

What's Up Doc?

- Beth Martin

It may still be feeling warm, but it's officially autumn and dry off is approaching. The summer has been kind, with just enough sun and just enough rain to keep everything green.

Spore counts on our monitor farms haven't spiked to more than 20,000, but that doesn't mean they won't climb. Topped paddocks with lots of dry matter will have much higher counts. In previous years, we have been surprised with high spore counts in April and May, so keep a close eye on the counts.

Cows should be at full zinc rates in the water and young stock will have received their first bolus. If you're concerned about your cows' zinc levels (toxicity or deficiency), a simple blood test can give us more information.

Dry off is fast approaching - don't forget to book in your restricted veterinary

medicine (RVM) and dry cow consults and start making a plan for slowing down the cows. Last season, a few herds were dried off too fast, resulting in post-dry off mastitis. The dry season is also a great time to perform herd trace mineral testing, including liver biopsies.

Scanning season is nearly over and Charlotte has a great summary of the results in this newsletter.

Over the summer, we also hosted some great educational courses at the clinic. Check out Ryan's overview of what we learnt.

Last, but not least, we have a Farmer's BBQ on Tuesday 5th March! Please remember to RSVP - the team looks forward to seeing you all there.

What's happening on-farm?

- ✓ Autumn calving
- ✓ Monitor spore counts and zinc treatments
- ✓ Bulk milk BVD testing



The benefits of a liver biopsy

- Beth Martin

Trace minerals are crucial to optimal production and animal health. Coming into autumn and winter, copper levels start to decrease, especially after the facial eczema season with zinc usage.

The liver is the storage organ for

copper and the levels of copper in blood aren't always an indication of storage levels. The liver is like a water tank and the blood is the tap - the tank can be nearly empty, but the water will still flow as if it's full. Hence, the liver can be low in copper but the blood will

show adequate levels, so, we can't always rely on liver blood levels to assess copper status!

A pre-dry off liver biopsy to test for copper, along with blood sampling

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for selenium and B12, is the best way to assess your herd's trace mineral status. Winter is a period of low availability and high demand (pregnancy and early lactation), so ensuring cows have adequate stores is key.

How does a biopsy work?

The concept of a liver biopsy can seem scary, but cows tolerate it very well and complications are rare.

- We generally ask for 10 cows of varying ages to be drafted. Six will be biopsied and blood tested and the

rest just blood tested.

- Cows need to be well fed so the full rumen holds the liver in place against the diaphragm.
- The cows are restrained in a race with access to the right hand side of the cow. A biopsy needle is inserted through the skin and muscle, between the ribs, to reach the liver and retrieve a small sample.
- Local anaesthetic is used so the animal doesn't feel the biopsy needle being inserted and pain relief is given at the same time.
- No stitches are needed and cows quickly return to grazing.

When is the best time to do trace mineral testing?

The ideal times to sample herds are pre-dry off (blood test and biopsy) and one month pre-mating (blood test only). We also blood sample during transition and calving to measure calcium and magnesium levels.

Accurately knowing your animals' trace mineral status guides appropriate supplementation, avoiding under and over dosing, to get the best out of your herd.

VCM Autumn Trace Minerals Testing Programme

**Autumn liver biopsy package
May/June**

- 5x Copper liver
- 5x B12 blood
- 5x Selenium blood

Cost: \$830
(plus visit and mileage)

or

**Autumn blood-only package
May/June**

- 5x B12 blood
- 5x Selenium blood
- 7x Copper blood

Cost \$490
(plus visit and mileage)

and

**Pre-mating package
August/September**

- 5x B12 blood
- 5x Selenium blood
- 7x Copper blood
- 10x Magnesium blood

Cost \$650
(plus visit and mileage)

Double up and **SAVE 10%:**
Autumn liver biopsy and pre-mating
\$1480 - SAVE 10%
Autumn blood-only and pre-mating
\$1140 - SAVE 10%

