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## LICE IN CATTLE



Lice are wingless, flattened insects and are very species specific, meaning they don't jump from cow to sheep to you. They complete their whole life cycle on the cow meaning that lice are spread mostly by close contact between animals. The eggs of lice are known as nits and these can quite often be seen attached to hair shafts as white or yellow masses. Live lice may also be seen as brownish specks moving through the coat. There are two different kinds of lice that live on cattle, biting and sucking lice. The biting lice feed on skin scurf and other organic material on the skin causing more irritation than sucking lice. Biting lice are most commonly found on the neck, shoulders, back and rump. In contrast to biting lice, sucking lice have relatively small narrow heads designed to pierce the skin and suck blood. They are usually found around the head and neck of cattle and in large numbers can cause irritation and anaemia. Biting lice move rapidly whereas sucking lice move more slowly and may be seen head down, bum up, close to the skin surface. Both are an irritation and annoyance and usually both types are found on cattle, although one study in the 70's showed that beef cattle had higher numbers of biting lice compared to sucking lice. Younger and lighter cattle have higher infestations than older heavier cattle. Lice are particularly prevalent during cooler weather when haircoats tend to be thicker. They can be so itchy so as to cause cattle to rub against fences and trees and lick at themselves a lot. Time spent doing so may reduce time spent grazing and intake in infested cattle. Treating once a year in late autumn early winter is usually enough to keep louse infestations low. Only a pour-on product can kill both biting and sucking lice. Because sucking lice suck blood, injectable products and oral products can kill sucking lice but biting lice are not exposed this way to the drug so need to be killed with a pour-on product.

**Combination pour-on in young stock and Abamectin pour-on in adult stock** will control lice as well as treating internal parasites going into winter.

Chat to Daniel or John regarding specific products for your stock.

## Don't Step on the Turtles

Three women die in an accident together and go to Heaven.  
They meet God at the door, and he says "there is only one rule in Heaven. Don't step on the turtles."  
So they go in, and sure enough there are millions and millions of turtles on the ground, and it is near impossible not to step on one.  
So the first woman accidentally steps on a turtle. Saint Peter comes and chains her hand together with the hand of the ugliest man she had seen in her life.  
Later, the second woman stepped on a turtle, and Saint Peter came and chained her hand to another ugly, ugly man's hand.  
The last woman was very, very careful though. She didn't step on a turtle for months. So when the 3rd month finished without her stepping on a turtle, Saint Peter came and chained her hand to a beautiful, handsome, muscular man's hand.  
She says, "do you know why we were chained up?" He replies, "I don't know about you, but I stepped on a turtle."



APRIL 2019

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Have you ever had gout? Bloody hell, I have, and it hurts! I can't believe childbirth could be more painful than that (in fact I know one woman who didn't even experience pain at childbirth so I'm getting no sympathy from her). The only silver lining in my latest attack was that I couldn't get to work on the final day of The Masters so was able to watch Tiger make one of the most remarkable comebacks in all of sport. Other than that, I don't recommend it (and for those of you women still laughing may I remind you that man flu is real...).

This newsletter is unashamedly a drying off edition since that's what is either already happening (as the mountain begins to go white) or is about to happen. Thanks to all of you who, so far, have been getting your drying off forms into us before you intend drying off, which gives us time to look at your results and consider what the best strategy is for you this season. Bringing your form in on the day you intend drying off guarantees you a frosty reception at best and doesn't give us any time to really look at your situation and make an informed recommendation; it may even mean walking out without any dry cow at all. So please, those of you still to come, get your forms into us a good week before you intend drying off so we can have everything signed off and ready for you on the day you come in to pick up your DCT. Those of you wondering what next year will look like with regard to dry cow and the new rules, join the club. At this stage we don't know much more than you. We know what the intentions are, but we assume (hope?) we will get clear directives well before drying off rolls around in 2020. When we do find out, be assured we will let you know.

Facial eczema managed to rear its head late in the season and we did end up with a few severely affected herds. On the whole though, most of you managed the situation well and (hopefully) escaped relatively unscathed. We did see more people pasture spraying and that does seem to work well as long as it is done correctly (getting full coverage of paddocks), before the spores really take off and repeated at the right time (generally about a week before the first application is due to wear off). With the way the summers are going I think spraying will become more and more common as eczema becomes more predictable each year.

The renovations are nearly complete! It's been a struggle but once it's done it should be well worth the wait and we look forward to welcoming you into our brand-new reception and retail area in early May (fingers crossed). The earthquake strengthening work held things up as we had to wait for the structural steel and the special bolts that tie the old brick walls to the internal bracing. Watching it go in gives me great confidence that the safest place you could possibly be if the "big one" hits will be inside the vet building. Honestly, nothing is going to fall in on you there.

So, as another season draws to a close **thanks again for your support.** **Good luck and farewell** to those of you either exiting the industry or moving out of the area and let's look forward to a prosperous 2019/20 season with healthy pay-outs, kind weather, record lamb and beef prices and a three-peat at the Rugby World Cup later in the year. That's not too much to ask is it?

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

**Farmers Golf Day**  
at Eltham Golf Club  
**Thursday 6th June**  
Entry Fee \$10.00. Entries limited.  
Entries to the clinic by 31st May  
Ambrose format—teams of three

## 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](http://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](http://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.

