

MAF - NZFSA Welfare Requirements

I had a good chat recently with Barry Greenbrook from MAF/NZFSAVA about a few issues that some of you, particularly drystock farmers, may not have considered with regard to animal welfare and record keeping. Most dairy farmers keep pretty good records of animal health issues and treatments these days. They have to because they seem to be audited constantly. However, beef farmers probably aren't quite so thorough when it comes to keeping records and that lack of records could land you in hot water with MAF Animal Welfare or NZFSA for ASD (old TB card) noncompliance if an issue arises. NZFSA VA is now auditing sheep & beef farms on the accuracy of the ASD information and welfare, so you need to start keeping better records if you aren't already. That may simply mean writing down in a diary that you treated an animal for a lame foot with penicillin on such and such a date, used pouron, used an agricultural spray, or rang a vet for advice on a certain date.

As an example, you had a bull damage its leg. It fell down a bank or was in a fight with another bull. It doesn't seem too bad so you put it in a nearby paddock and give it a few days. After a week or so you forget about it and it's not until 5 months later that you see a bull with a sore leg, still lame. Not as lame as it was 5 months ago, but you decide you need to send it to the works. But for that you need a vet certificate. The vet decides that in all probability that bull had a fracture in its leg all those months ago. It's stable now so there is no reason why it can't go to the works. However, when it gets there they will ask quite rightly, did you do anything about that animal at the time of injury? You could be liable for prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act for not seeking veterinary advice or treatment at the time when the bull was probably in some pain and distress. You never wrote anything down, got a vet out to take a look or even rang a vet for advice. Or if you did, you didn't keep a record of it so from a MAF Welfare point of view, you did nothing for 5 months. It doesn't look very good.



What about Pinkeye? We get a lot of drystock farmers coming in asking for pinkeye ointment. That's fine, they need something. However if you treat a case and it doesn't get better you then need to seek veterinary advice or a visit to see if it needs further treatment. Simply saying you treated it and it didn't get any better is no excuse. What's more these days you can't send a single blind animal to the works* anyway so it's money down the drain. Most cases of pinkeye do respond to a course of ointment but sometimes they need a further treatment that may require a vet visit.

The requirement for ASDs also remains. In old terms we are talking about TB cards. When a bull supplier hires or sells you a bull it should come with an ASD (animal status declaration). In all cases the animal/s needs a new ASD signed by you to return the animal to the farm just as if it is going to the processing plant. If it's going back due to an injury, then it can't be transported without a vet certificate. If you can't produce an ASD for an animal transported to or from a property you are putting the status of that property at risk. That means that without an incoming ASD when you next send that animal to a processing plant you must tick all the 'negative' boxes ie worst case scenario. Also if you need a vet certificate, for heaven's sake, don't save the animals up to economise on a visit fee. Anytime 3 or 4 animals arrive at the works from one property, all with vet certificates, they attract interest - for obvious reasons. Also make sure you ring and talk to the works buyer before you get a vet out to write a certificate. Often there can be quite a delay in getting animals to the works and by the time you get the animal in the certificate has expired. Generally we don't like giving more than a week on a certificate.

So next time a bull goes lame or it damages its pizzle or has what looks like pinkeye, you have a requirement to do something; you can't just leave it and hope it gets better. And make sure you keep a record of what you did!

**Excerpt from the latest NZVA GUIDELINE re blindness*

A blind animal that is unaccustomed to the company of other animals should not be sent for slaughter as slaughter premises are not equipped to provide the level of individual supervision required during transit through yards and races. A blind animal in a mob is not usually a problem.



March 2010

Well you finally got that rain you've been wanting. I'm not sure how much use it will be to you though unless it warms up again. The drop in temperature has seen a few of us less hardy souls back into long pants; mind you the sooner my legs are withdrawn from public display each year the better. Once again I've crammed so much into this newsletter that there is very little room for my usual rant about the Hurricanes and the Black Caps at this time of year so I will just say that I predicted that a Hurricanes team with a predominantly Wellington-based forward pack would be a mistake, especially in the front row. How did they let so many good Hawkes Bay players disappear to other franchises (I know he's not a front rower but why on earth was Zac Guildford let go to the Crusaders?!). Enough said. As for the Black Caps; don't get me started!

So, in this issue we talk mostly about drying off and Dry Cow, we say goodbye to Andy Aitken and hello to Sue Morresey and bring you up to date on a few issues that are relevant at this time of year. I hope it is of interest and use to you as we start our inevitable slide into winter and cold weather. My wife is still asking where the summer went, or more to the point when is it going to start (remember she is South African and extremely weather intolerant). Mind you she asks that every year.

Have a nice Easter!

Will Ye Go Laddie Go!



