

What's Up Doc?

- Ryan Olesen

Early winter has given us some good weather, with warm temperatures and plenty of sun to help maintain the grass growth that has been continuous throughout this year.

Cow nutrition has been of a good standard across farms, with animals having good body condition scores (BCS) leading up to calving. There are a few risks with a BCS being too high over winter, especially with ketosis causing down cows in the herd. As the calf grows inside the cow, this restricts the rumen size and capacity to graze. Feed intake is therefore reduced, causing the condition of the cow to drop. If the cow has too much fat (>6.5 BCS), she will use these fat stores for energy (ketones). Too many ketones can be toxic, causing lethargy, recumbency and, in extreme cases, death.

To treat cows with ketosis, use metabolic bags containing Dextrose and give slowly into the vein. Under the skin won't be effective as the product needs to be circulating through the blood to get effectively distributed to the liver and other cells in the animal.

Oral Ketol will also give the cow a good dose of energy to help in recovery.

Winter is also the highest risk period for salmonella. The muddy conditions provide a good median to infect other animals on farms. Salmonella is also a stress-related disease, with any carrier animals showing signs of sickness during increased stress levels (bad weather, moved too hard, calving/lambing). We recommend vaccinating your herds that are prone to salmonella with Salvexin, reducing stress through good, calm stock management, and having plenty of shelter during adverse weather events. It's important to get veterinary treatment as soon as possible for any sick animals suspected of having salmonella.

Lastly, calving season is in full flow for spring farms. Continue to make sure calves get good colostrum intake and have optimal nutrition. Use plenty of lube in difficult calvings and remember that early intervention is key. The longer a cow is struggling to give birth, the more energy and electrolytes she uses and the more likely she is to go down (and stay down).

Many pelvic nerves get compressed during calving (primarily the obturator nerve) and prolonged compression will lead to nerve damage and the inability to move the hindlimbs correctly. Limit the time taken to assist the cow to 30-40 minutes maximum before calling a vet for assistance to ensure the cow and the calf have the best chance of survival.

What's happening on-farm?

- ✔ Calving / Kidding
- ✔ Metrichex July calvers
- ✔ Disbudding
- ✔ Autumn herd pregnancy testing
- ✔ Calf vaccinations
- ✔ Bulk milk BVD testing

Mastatest and HiSCC in early lactation

- Agrihealth



Reducing mastitis in the colostrum herd is key to preventing future mastitis cases in the milking herd. Wash teats, if they are dirty, with a low-pressure hose. Teat spray colostrum cows before and after milking to kill bugs, improve teat condition, and assist milk let down. Strip quarters to check for mastitis at every milking.

Agrihealth recommends:

- Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT) each cow at the eighth milking after calving (10th milking for heifers);
- If any quarter is RMT positive, retain the cow in the colostrum mob for another four milkings;
- If the RMT reaction gets worse, or if it is still positive on the 12th milking, take a sterile milk sample and, ideally, test the milk to identify the bacteria with Mastatest HiSCC test.

Mastatest clinical cartridge recommendations:

Staph. aureus	If new infection, treat cows with an extended course of antibiotic ranked number 1 (lowest MIC) Check records for repeat high SCC or clinical mastitis cases. Seek vet advice; options include dry off quarter, antibiotic DCT or culling (at end of season)
Strep. uberis / Strep. dysgalactiae / Strep. species / CNS / Other Gram +ve / Unspecified	Treat with intramammary antibiotic ranked number 1 (lowest MIC)
E. Coli / Unspecified Gram -ve	MIC most commonly ≥ 4 indicating antibiotics are likely ineffective. Continue with KetoMax and milk cow at least twice a day. Discuss options with your vet
Probable Serratia / Klebsiella	Antibiotics are ineffective, continue with KetoMax. Culling the cow should not be based on a single test result, please contact your vet
No growth	No treatment - strip quarter twice daily and monitor. If udder is painful or swollen continue with KetoMax
Mixed infection (two bacteria)	Discuss options with your vet

Mastatest HiSCC cartridge recommendations in early lactation:

Staph. aureus Low BMSCC (<150,000)	Treatment uneconomic. Options include: • RMT test and dry off infected quarters (but take care not to re-cup these quarters for the rest of the lactation) or • Milk these cows last to reduce spread to other cows then manage as appropriate at dry-off
High BMSCC (>150,000)	If new infection; RMT test and treat infected quarter(s) with extended antibiotic treatment (discuss with your vet). If long-term infection; RMT test and dry off infected quarters or milk last
CNS / Gram +ve Low or High BMSCC	Leave untreated but monitor. If mastitis turns clinical then re-test infected quarter(s) using Mastatest clinical cartridge and treat based on recommendation
Coliform / Gram -ve Low or High BMSCC	Leave untreated and monitor quarter(s) (If >10% Gram -ve discuss with your vet)
No growth Low or High BMSCC	Leave untreated and monitor quarter(s) (If >20% no growth send sample to lab to check for yeast/fungi etc. Discuss with your vet)

Calf vaccine regime – Lepto 4-Way

- Charlotte Glass

Calving will be well underway now.