## No DCT Returns Reminder

Just a reminder that this season we will not be accepting returns of unused dry cow therapy tubes.

Once a product has left the clinic we have no control over how it is looked after or where it has been stored so can't guarantee that it is still fit for use if it is returned.

Like most things, over the years our relaxed approach to returns has been abused by the few at the expense of the many. When we get tubes returned that are wet, dirty and in some cases contaminated by cow shit we are left having to throw it away. I don't imagine any of you would be keen to receive tubes from us that have clearly been elsewhere. And you certainly wouldn't be happy to be charged the same amount as a fresh, unadulterated tube. So, I'm afraid that the days of taking back unused dry cow therapy tubes are over. Please make sure you know how many tubes you need when purchasing your DCT this season because once it's left the clinic it's not coming back.

## Why won't you do our Dry Cow for us?

We've had a few requests to send the vets out to do peoples' dry cow therapy this season. The simple reply to this is "sorry, we don't offer that service".

The reason takes a little longer to explain.

Treating a herd of cows with DCT or Teatseal takes a long time; hours in fact. It generally requires a team of 3 or 4 people or more. We might be able to do that for one or two clients but here's the thing. You guys always want the same job done at the same time; just look at scanning and disbudding calves. It's always a scramble to fit everybody in roughly when they want us.

With DCT the time frame is even more congested (and depending on the weather your planned dry off date can change dramatically). Even if we had the resources to send 4 vets/technicians out to each farm, the absolute maximum we could do is 2 herds a day (and that would be a push, since a large herd can take most of the day). We couldn't send out 2 teams or we would have no vets or support staff left in the clinic to do our regular job. Remember at that time of the year we still have pregnancy testing to do, vaccinations, companion animal work and general farm visits for lame & sick animals. And don't forget dry cow consults. We can just manage teat-sealing heifers with the numbers we have. That requires a lot of planning, negotiation and juggling of resources; and remember most of the time we're talking 30 or 40 heifers, not a herd of 500.

So, rather than offer a service that we know we can't resource we have taken the decision that we won't offer it at all. Otherwise one or two clients get special treatment and everyone else gets disappointed.

What we can offer is to can send someone out to show you how to do it and get you started.

## Leptospirosis

Lepto is a nasty disease that can cause severe illness or even organ failure and death in people. Lepto bacteria can swim so the high-risk period is when there is standing water for it to swim around in. Maximum protection, which kicks in soon after vaccination, is required to start early-to mid-autumn in this area when puddles start to form and stay around.

Lepto hangs out, protected from the immune system, in the kidneys and is mostly shed in the urine. This shedding can continue for up to 18 months.

It's a tough ask for a vaccine to stop the bacteria even getting to the kidneys, so vaccination strategy relies on protecting **ALL** cattle on the farm to reduce the "challenge" for the milkers. Leaving any unprotected stock on the property increases the risk that they will be infected and be able to then cause infections even in some vaccinated animals.

You should make sure that beefies and bulls have been vaccinated as well as the milkers so that you and your workers, and any kids or visitors to the farm, are protected.

## Introducing Dairy Antibioqram

### What is Dairy Antibioqram?

Dairy Antibioqram is a new test that is performed on bulk milk tank samples which detects and monitors antibiotic resistance in mastitis bacteria on your farm. Bacteria are cultured in the lab in the presence of different concentrations of all the mastitis antibiotics available in New Zealand. From this you get a resistance level for your bacteria to every antibiotic.

### Why Dairy Antibioqram?

Antibiotic resistance is a serious animal AND human health problem. It occurs when bacteria are exposed to repeated antibiotic treatments and become harder to kill/control. The end result is a situation where we are powerless to treat infections which were once very responsive to antibiotics.

Antibiotics are a valuable tool in the dairy industry, and when used responsibly, they are vital for the maintenance of good animal health and welfare. Bacterial resistance to these valuable treatments is a threat to the viability of dairy farming and is perceived as a threat to human health. Dairy markets are conscious of the development of antibiotic resistance and are nervous about the impacts on consumers.

### Who is responsible for preventing antibiotic resistance?

Everyone who is involved in the use of antibiotics. In the dairy industry this includes FARMERS, FARM WORKERS, VETERINARIANS, and PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES.

### The value of Dairy Antibioqram to YOUR farm:

A Dairy Antibioqram will give you valuable information which, with the direction from your vet, will help you:

- 1) Plan to use effective mastitis treatments
- 2) Avoid using expensive broad-spectrum treatments when other cheaper options are shown to be effective
- 3) Know the resistance status and how this ranks compared to other farms in the country
- 4) Develop biosecurity plans to protect a "good" resistance status
- 5) Identify threats to your herd which can be investigated further and managed or removed
- 6) Monitor if your resistance status is changing over time
- 7) Help the dairy industry demonstrate that it is using antibiotics responsibly

Knowledge of the resistance status in your herd is the key to choosing the right treatments for your cows, and monitoring and preventing the development and spread of resistance.

The recommendation is to get two tests done per season. One in early lactation and one in late lactation.

This allows us to capture an accurate picture of what is happening on your farm. Once we have this picture you shouldn't generally need to do another test for a couple of seasons.

Have a chat to one of us if you want more information or to book a test in.

