



Eltham Vet Services



Xmas 09

How about some good news going into Christmas? Where should I start?

The payout has gone up. Wonderful news for everyone and perhaps we can hope for some certainty and consistency with regard to the payout for next few years rather than the huge ups and downs of recent years. It should mean that you are able to meet commitments and have fewer visits from bank managers over the next year. Hopefully cow prices don't rise back to the ridiculous levels they were at last year, and if they do how about putting your hands in your pockets and leaving them there?

There must be something in the water here because it's good news all around with babies due and a recent engagement at the clinic. Lisa and Gareth (Barts) Bartley got engaged recently - congratulations to them both.



Nina is pregnant and will be taking maternity leave in February - congrats to her and her partner Brett. And on the same day Lisa announced her engagement Andrew Weir announced that he and Kath were expecting their 3rd child in May so it's been cakes all round for a couple of weeks at the clinic. Great news for all concerned.

Our in-clinic 'Action Man' Adrian recently improved his personal best for a half ironman by over 30 minutes (wait a minute... is that where all the steroids have gone?) and continues his punishing training schedule towards the Taupo ironman next year. I have no idea how he motivates himself to train like he does; I get exhausted just hearing what he has been up to each weekend. It's inspiring seeing a young man so organised and focussed that he can fit in a busy professional life with just about fulltime training. We're considering taking his ute off him and just getting him to run to calls.

On the work front it's fair to say we haven't been under the same pressures we were last year. We have still treated a lot of non-cyclers thanks to a terrible October, but generally I think cow condition is pretty good and they seem to spark up again as soon as some sun hits their backs so here's hoping for good conception rates this season. One thing we did do lots of in October and November were lame cows. Wet weather coinciding with the start of mating resulted in lots of foot damage and lots of vet visits. Most of them could be explained by just that - bulling activity and soft feet from wet weather. There are a few cases however where other factors have to be involved to get so many so consistently. Put it this way; if you are a bit of a 'rip, sh#t and bust' type of guy and you get lots of lame cows, perhaps you should think about how you bring the cows to the shed each day. I know I would be terrible and have them practically sprinting to the shed so I could get the milking done and get back to watch the cricket or rugby or whatever (what about the ALL Whites?! Fantastic!!). If you think you fit that mould maybe either reassess how you bring the cows to the shed or perhaps even get someone a little more laidback to do the job. If cows are allowed to take their time placing their feet, even on the roughest races, they are far less likely to go lame. And perhaps, go easy on the backing gate!

With bulls either out now or about to go out we have reproduced the article from our last newsletter regarding bull power and how many bulls you actually need once AB is over. Remember that if a bull gets sick or develops a temperature for any reason he is essentially of no use for that season because it can affect fertility for up to 2 months. While a newly lame bull is still fertile, he is also essentially gone for the season if he is unable to serve cows because he's sore. You nearly always end up needing more bulls than you thought so make sure you are prepared just in case.

So folks, thanks for another year of your business. It's been a challenging one, but as we near the end of 2009 things appear to be looking up and we have good reason to be optimistic for 2010 (a decade of the new century gone already!!). Enjoy the festive season and we look forward to catching up with you again in the New Year.

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Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS
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**Join us at the clinic
 for an end of year
 celebration**

**Tuesday 22 December
 late afternoon/evening**



*Congratulations
 to the Okaiawa
 Preschool who
 took out the
 'Supreme Award'
 at the Hawera
 Xmas parade
 (note clinic calf in
 background)*



Bull Power

Earlier in the year Teresa, Andrew and Polly did quite a few consultations reviewing herds' breeding performance. While every farm was different, and each had its own strengths and weaknesses, lack of bull power was by far the most common area of weakness. How do we measure the bulls' performance? We compare a herd's actual empty rate and estimated 6 week in-calf rate with the industry targets for their length of mating. If the 6 week in calf rate compares much better than does the final empty rate, we look more closely at bull numbers, selection and management. To get an accurate 6 week in calf rate you need to get accurate conception dates from aged pregnancy testing which means you need get onto scanning early (it usually means starting in January or February).

