

## INVESTING IN BETTER DRENCHES WILL PAY OFF

We all know the importance of drying off cattle in good body condition score (BCS). It is well established that BCS at calving is a vital influencer of milk production and reproductive performance in dairy cattle over the next season. Research has shown a cow that calves at BCS 5 will on average produce 15 kg more milk solids and cycle eight to 10 days earlier than a cow that calves at BCS 4.

Recent improvements in growth conditions, while helping extend the season, have also been favourable to gut parasites meaning we are starting to see higher levels of challenge on pasture. Given the fact parasite numbers during autumn are often higher than at any other time of the year, appropriate drenching has a potentially critical role to play in order to maximise production next season. Eliminating parasites now ensures cows are able to use all available energy resources for foetal development and can also help them maintain body condition throughout the dry period. This is the primary aim of a drench at dry-off as there is minimal evidence that drenching at drying-off significantly increases milk production the following season. For this reason, we would recommend treating with REFLEX Pour-on at this time of year. Gut parasites along with sucking and biting lice will be eliminated over the dry period with relatively little expense.



**A drench at calving time is a different story.** The aim of a drench at calving time is to maximise production and reproductive performance for the whole season. This is the time when money is better spent on EPRINEX®. This is because EPRINEX is the only drench in New Zealand that has shown in independent scientific research (not done by the drug company itself) to significantly increase milk solids for the whole season following one treatment and to improve reproductive performance. When just taking into consideration the increased milk production over one season following one drench with EPRINEX, the average farm could expect a net return of approximately \$50/head.

CYDECTIN has only ever been able to show about half of this return and has no evidence that reproduction is improved.

The other drenches that contain abamectin such as GENESIS® pour-on have no evidence that they can increase milk production or reproduction.

EPRINEX is unique as it is the only endectocide specifically formulated for use in adult dairy cattle and is a smart animal health investment at the right time of year with returns over the whole season and into the next.



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### APRIL 2020

How's everyone doing?

Who would have thought instead of talking about Super Rugby, Dry Cow Therapy and drying off, we would be talking about social distancing, "flattening the curve", lockdowns and shortages of hand sanitiser and toilet paper? The year has been turned on its head by coronavirus and who knows what the next few months hold? Certainly it hasn't been a good time to be taking a close look at your superannuation fund as its value plummets.

We're doing our best to keep up to date with developments and taking advice from NZVA and the Government agencies on what measures we need to take both with regard to the safety of our staff but also our clients. We have also been paying close attention to our suppliers and wholesalers seeking assurance that there will be continuity of supply as we head into winter and then, of course, next spring. It would be a rotten time to run out of important drugs and metabolic solutions. We will be doing our utmost to make sure our warehouse is as fully stocked as we can get it going into a new season. We've managed to get the bulk of our DCT stocks into the warehouse already so don't panic.

Hopefully you've been getting our e-mails keeping you up to date with developments and we're also posting on our Facebook page regularly and have also updated our old website recently with a general update. By now I'm sure you've guessed that golf day is off this year, discussion groups are canned, our annual visit to Massey to award the Michael Higham Memorial Scholarship is cancelled and any seminars we had planned this year are off as well. No surprises there. Our latest board meeting will be done remotely, and heaven knows how we do the AGM this year. Unfortunately it seems that shed audits are continuing, so there's a note about that in this newsletter.

We're all learning as we go along with this pandemic. Policies we put in place yesterday may not be the right course of action today. Some jobs we did today, after reviewing the risk profile, may not be jobs we're prepared to do tomorrow. So bear with us please. We're trying to carry on as best as we can, but this is not business as usual. Even this newsletter has been e-mailed to you rather than posted. That's for two reasons - the Post Office probably has better things to do right now and the act of folding newsletters and placing them into envelopes creates many shared points of potential contact. Hence this PDF version e-mailed.

We do have to talk about **RVM consults** this season. Requirements have changed and we will need to have consultations with you to set up your prescriptions this year (well for our dairy clients anyway). Obviously that's not going to be done the way we had intended, so expect a phone call at some stage in the next two months. Please read the article for more details.