Yes our big Scots Laddie is off home in pursuit of a lovely wee Scots lassie and we wish him the very best of luck. It's hard to believe that Andy has been with us for 6 years, when he initially came for just a couple and then he would 'see how it went'. Well it must have gone reasonably well in that case and we have loved having him here. We will certainly miss his bagpipe recitals at Xmas do's and golf days, his accent, good humour and general kind nature. We hope that this is not farewell, but simply a 'see you later' and that Andy returns to Eltham in a few years when

he's convinced Emma that the weather is better here (that shouldn't be too hard). Good luck mate, take care and come back as soon as you can.

Action Men & Women



By now you are probably all aware that our very own "Supervet" Adrian completed the Taupo Ironman recently in 11 hours, 19 minutes and 26 seconds. An unbelievable effort, especially when I struggle just getting up the stairs. He's very modest however and doesn't want me to go on about it so I will just say how impressed and proud we all were of his effort and also that if he ever complains that he's tired after a hard day at work we won't believe him.



Adrian's not the only action person here though. By the time this goes to print, Jill, Lisa and Teresa will have completed the Women's triathlon in Hawera and will almost certainly be complaining of tiredness. And John Larkin has become a bit of a Lance Armstrong (minus the gorgeous celebrity girlfriends and endorsement deals) lately on the bike having done the Round Lake Taupo event and the Round the Mountain event as well. Quite an effort for an old fella.

It extends to offspring as well, because Jim's son Josh was recently named in the NZ American Quarter Horse Western Riding Youth Team to compete at the World Youth Championships in Oklahoma in July and Jill's daughter Nicole recently was part of the Taranaki Saba Sam Show Jumping team that came 3rd at the Horse of the Year show in Hawkes Bay. Well done to you all. I'm exhausted just writing it all down!

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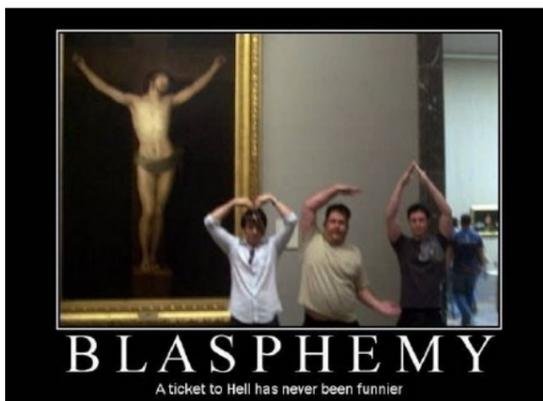
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Invoice/Statements by EMail



We are currently investigating sending our monthly invoice/statements by email to those clients who have internet access. If you would like to receive your bill by email once this service is up and running please email joan@elthamvetservice.co.nz



DRY OFF MANAGEMENT

The way cows are managed during drying off, and how the process itself is done, can have a significant impact on the outcomes. Dry Cow Therapy is a significant investment in your herd so we have put together a few pointers to help you get the most out of it.

PREPARATION

Recommendations on a DCT programme suitable for your herd prior to drying off. Once you have decided on your programme it is wise to get all product on farm ready to be used when required. You will also need to make sure to have plenty of teatwipes, teatspray and spray-paint ready.

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 SAMM plan, or you can discuss it with one of the vet team.

DRYING OFF

It is important to make sure you have plenty of help on hand and time to do the job properly. If you are drying off after a morning milking and it is cold, the intramammary products can sometimes be harder to administer. If you find this is happening, the bucket of product 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 infection if transferred into the udder on the syringe.

Mark each cow clearly just before treatment and record the id number and treatment given.

The udder should be clean and dry. Disinfect the teat end using one teatwipe per teat making sure the wipe comes away clean when you are finished. When removing the cap from the Dry Cow be sure not to touch the end of the syringe. Partially insert the nozzle into the teat end and infuse the product. If using an antibiotic be sure to massage the Dry Cow from the teat up into the udder. If using Teatseal in combination or alone it must NOT be massaged into the udder, but stay in the teat canal. Treat all four quarters and follow with freshly mixed teat spray of the correct concentration.

AFTER TREATMENT

Once the mob has been treated and clearly identified they should be walked quietly back to a clean paddock.

Preferably this paddock is 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 for any swollen udders that may need investigating.

It may take a little longer to do the job correctly, but if you're spending all this money to protect your investment take the time to do it right the first time.

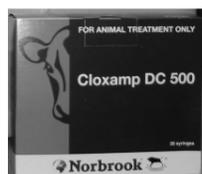
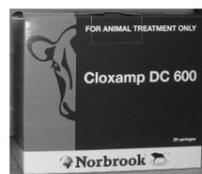
Dry Cow Options for 2010

Recently you will have received a 'newspaper' that deals with Dry Cow therapy, drying off management and so on. While it is clearly an advertisement for Cepravin, it does provide some excellent information regarding the merits of DCT, best practice for drying off and so on. It is definitely worth a read. Also it saves me having to repeat it all in this newsletter! I recommend you take a look at it. If you've thrown it away, we have extra copies here. As I said, while it is concentrating on the merits of Cepravin in particular, the principles apply to whatever DCT you use this season so don't dismiss it. Cepravin remains the flagship product with 30 years' use and research to back it up. It is the most expensive so we have a number of alternatives available for you to consider if cost is an issue. Those options will be made known to you via our Dry Cow Therapy Consultations along with the prices. Suffice it to say we attempt to price all our DCT products very competitively so that you get the best deal available.