You need 1 bull for every 30 cows that are not pregnant when the bull goes out. That is the number of bulls which should be **with the herd at any one time**. More are needed to allow for rotation and rest. The actual number recommended depends upon the size of the herd and the % which are pregnant when the bulls go in. The % pregnant will depend upon the length of AB, the submission rate and the 3 week non return rate. The 6 week in-calf rate can give some indication but if you are in any doubt about how well AB has gone, you should assume a low percentage (about 40-50%) are pregnant when the bulls go in. That means for a 300 cow herd you need 6 bulls in at a time, and for a 500 cow herd you need 9 or 10 bulls at a time.

I know that bull hire is expensive but \$650 for a 2 year old bull is less than one empty cow.

Don't economise on bulls, it will cost you more in the long run.



Scanning Reminder

I know scanning is the last thing on your mind right now, but come January/February it suddenly becomes more relevant. This note is just to remind you about some important issues relating to accuracy of scanning:

- 1. Bull removal date.** This date is crucial to our accuracy. The date you give us determines what we call. If we think the bull has been out 6 weeks then a cow that looks and feels empty will be called empty. If it turns out that in fact the bull was removed only 4 weeks earlier, some of those 'empty' cows will be 4 weeks in calf and may be off to the works or end up calving at the run-off with all the other 'holdovers'. Write the date down and be accurate!!
- 2. Timing.** If you really want accuracy in terms of dating we have to scan them ideally 6-8 weeks after the bull has been removed. After that it's hard to tell between a 14 week pregnancy and a 20 week pregnancy. To call a cow late we really need to see the foetus on the screen and they are only really easy to spot between 5 and 9/10 weeks. After that it becomes an 'educated guess'.
- 3. Records.** Ideally print out a list of probable dates which are readily available if you have Minda-Pro or similar. If we are viewing a pregnancy that looks well established (say 14 weeks or more) and you say she's 15 weeks we can move on. If you call a cow 15 weeks and we can see a whole foetus on the screen we know immediately that she has returned to the bull at a later date and can be identified as a possible induction. And if you call a cow 6 weeks based on having seen her 'bulling' and we can see she's well in calf we know that was a false alarm. If you don't call out a cow like that we will call her well in calf and move on. If you haven't picked up on that you will still have her down as a probable late, put her up to be induced and miss out on an AB calf as a result.
- 4. Clean, readable ear tags.** Need I say anything more?



LOVE AND HONESTY

An 80 year old woman was arrested for shoplifting. When she went before the judge he asked her "What did you steal?" She replied "A can of peaches." The judge then asked her why she had stolen the can of peaches, and she replied that she was hungry, "and my husband won't give me extra money". The judge then asked her how many peaches were in the can. She replied "6." The judge said "Then I will give you 6 days in jail." Before the judge could conclude the trial, the woman's husband spoke up and asked the judge if he could say something. Respecting his natural concern the judge asked "What is it?" The husband said "She also stole a packet of hundreds and thousands."



CONSULTING

If You're Not A Part of the Solution,
There's Good Money to be Made in
Prolonging the Problem

BVD Vat Test Results

One hundred and fifty of our dairy clients took us up on our offer to have their vats tested for BVD antibodies at no charge. The results of the tests are now in. All the farmers involved have been sent their results and a letter of explanation from Andrew Weir. Each test would normally cost \$39 + GST but Andrew persuaded Pfizer to pick up the tab for us.

Herds with **moderate exposure** are probably in the best category but made up only 18% of the herds tested. There may have been BVD in these herds in the past but it isn't there now. Even better, up to half the cows are already immune to BVD, so if it does get into the herd the disease outbreak won't be quite as catastrophic. (They could still experience a significant impact on reproductive performance and other disease problems). It would be a good idea for these herds to repeat the vat antibody test annually before mating just to check the levels haven't changed very much. A big rise is a sure sign of danger. They should only use tested and vaccinated bulls but other protection measures such as vaccinating calves and holdovers before they go out grazing and boosting yearling heifers are optional. These measures will give additional insurance against BVD infection of your herd but, like all insurance, there is a premium to pay! A chat with one of our vets about the individual circumstances on your farm may help to clarify which measures, if any, will be most cost effective for you.

