



Inductions Reminder

Identification and scanning records

Just so there's no confusion on this here is an extract from the Induction Code of Practice regarding confirmation of expected calving dates for cows you plan to induce:

“Expected natural calving date must be determined by ultrasound examination or manual palpation performed at an appropriate time when the stage of pregnancy can be accurately estimated.”

This means potential candidates for induction must be scanned or manually tested 6-12 weeks after mating for accurate estimation of calving date to be made. After 12 weeks accurate estimation of calving date becomes almost impossible.

“Ultrasound examination must be by a competent and experienced operator. Farmers purchasing pregnant cows to increase herd size and who wish to induce them after purchase must ensure that the relevant documentation (i.e. veterinary certificate with pregnancy information) is included in the purchase/sale agreement. This is important to assist their own veterinarian to determine their suitability for selection for calving induction.”

So, in answer to a few questions, if you are planning to induce this year mating records are not enough on their own. Those dates need to be confirmed by manual or ultrasound testing at a time when accurate dating is possible: 6-12 weeks after the bull has been removed. If you keep half decent mating records you should already have a list of late calving cows that potentially qualify for induction based on your last mating date. Please have that list with you and make sure you bring those cows to our attention during scanning so we can take a bit of time to accurately date the pregnancy. If you want to save time during scanning, tail paint all the cows with late mating dates a different colour to bring them to our attention. Simply calling a cow 'late' like we used to is no longer good enough to meet the code of practice; we need to establish an actual date.

Remember after about 12 weeks we often don't see a calf on the scanner; we just see the cotyledons or 'buttons' that confirm a pregnancy and call her pregnant based on that. You can only accurately date a pregnancy if you can see a calf and you can only do that between 6 and 12 weeks; after that it's just going to be "yes" or "no".



Taking Care with New Pasture

We all know the risks associated with introducing cattle to lush, rapidly growing pasture - that is Nitrate poisoning. Generally this occurs in autumn/winter on lush rapidly growing pasture such as fast growing annual ryegrasses or nitrogen/urea boosted pasture grazed too early and during dull, overcast, warm weather. The secret is to introduce this sort of pasture gradually, feed in short periods, supplement with other feeds and watch for signs of sick cattle.

Well, here's another reason to take care with new or lush pasture:

“Fog Fever”; also known as Atypical Interstitial Pneumonia, this condition has been diagnosed recently in our area, resulting in the sudden death of three cows. Typically this condition is seen in the autumn when cattle are moved on to new lush pasture from drier more mature pasture. The reason we've seen it earlier than usual (one case before Xmas) is due to the dry pre-Xmas conditions followed by rain and sudden grass growth. Often the pasture concerned has been top-dressed with a nitrogenous fertiliser and the condition is generally seen within a couple of weeks of entry to the new pasture. The syndrome is thought to be an allergic reaction to a breakdown product of an amino acid called L-tryptophan, which is present in pasture, especially lush rapidly growing pasture.

Clinical signs: Onset is normally sudden, with one or more animals affected. Symptoms can vary widely and the farmer may only notice one to be ill at the start. Severe breathing difficulty with loud grunts and frothy mouth breathing become obvious in acute cases but actual coughing is only heard occasionally. Mortality rates are often high (75%) but fortunately usually only a small number of cows are affected (5%). Sometimes cows are simply found dead in the paddock.

Treatment: in early cases, antihistamines and anti-inflammatories can help and antibiotics are often given to prevent a subsequent bacterial pneumonia. Remaining animals should be removed from suspect pasture (slowly, because stress and excitement can precipitate death). They can be safely returned to the same pasture after 2-3 weeks when the critical stage of growth has passed and grazing will be safe again.

Another reason to treat new, lush pasture with caution and respect when feeding to stock.

Purchase selected Merial Ancare Pour-On products to 'Get the Tailored Fit'

**a half sleeve vest
Or
a Stormbusta**



Eukanuba and Iams Pet Food now back in stock



Our John just gets better with age

You've probably seen him lately; thin as a rake and fit as a fiddle. Our much teased Trading Manager, John Larkin took up cycling seriously not that long ago and it seems to agree with him. I'm not sure what he looks like in tight shorts but he can obviously turn those pedals because he did the round-the-mountain race recently in 4 hours 42 minutes, making him 47th over all. Brilliant effort John; well done. Don't get any thinner though or you won't be able to lift those 20 litre drums of drench into your Ute.