Your response to the consultation form remains the starting point for our final recommendations as to what we think will suit you best. I know some of you think it is all a big waste of time, but the more effort you take in filling it in, the better we are able to make a recommendation that will be of benefit to you. Sometimes the cheapest option is not the best so please make the effort to fill it in properly.

The dry period is your best opportunity to 'reset the clock' in your herd with regard to clearing up sub-clinical and long standing infections as well as minimising the risk of new infections during the dry season and on into the new lactation.

We look forward to discussing your mastitis control plan and DCT requirements in the next month or two as drying off approaches.



Why Dry Cow Therapy Doesn't Always Work

Having told you earlier how important DCT is, it is important to note that it doesn't cure all your cases of sub-clinical mastitis. There are a number of reasons for this, which are well documented and worth bearing in mind when considering whether or not to treat a particular cow at drying off.

Cure rate declines (i.e. less chance of curing infection) with:

- Increasing age, so the older she is the less likelihood of a cure
- History of high SCC in previous lactations
- The more clinical cases she has had, the less chance of a cure with DCT
- Rear glands have a lower cure rate than front ones (don't know why)
- Multiple infected glands (i.e. more than one quarter infected, the lower your cure)
- Type of bug present
- Failure of teat end closure- *obviously you aren't going to be able to tell if a keratin plug has formed, but if a cow develops a 'new' infection in the dry period 4 weeks after treatment then the chances are she never formed an effective plug (perhaps one of those older cows?)*
- Length of dry period. *An excessively long dry period means that often the effect of DCT has worn off well before calving, making them vulnerable again. Here the use of Teatseal might help*
- Increasing production at dry off (*if > 12L/cow*). *This makes sense because it is hard to manage cows with high milk volumes at dry off and it is feasible that DCT could leak back out*
- Severe reduction in dry matter at drying off. The opposite of above or possibly as a result of the above, you screw them down so much that they start to lose condition, come under stress and develop ketosis. Ketotic animals will have a compromised immune system and that in turn will affect how well DCT works

So if you are thinking about treating a 12 year old cow with a history of chronic mastitis in multiple quarters, a consistently high SCC and lumpy hind quarters perhaps you should think again and send her to the works, where she probably belongs!

Heifer Mastitis and Teatseal

Your heifers are the future of your herd and you have invested considerable money and time before they enter the milking herd. The quickest way to devalue this investment is calving mastitis, which often leaves heifers with light quarters, and complicates their first few days in the shed.

Heifers that develop mastitis are also more likely to be culled early.

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

The cost of this mastitis was measured in a recent NZ study which found each case of heifer mastitis costs \$197 when calculated using a \$5.50 payout. This means that with a payout of over \$6 each heifer with mastitis will cost you well over \$200! This cost takes into account the treatment cost, labour for treatment, milk discard and culling.

There are a few ways you can reduce the amount of mastitis in your heifers. Management tools such as twice daily removal and milking of heifers from calving mob have been shown to reduce clinical mastitis by 45%. You can also reduce heifer mastitis by approximately 70% through using Teatseal 4 – 6 weeks pre-calving. With such a dramatic reduction in costly mastitis cases the Teatseal treatment of all heifers quickly pays for itself. 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 lower chance of getting culled.

Teatsealing heifers pre calving is a surprisingly achievable job, once you know what you are doing. It bears no resemblance to the heifer in pain with mastitis being treated during milking. Farms that have already tried Teatsealing heifers are repeating the treatment year after year in their first calvers.



The Preacher says, "Anyone with needs to be prayed for, come forward to the front, at the altar!"
Leroy gets in line, and when it's his turn, the preacher asks: "Leroy, what do you want me to pray about for you."

Leroy replies: "Preacher, I need you to pray for my hearing."

The preacher puts one finger in Leroy's ear, and he places the other hand on top of Leroy's head and prays and prays, he prays for Leroy.

After a few minutes, the Preacher removes his hands, stands back and asks, "Leroy, how is your hearing now?"

Leroy says, "I don't know, Reverend, it ain't until next Wednesday."

An old man goes in to a drug store to buy some Viagra.

"Can I have 6 tablets, cut in quarters?"

"I can cut them for you" said the pharmacist "but a quarter will not give you a full erection."

I'm 96" said the old man "I don't want an erection. I just want it sticking out far enough so I don't pee on my slippers."