Scanning results

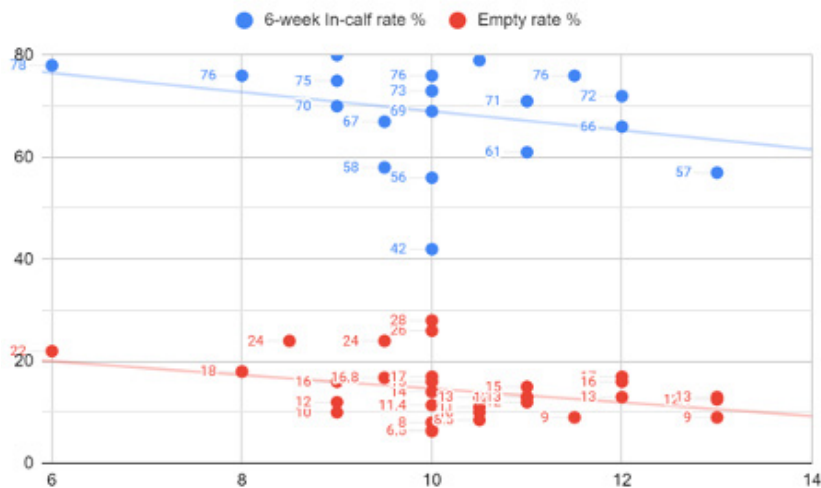
- Charlotte Glass

We are reaching the end of the scanning season and have collated everyone's results, which show a 3% drop in empty rates from last year. The median has gone from 16% last season to 13% this season.

A quarter of you have met the 10% industry target for empty rate, so well done. A small number have also met the 78% industry target for 6-week in-calf rate. To enable us to provide better data analysis for you in the future, please consider giving us access to your MINDA.



Industry targets:	%	Lower quartile:	%	Upper quartile:	%
6-week in-calf rate	78.0	6-week in-calf rate	63.8	6-week in-calf rate	75.8
Empty rate	10.0	Empty rate	10.0	Empty rate	16.9



Graph showing the 6-week in-calf rate vs. mating length in blue and the empty rate vs. mating length in red. The y axis is the percentage and the x axis is the mating length.

If you are disappointed with your repro results this year, have a chat to your KeyVet and organise a repro consult to find areas where improvements could be made.

Wanted to make a cow joke
But you've probably herd 'em all!



Upskilling the region

- Ryan Olesen

In late 2023, Vet Clinic Morrinsville hosted a series of practical workshops in animal medicine, primarily focusing on improving lameness and ultrasound techniques. The goal was to educate veterinarians, vet techs and farmers of the Waikato region to further boost community knowledge in animal health and the farming industry.

Ultrasound course

Ultrasound is an important diagnostic tool for determining pregnancies in cattle. Technical and CPD Manager for Agrihealth, Steve Cranfield, who is known for his expertise in mastitis and pregnancy ultrasound diagnostics education in New Zealand, led this workshop.

The course aimed to increase accuracy in diagnostic imaging and improve herd welfare. Veterinarians and vet technicians on the course came from across the Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Taranaki regions and there were positive reviews from farmers and participants alike.

"Today I was really encouraged to see young vets really stretching themselves and giving it a go", said the farmer hosting the event. *"The skill level I saw was awesome."*



Lameness course

Vet Clinic Morrinsville also hosted a lameness course to further improve animal health knowledge into the causes and prevention of lame animals.

Neil Chesterton, veterinarian and lame cow consultant for Vet Education Transfer Services Ltd, has led the Healthy Hoof class for several years and is regarded as the head of lame cow health in New Zealand. The workshop ran for three days and included in-depth discussions on

- lameness theory,
- observing cow flow and herd management,
- track and shed design,
- prevention of lameness, and
- the treatment of individual cases.

If you have any concerns about your animals' hooves, or want to know more about how to manage lameness on your farm, please give the clinic a call - we'd be happy to help.



Come get a feed on us!

Date: Tuesday 5th March 2024
Time: 5pm - 8pm
Location: Vet Clinic Morrinsville, 62 Moorhouse Street, Morrinsville

We wish to invite you and your family to join us at our casual late summer BBQ to show our appreciation for your support over the past year. Mix and mingle with fellow farmers and catch up with the Vet Clinic Morrinsville vets and staff.

Please R.S.V.P. on (07) 889 6738, email office@vetclinicmorrinsville.co.nz, or let a staff member know so we can nail down the catering and bar requirements.

We hope to see you there!



Our clinic

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