Eltham Vet Services

February 2011

So, does anyone have any idea what the weather is going to do over the next couple of months? I don't and I suspect that neither Metservice nor my old mate Ken Ring have much idea either. Talk about variable. Every time I think that we are set for a tough eczema season, it gets a bit cold and just when I'm thinking we may be in the clear it gets all muggy & sticky again. One thing I think I can say with some assurance now is that talk of an early dry off due to drought is probably no longer a worry. Hopefully for a change you can capitalise on a decent payout by milking well into April or May. Mind you, now I hear rumours of an \$8 payout and possibly higher for next season. That's great but I can't help feeling that if Fonterra can afford a really big payout, couldn't they maybe hold a bit back and guarantee a good payout for say 3 years? That would have to make budgeting, provisional tax and so on a lot easier? I suppose that depends on where you are in your dairy career; if you are about to retire & sell up you will be saying "the higher the better" while if you are trying to enter the industry you will be praying that we don't get the crazy price fluctuations of recent years. Scanning and dry cow therapy starts to feature in people's thoughts over the next few months. Remember if you intend inducing next season, you need all potential induced cows scanned at the correct time (see this newsletter) to confirm the natural mating date; mating records alone are not enough this year. Remember also to keep a keen eye on spore count trends over the next 2-3 months and be ready to act quickly - take a look at the article over the page for more details. Our latest young vet introduces himself below; no we haven't hired Scott Styris - Leon is the slightly drunk looking chap leering into the camera from the side. I can vouch for him when he's sober and I am very confident you will all like him - my only worry is that he's a Chiefs fan ...

**RELAY FOR LIFE
IS A REMARKABLE AND MOVING OVERNIGHT TEAM
EVENT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CANCER SOCIETY**

Your support so far is appreciated.

- *Hayden Lawrence won the \$100 note*
 - *Pauline Bourne won the hamper*
- Team members required to walk 26/27 March**
Remember - the donation box at counter

New Veterinarian

Hi my name's Leon and I'm the new vet here at Eltham Vet Services. I hail from the small town of Paeroa in the Waikato and have been an avid supporter of Waikato Rugby and The Chiefs through thick and thin (mainly thin).



I'm interested in all aspects of veterinary medicine including dairy, dry stock, equine and the odd small animal here and there. My interests outside of work include fishing, diving, hunting and most sports involving a ball of some description. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and working with you in the future.

Clinic & Farm Supplies
Railway Street, Eltham
Ph . (06) 764 8196
www.elthamvetservice.co.nz
Trading Depot
Hollard Engineering,
Victoria Street, Kaponga
Ph. (06) 764 6686
J Larkin 0274 482 585

Veterinarians

Alistair McDougall BVSc - CEO
Giles Gilling BVSc BSc MRCVS
Andrew Weir BVSc, PGDip (Epi)
Jim Robins BVSc, BSc, DipPharm
Polly Otterson BVSc, MSc,
Teresa Carr BVSc
Adrian Clark BVSc
Linley Gilling BVSc
Lindsay Lash BVSc
James Bruce BVSc
Leon Christensen BVSc

Office

Joan Hughes John Larkin BBS
Lisa Goldsworthy Jill Watson
Sue Morresey Frank Suter

Calf vaccinations due now!!

Give Lisa a call to book

1st and 2nd Lepto & BVD vaccinations. Remember if there's any chance of these calves being exported in the future please request Pregsure BVD vaccine as opposed to Viracare.



Early Dry-Off? Don't forget DCT

It's generally about this time of year that some cows put their hands up (hooves?) to let you know they are struggling and need to be dried off early. This may be due to age, illness or high somatic cell count.

Whatever the reason, once you've decided whether she's worth keeping or not, don't forget to treat her with Dry Cow therapy and/or Teatseal. She's going to be dry for a long time and she won't be eligible for treatment later in the season when the rest of the herd is dried off so you have to make that decision now. Ideally use the longest acting DCT available and for even better long term protection the additional use of a teat sealant should see her well and truly protected until calving.

If you have some cows you are thinking of drying off early and keeping for next season, come and speak to one of our vets about protection over the dry period.

Please complete (& return) the enclosed Dry Cow Consultation form two weeks before drying-off your herd

FACIAL ECZEMA REFRESHER

Who knows what's in store for us this season. The weather has been all over the place with unseasonal dry spells, humidity and the odd massive down pour. With such uncertainty it's impossible to make any bold predictions with regard to facial eczema this season. So for that reason we have re-printed the FE article that appeared in our newsletter last year. If you aren't on our Spore Counts e-mail list let us know and we will add your details.