Herds with **low or no exposure** are at risk of a catastrophic disease outbreak if BVD gets into the herd. How catastrophic is catastrophic? It depends on the time of year that it strikes. A current outbreak which started last autumn has caused 5% un milkable slips, 50% of keepers dead or deformed, appalling calf scours and most of the Friesian bull calves bobbied. Unfortunately half of the herds we tested are in this susceptible group. It is impossible to predict when, or if, any of these herds will become infected but the more contact the herd has with other herds, the greater the risk of catching BVD. Using untested and unvaccinated bulls, buying in stock, grazing stock away from home, having lots of neighbours or showing stock will all bring the herd into contact with other cattle and *eventually* one of those other cattle will be infected with BVD. We cannot predict when *eventually* will be; it could be this year, it could be 2025 or any of the years in between. Again, a chat with a vet about your individual farm's circumstances will help to clarify the biggest risk factors for your herd, what measures can be taken to reduce them and what those measures might cost.

Herds with **very high exposure** are likely to have active BVD infection in the herd. Only 14% of the herds we tested fell into this group but nearly half of those will have one or more **PIs** present. **PIs** are animals which were infected with BVD while still in the womb. They remain infected all their lives and are the main way that BVD infection persists in a herd. If you get rid of the **PIs** the BVD will die out. If you don't get rid of the **PIs**, BVD will persist in the herd until the last **PI** dies or is culled.

When Andrew studied herds with **PIs** in them he found the effect on herd health and reproduction was worth about \$80/infected cow. So we *strongly recommend* that herds with an **SP** ratio of 1 or more test their vats for presence of the BVD virus using the BVD PCR test. If virus is found then the **PIs** should be hunted down and culled. Speak to one of our vets about how to test your vat for virus.

Herds with **high exposure** (17%) are the most difficult to interpret. They could have a **PI** present, or they could have high antibodies because they regularly contact an infected neighbouring herd over the fence or the heifers and holdovers may be contacting BVD out grazing if they are not vaccinated before they go. Recent vaccination of the herd can sometimes lift antibodies into this category. Again, a chat with a vet may clarify matters. Some farmers in this category may wish to do a vat test for the presence of BVD virus to make sure they don't have **PI** in the herd.

If this seems hideously complicated, it's because BVD is a hideously complicated disease. It is very tempting to stick your head firmly in the sand and hope it will all go away. (I so wish it would). If you are lucky it might, but it could also bite you hard on the backside while you're not looking. BVD prevention measures are a bit like insurance, you weigh up the risks against the cost of the premium and choose the level of cover you are prepared to pay for. That decision is yours but we can help to clarify the risks and the costs for various levels of BVD control on your particular farm.



IT IS GOOD TO BE A WOMAN:

*We got off the Titanic first...
We can scare male bosses with the
mysterious gynecological disorder
excuses.*

Taxis stop for us.

*We don't look like a frog in a blender when dancing.
No fashion faux pas we make could ever rival the
Speedo.*

*We don't have to pass gas to amuse ourselves.
If we forget to shave no one has to know.*

*We can congratulate our teammate without ever
touching her rear end.*

*We never have to reach down every so often to make
sure our privates are still there.*

We have the ability to dress ourselves.

*We can talk to the opposite sex without having to
picture them naked.*

*If we marry someone 20 years younger we are aware
that we will look like an idiot.*

We will never regret piercing our ears.

*There are times when chocolate really can solve all
our problems.*

*We can make comments about how silly men are in
their presence because they aren't listening anyway.*



CHRISTMAS HAM
Purchase selected Merial
Ancare products during
this festive
season and



we'll serve you up a
quality kiwi ham!
(promo concludes 18th Dec)

**PLUS each purchase receives entry in draw
for \$1,000 New World voucher**

**New World
vouchers
with Vetdectin**



See
in-clinic
display

Chocolate Poisoning!!!