What else can we talk about? Well, there's no rugby to speak of, The Masters was postponed, and all professional tennis is postponed until July so we can't even talk about Rafa winning yet another French Open. I guess The Warriors had their best season in a while - only two losses.



I saw a good quote the other day. "All this lack of sport on TV has had one positive outcome. I've just found out my wife has brown eyes." Another good one "If I get quarantined with my husband .... rest assured it won't be the virus that kills him" and "I really feel sorry for all

those husbands who have been saying for years 'I'll do that when I have time'...

Hang in there folks, keep your heads up and take comfort that even in a pandemic people still need to be fed, so you're in the right line of work. Thank God for our farmers - perhaps now you'll get some of the appreciation that's been missing for too long.

**Pollution levels dropping at record breaking rates. Less cars on the roads, less cruise ships in our seas, less planes in the sky.**  
Same amount of cows.

**Raw toilet paper for sale \$20**  
  
Some assembly required

They said a mask and gloves were enough to go to the supermarket. They lied. Everyone else had clothes on as well



### One parachute too few

*A plane with 5 passengers on board - Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Jacinda Ardern, The Pope and a ten-year-old schoolgirl is about to crash and there are only 4 parachutes.*  
Trump says "I'm taking one. I'm the smartest man in the USA and I need to sort out the problems of the World!". He takes one and jumps.  
Boris says, "the British people need me". He takes one and jumps.  
The Pope says, "I need to save people's souls." He takes one and jumps.  
Jacinda says to the ten-year-old: "You can have the last parachute. I've had a good life, yours is only just starting."  
The 10-year-old replies: "Don't worry, there are 2 parachutes left; the smartest man in the USA took my school bag."



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## GOT A SHED AUDIT COMING UP? THINK AHEAD

Under current circumstances, I'm not sure if you're still having audits but on the assumption that you are, or at least looking ahead to next season, read on:

We occasionally get phone calls from panicked clients saying they've just had their shed audit and there's a product missing from their RVM authority. And, they could be up for a re-visit fee if it doesn't get added right away. In most cases we can sort that out for you but here's an idea:

You know at least a week in advance that a shed audit is coming up. How about giving us a call and asking for a copy of your RVM authority before your audit? It's very possible that since you received your copy at the start of the season, products have been added, changed or swapped for something else and you don't have the most current copy. We can also print off a copy of your dry cow prescription from last season that they all seem obsessed with seeing. But we can't if we don't know you've got an audit coming up. So give us a call. We're more than happy to print off the most recent copy we have on record and send it out to you. Then go through that before your audit and throw out anything that shouldn't be there. For example, a part bottle of something that was prescribed specifically for a particular animal by a vet on farm. If the course of treatment has finished and there is a little left over, throw it away – you shouldn't still have it sitting in your drugs cupboard because you don't have veterinary authority to use it on another animal. The only drugs that should be in your cupboard are the ones on your RVM authority or drugs that were prescribed for a particular animal that is still currently under treatment. You should have a "Veterinary Prescription and Treatment Form" for these animals. The vet gives you one when he/she treats something on-farm and leaves behind drugs for you to continue treatment. Hang on to them; they're important. So give us a call beforehand and we'll do our best to make your life easier.

## NEW RULES FOR RVM AUTHORITY AND SUPPLY IN 2020/21

As mentioned in our February newsletter and frequently in recent conversations, this season we are required to make changes to how we issue your annual RVM authority (your prescription) and what drugs we can prescribe for the 20/21 season and beyond.

The new rules mean we can no longer issue your annual prescription without a formal veterinary consultation and documentation of that consult. These consultations must occur before we provide you with a new RVM Authority for the 20/21 season and will become an annual occurrence. For now, this just applies to dairy farmers but expect it to eventually apply to everyone. If you own multiple farms we will need to have a consultation for each farm and issue an individualised RVM Authority for each farm. You will not be able to have a single RVM authority covering two farms for example. There will be a charge of \$100 for each RVM Authority that is issued. The new section of the rules around veterinary authorisation includes this statement:

"Farmers are responsible for managing the inventory of authorised RVMs on farm and for ensuring that they only have product on hand that hasn't expired. Farmers should not have any RVM on their farm unless the RVM is linked to a current and valid authorisation. To help farmers, veterinarians must provide information about the products they authorise, and consider what products are already on farm before authorising more."