The Problem:

During periods of warm humid weather a fungus called 'sporidesmin' builds up in pasture. When eaten this toxin damages the liver, which in turn results in the build up of waste products that circulate around the body and react to sunlight resulting in the classic signs of facial eczema. FE can be very severe and may kill animals. Usually these signs are quite visual but once they are obvious the animal is already severely affected.

Signs:

- Marked drop in milk production
- Restlessness at milking time (kicking off cups, etc)
- Actively seeking shade
- Licking of the udder
- Obvious redness ("sunburn") of affected areas, particularly white areas, inside hind legs, udder and teats, tongue, lip margins and vulva
- Dramatic peeling of 'dead' skin from affected areas

Likely toxic conditions:

Prolonged periods of warm humid weather

High humidity

Light rain or heavy dews in conjunction with grass minimum temperatures above 12-13 degrees C.

North facing sheltered paddocks, under hedges, etc are generally the most likely to have high spore counts

Risk levels:

Spore counting is still the best way to get a handle on likely risk. It is highly variable between paddocks but as a [guide](#):

Low risk: < 20,000

Slight: 20,000 – 35,000 (start water treatment once we get to 20,000 if not already)

Moderate: 35,000 – 70,000 (if you were drenching this is when you would generally start)

High: > 70,000

Care for affected stock:

Dry off milking cows

Make shade readily available

Treat infected skin lesions

Access to plenty of quality feed and water

B vitamin injections, zinc cream for affected areas and

'Eczema Oils' or 'Manderson's Mix' to aid recovery

Seek veterinary advice

Management and Prevention Tips:

Make early preparations (around here that means starting to make plans in January usually).

Spore count regularly to find out what the situation is on your property and where the most dangerous paddocks are (regional monitor farm counts are at best a trend indicator for the region).

Never graze stock into the base level of pastures. The fungus grows on the litter at the base of the plant and spores are concentrated there (watch out for re-growth paddocks after hay and silage making).

Prevention Options:

Fungicidal Sprays – they certainly work but timing is an issue and around here where FE is sporadic it might be hard to justify cost. (In the Waikato where FE seems to occur every year, it would just about be a no-brainer). If you were planning on using them they need to be applied before spore counts rise so you would be applying them now. X-Spore is available at the clinic.

Zinc is still the most workable and cost-effective choice for this part of the world. There are various ways to supplement zinc depending on your situation:

Water treatment - as this is not a direct method you would need to start adding zinc to the water supply in small amounts early (i.e. before spore counts get high and so that cows get used to the taste). Effective in low to moderate conditions; less effective once counts get to danger levels.

Drenching - individual drenching is the method of choice once spore counts get high because then you know the cows are actually getting the required dose for protection. Not possible in some situations depending on your shed and so on.

Zinc boluses – very useful option for stock away grazing, young stock and so on. At least two versions are available with protection of about 4-5 weeks. Probably not cost-effective in lactating animals due to their size and therefore cost of treatment.

For all your zinc requirements and options our Trading Manager John Larkin is the man to talk to.



PUSHING THE PROVERBIAL UPHILL

It's around this time of year when we start seeing people coming in to purchase large amounts of mastitis intramammary drugs to treat high cell count cows, often in an attempt to get their bulk count down below penalty levels. Or maybe they have just had a herd test done and want to treat all the cows that tested over 1,000,000.

When you are faced with a large group of high cell count cows you have a number of options and treating them all is not necessarily the smartest or most cost effective one.

Unless this is a sudden outbreak, which is unlikely, the probability is that you have been fighting a rising bulk count all year and quite possibly for a number of years. Bulk count issues generally do not happen overnight. Sometimes they do if, say, you've simply missed a couple of cows with clinical mastitis, in which case you just need to find those cows and get them out of the vat. Unfortunately in most cases it's not quite that easy.

So, your bulk count is hovering at or above 400,000?

The first thing you need to do is remove enough high cell count (or clinically infected cows in case you've just missed a few cases of actual mastitis) to get your bulk count below 400,000 so you don't get penalised.

You do that either thanks to a recent herd test, which will give you a list of high count cows - those are the ones you need to target first using either the rapid mastitis test (preferably) or your electronic mastitis detector. Remember that as few as 5% of your cows can account for 50% of the bulk count so often it's not as many cows as you may think. If you haven't had a herd test recently you will need to either test the whole herd with your RMT or electronic tester or start by targeting likely problem cows - you know the ones: old cows with lumpy udders, cows with a history of repeat mastitis during the season, recently treated cows, etc. Start with them first and you might get lucky.