Did you know that chocolate contains a chemical called Theobromine which is actually poisonous to our pets? Theobromine is also present in cooking chocolate and cocoa powder. If your pet ingests too much of this poison they can develop vomiting and diarrhoea or in really bad cases convulsions or even just die suddenly from heart failure. Darker chocolates contain higher levels of theobromines compared to milk chocolates so are more dangerous.



Before you call 111 because your 40kg Lab has just eaten one of your Cadbury favourites, relax. Whether a dog gets chocolate poisoning or not will depend on the type of chocolate, the size of the dog and how much it has eaten. A big Lab eating one piece of chocolate will be fine; a Chihuahua eating a block of Energy chocolate on the other hand could present a real threat. Smaller breeds of dogs are especially at risk because of their smaller body weights so you really need to watch them around your Xmas chokkies.

Treatment requires trying to get rid of the undigested chocolate in your pets system and also maintaining them on a drip in the clinic, which, as you can imagine, can become expensive.

So next time those big brown eyes are begging for some of your Moro or Dairy Milk (or worse your Whittaker's Dark Chocolate) ignore them and keep eating! If you have any worries that your dog may have over-indulged please give us a call.

Marriage Quotes

(I hope Barts is reading this!!)

A good marriage would be between a blind wife and a deaf husband. *Michel de Montaigne*

A husband is what is left of a lover, after the nerve has been extracted. *Helen Rowland*

A man in love is incomplete until he has married. Then he's finished. *Zsa Zsa Gabor*

A man marries to have a home, but also because he doesn't want to be bothered with sex and all that sort of thing. *W. Somerset Maugham*

A man may be a fool and not know it, but not if he is married. *H. L. Mencken*

A wedding anniversary is the celebration of love, trust, partnership, tolerance and tenacity. The order varies for any given year. *Paul Sweeney*

A wedding is just like a funeral except that you get to smell your own flowers. *Grace Hansen*

All marriages are happy. It's the living together afterward that causes all the trouble. *Raymond Hull*

Any intelligent woman who reads the marriage contract, and then goes into it, deserves all the consequences. *Isadora Duncan*

Bachelors know more about women than married men; if they didn't they'd be married too. *H. L. Mencken*

Do you know what it means to come home at night to a woman who'll give you a little love, a little affection, a little tenderness? It means you're in the wrong house, that's what it means. *Henny Youngman*

I have great hopes that we shall love each other all our lives as much as if we had never married at all. *Lord Byron*

I have learned that only two things are necessary to keep one's wife happy. First, let her think she's having her own way. And second, let her have it. *Lyndon B. Johnson*

I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life. *Rita Rudner*

More Products to Disappear

The mastitis product Special Formula vanished from our shelves last year. More products are about to become redundant in the New Year. The ACVM group have had the antibiotic Streptomycin in its sights for many years now and finally has decided that it wants to get rid of products that have Streptomycin, where it comes as a combination with other antibiotics, removed from circulation. There are plenty of valid reasons why this should happen, mostly to do with the human food chain and so on. Also if you've ever looked at a mastitis sensitivity panel you will notice that just about everything that causes mastitis seems to be resistant to Streptomycin anyway so why bother with it? It will still be available on its own as an injectable because it is the antibiotic of choice for treating Woody Tongue, but where mastitis preparations in particular are concerned it means that a number of products you will be familiar with either need to be reformulated or withdrawn. The products on our shelves affected are: Nafpenzal Milking Cow, Ubro Yellow and Strepin HP. Also affected are Pink Scour tablets and Scourban Plus. As of 25th August next year those products will be banned from use so it's no point stock-piling them because you won't be allowed to use them.

Between now and then I'm sure that Scourban and scour tablets will be reformulated so they are acceptable but those three mastitis preparations will be gone by this time next year. For now, you don't need to worry but over the next 6 months we will not be re-stocking these products and will either stock alternatives or recommend existing products that will do the same job. This will be reflected in your PAR Authorities for next season.