplement if you really feel the need. Talk to Dan or John about those options if you want to know more.

For those farmers in this situation, as well as zinc supplementation, you'll need to seriously consider spraying pasture with an appropriate fungicide such as "Topsin", X-Spore" or "Mycotak". These products do work but generally only if applied before spore counts get too high. Most people apply once counts get to around 20,000. They generally give protection for about 4-6 weeks and then you'll need to spray again if conditions are still favourable for spore growth.

Look out for our weekly spore count e-mails to start early in the New Year. If we don't have your e-mail, please let us know and we'll add you to the list.

## Results from our inhouse milk cultures

We started doing our own inhouse milk cultures at the beginning of August. Up until November 14<sup>th</sup> we have had samples from 86 cows. Our results follow the normal New Zealand pattern with *Strep. uberis* and *Staph. aureus* being the most common bacteria isolated. Coagulase negative Staphs. (C.N.S.) were the next most common, then *Strep. dysgalactiae*. One isolate was grown for each of *E. coli*, *Serratia* and *Pseudomonas* (that's why my percentages don't add up to 100). In 5% of samples, poor sampling technique resulted in dirty, contaminated samples. Another 5% of samples failed to grow any bacteria at all.

**Culture results - 1<sup>st</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> November.**

	<i>Strep. uberis</i>	<i>Staph. aureus</i>	Coagulase negative Staph.	<i>Strep. dysgalactiae</i>	No growth	Contaminated
%	34	31	16	6	5	5

The pattern of infection changed over time. *Strep. uberis* infection predominated in early lactation and *Staph. aureus* became commoner from October onwards.

**Culture results - August vs. November.**

	% <i>Strep. uberis</i>	% <i>Staph. aureus</i>
August	47	26
November	20	53



*Staph. aureus* infections are particularly unwelcome for two reasons. They have a poor cure rate, even with Dry Cow Therapy (DCT), and they are contagious. *Staph. aureus* cows are likely to remain infected and to pass that infection on to other cows in the herd. So it is a good idea to track them down and either manage them to minimise the chances of them passing on the infection or cull them.

Your next herd test is an opportunity to track down your *Staph aureus* infected cows. They are often not the highest SCC ones, the 'millionaires'. More often they are about 500,000 – 1,000,000 and have continued to be high SCC despite previous DCT.

Pottles and sampling instructions are available free at the clinic. We charge \$15 plus GST per sample. If brought in to the clinic before 11 am Monday to Thursday results will be available the following day. Friday samples will be frozen and get their results on Tuesday.

Particularly nasty or difficult to identify bugs such as *Pseudomonas* and *Serratia* will be sent on to our commercial lab for confirmation.