"Before authorising RVMs for future supply, veterinarians should request and review information from the farmer about what stocks of products are already on farm, and the expiry dates of that stock".

So a big part of the consultation we plan to have with you this year involves knowing what you already have on farm and allowing for that when we consider quantities for the new season.

We will also talk with you about how you approach and treat common problems like lameness and mastitis to see if we need to change what drugs you use or the way you use those drugs.

When this all kicked off the requirement was to have these consults face-to-face in clinic or on-farm depending on your situation. Now with the lockdown, this will have to occur over the phone. In most circumstances we will be talking directly to the herd owners. However if you have a trusted farm manager and you prefer the consultation is done with that person, then let us know. It's up to you who we talk to but whoever it is needs to have sufficient authority to make decisions on routine drug use. We hope to begin consults from mid-April and continue into early June if necessary. We've got a few to get through after all.

So, what do we need from you? Understanding firstly. We have no desire to become another member of the "farm police" but we also have to show we take drug stewardship seriously. Most of you will no doubt take this on the chin and start making appointments to get this sorted out well before the start of the new season. As always we appreciate the vast majority of clients who understand and co-operate. We will try and make it as easy and relaxed as possible. We apologise in advance for taking some of your much-loved drugs away from you. As you should be aware by now, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June the following drugs will no longer be able to be added to annual RVM authorities - Tylan, Tylofen, Kelacef and Mastalone. They are all classed as critically important antibiotics used in human medicine (or belong to critically important antibiotic families) and we are advised we can no longer prescribe them for routine use. At your RVM consult we can discuss alternative options.

Please note that without an RVM consult you will not be able to purchase any RVMs for the coming season, so bear that in mind when we contact you to remind you that we're due for a consult about your drug requirements. With this newsletter, we have attached a simple inventory sheet for you to record what you have on hand and what the expiry date is on those products. Please have that information with you for the consult so we can note down what you've already got on hand. Without this information we can't conduct the consult.

With Covid-19 and the lockdown obviously we're all going to be under a bit of stress by the time the end of this season rolls around so we'll try and keep things as relaxed as possible. In fact after being on our own for so long, a bit of a chat might be therapeutic for all of us!

Feel free to get in early and book your consult so you're ready to go at the start of the new season. We'll try to make it as smooth as possible. Thanks again for your co-operation and understanding in this matter.

## DRYING OFF MANAGEMENT

**Given you're unlikely to have anyone from outside your bubble helping you administer DCT this season, it would be well worth your while reminding yourself the correct way to administer the stuff.**

**Remember to plan ahead and take your time:**

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 from 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 after reviewing your DCT form. 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.

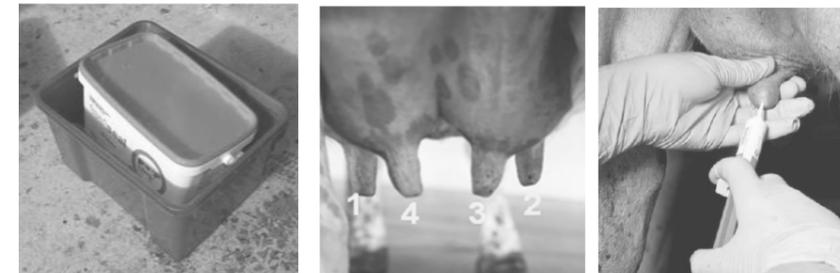
### DRYING OFF

It is important to make sure you have plenty of help on hand (well, that will depend on how many people are in your bubble...) and plenty of time to do the job properly. If there are only going to be two of you around, you might consider breaking the job up into bite-sized chunks based on which cows need drying off first.

Better to do the job over a few days than rush it all in one day and get sloppy because you're tired.

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 her 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 further information or training on dry off management, please contact one of our vets.

## 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 many. When we get tubes returned that are wet, dirty and in some cases contaminated by cow shit we are left having to throw them 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 because once it's left the clinic it's not coming back.