Take those cows out of supply and then take some time to consider what the best option is for each of those cows.

Sure, some of them will be worth treating, especially if they are young, haven't been treated regularly for mastitis or been high in previous seasons; even more so if you can isolate the problem to a single quarter. Generally speaking younger high cell count cows are always worth at least one attempt at treating during lactation, especially while the payout is high. So by all means give them a go; talk to one of us first for advice on what might be the best treatment.

What if they are older cows, which have had dry cow therapy before (maybe for a number of years) and remain consistently high? What are her chances of being cured now? I'll give you a clue: extremely poor. So why waste time and money attempting to cure her when we know she probably has a chronic staph infection and has very little chance of a cure? She should be culled now so she can no longer infect young vulnerable cows during milking.

Also think of the time of the year. For some of your cows you will be thinking about drying them off in another couple of months anyway, or sooner if she's struggling. If she's a cow deemed worth keeping and attempting a cure, we know that she has a better chance of cure from dry cow therapy than lactating treatment so perhaps you should consider drying her off now and treating her with DCT. That is of course; assuming that she wasn't high last season and has already had DCT in the past. If it didn't work in the past it is unlikely to work this time around so again you need to study your records and make the sensible choice to cull her.



Dry Cow Therapy is a wonderful product and cleans up a lot of cows and herds each year. However it isn't a miracle product, even if you do the whole herd each year. Some cows are past curing and need to be culled. That's what your treatment and herd testing records are for. And if you've allowed this problem to develop by either not treating cows with DCT in the past or ignoring advice to do the whole herd, or chosen to only treat the worst high cell count cows year after year (including those cows that have been high in previous seasons despite DCT) you have created a situation now where whole herd therapy alone just isn't going

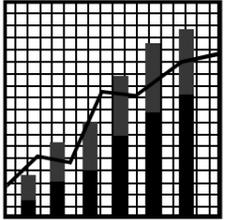
to give the results you are expecting. You need to embark on a co-ordinated program of culling alongside whole herd therapy of cows that remain; possibly for a number of seasons before you begin to see real progress.

Of course you also need to assess your whole milking management process. Do you teat spray all season? Are you quick off the mark detecting, removing and treating clinically infected cows? Are you one of those folks who stops teat-spraying after Xmas and then wonders why your bulk count begins to rise?

What if you are one of those unfortunate people who have bulk count issues as well as a high empty rate making culling on anything other than whether they are pregnant or not almost impossible? We have a few clients in that boat and it gets to the point where both in terms of their mastitis and their reproduction we are simply applying large expensive band aids every year but not making any real progress. In those cases unless we can get their reproductive issues under control we are unlikely to make progress on the mastitis front even though they know they should be culling problem cows - they just can't replace all those empties each year.

For those people it's probably time they thought about looking at the **In-Calf program**. We have three vets trained as **In-Calf consultants** - Andrew, Polly & Teresa. They have all made good progress with clients who have committed to the program. Perhaps they can help you start to sort out one major problem and in the course of doing that you may get to the point where you can finally do that big ruthless cull that is needed in your herd to get all those old problem high cell count cows (who get DCT every year but remain high and continue to infect younger cows) and begin sorting out your other major problem - Mastitis.

What you are doing isn't working so perhaps it's time to try something new. Give us a call to discuss your options.



The Italian lover

A virile, middle-aged Italian gentlemen named Guido was relaxing at his favourite bar in Rome when he managed to attract a spectacular young blonde woman. Things progressed to the point where he invited her back to his apartment and, after some small talk, they retired to his bedroom where he rattled her senseless. After a pleasant interlude he asked with a smile, "So, you finish?" She paused for a second, frowned, and replied, "No."

Surprised, Guido reached for her and the rattling resumed. This time she thrashed about wildly and there were screams of passion... The session finally ends and again, Guido smiles and asks, "You finish?"

Again, after a short pause, she returns his smile, cuddles closer to him and softly says, "No."

Stunned, but damned if he was going to leave this woman unsatisfied, Guido reaches for the woman yet again. Using the last of his strength, he barely manages it, but they end together screaming, bucking, clawing and ripping the bed sheets. Exhausted, Guido falls onto his back, gasping. Barely able to turn his head, he looks into her eyes, smiles proudly and asked again, "You finish?"

Barely able to speak, the beautiful blonde whispers in his ear, "No, I Norwegian".