The best time to book calves in for disbudding is between 2-6 weeks of age. For some farmers, there will be some big changes to the calf vaccine protocol with the new Lepto 4-Way vaccine. Your KeyVet should have discussed this with you at your RVM consult. Here is a refresher of the vaccine programme we recommend for calves:

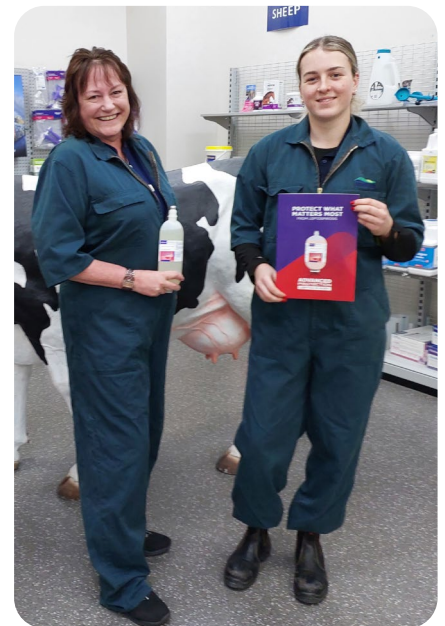
- **From 2 weeks of age:** Covexin 10 (clostridia protection), often given at time of disbudding.
- **From 6 weeks of age:** Covexin 10 booster (4 weeks after the first Covexin 10) and Lepto 4-Way.
- **From 12 weeks of age:** Lepto 4-Way booster (4-6 weeks after the first Lepto 4-Way).

We have Lepto 4-Way information brochures for those that would like to know more.

There are a range of other vaccines available, which may be indicated on some farms. If any of the following sound like they might be beneficial to your calves, please chat to your KeyVet.

Salvexin: For protection against salmonella. Calves will have initial antibodies from the cow if the herd is vaccinated. Calf vaccination is recommended from 4 weeks, or before their first winter.

Hiprabovis: For protection against herpesvirus (IBR), parainfluenza and BVD. Can be given from 4 months of age.



Some of our wonderful techs getting ready to go and Lepto vaccinate some calves.

Thoughts from the sideline: Dealing with an international vet shortage

- Bruce Hunter

Internationally, veterinary practices are struggling to attract and retain quality veterinarians, and New Zealand is no exception. There doesn't seem to be

any shortage of young people wanting to be vets, but tertiary funding streams are bottlenecking supply.



Thankfully, a number of new vet schools are popping up in places such as the USA and the UK, but the supply volume is unlikely to correct industry

shortages in the next 5-10 years.

New Zealand has a high dependency on international vets, with more than half of last year's registrations being from overseas vets.

To further aggravate the situation, the retention of young vets in practice is low, with many new vets (over 50%) leaving practice within six years. The reasons for this turnover are high workload, onerous rosters, compassion fatigue, customer stressors and resilience gaps.

Most young veterinarians start their career as mixed vets, which enables them to work with two hugely different client types – companion owners (predominantly cats and dogs) and farm owners. Attracting vets to be farm animal specialists is also difficult, as most vet graduates do not have farming

backgrounds, and their motivation to enter the career is seldom motivated by agriculture.

The problem is, fortunately, well understood by bodies such as the New Zealand Veterinary Association, who has been proactive in battling the situation for many years. Some very encouraging "work-ons" include upskilling vet nurses and vet techs to do more tasks traditionally done by vets.

Lobbying to increase the number of vet seats at Massey has also been successful, with a further 25 seats being added in 2023. To get better vet graduates, a pre-vet interview screen was started a few years ago, with this year's graduates being the first year of screened industry entrants. The screening interviews are undertaken by industry experts and look for

characteristics more likely to result in career longevity and success – e.g. resilience, communication, work ethic and emotional intelligence.

The medium-term outlook in New Zealand is for a continued tight supply of quality vets, although hopefully new initiatives will ease the stress in the next five years. The structure of the business will, however, mean that we will always be reliant on young and developing vets.

Fortunately, the primary industry is well known for supporting and developing young agribusiness professionals, and the farming clients at Vet Clinic Morrinsville are no exception. I thank you for your ongoing support of our young veterinarians - your contribution to their developing careers should never be underrated.

All things spring crossword

Test your dairy knowledge with this crossword. As well as proving your skills, we've got some vouchers to give away to the first three correct submissions as an added incentive!

Take a picture of your completed crossword, or send a list of your answers, to office@vetcm.co.nz. If you get all the answers right and beat your fellow farmers to the post, we will email you back with a \$30 [Loxies](#) voucher, so you can revel in your win over a coffee and a muffin (or whatever else takes your fancy)!

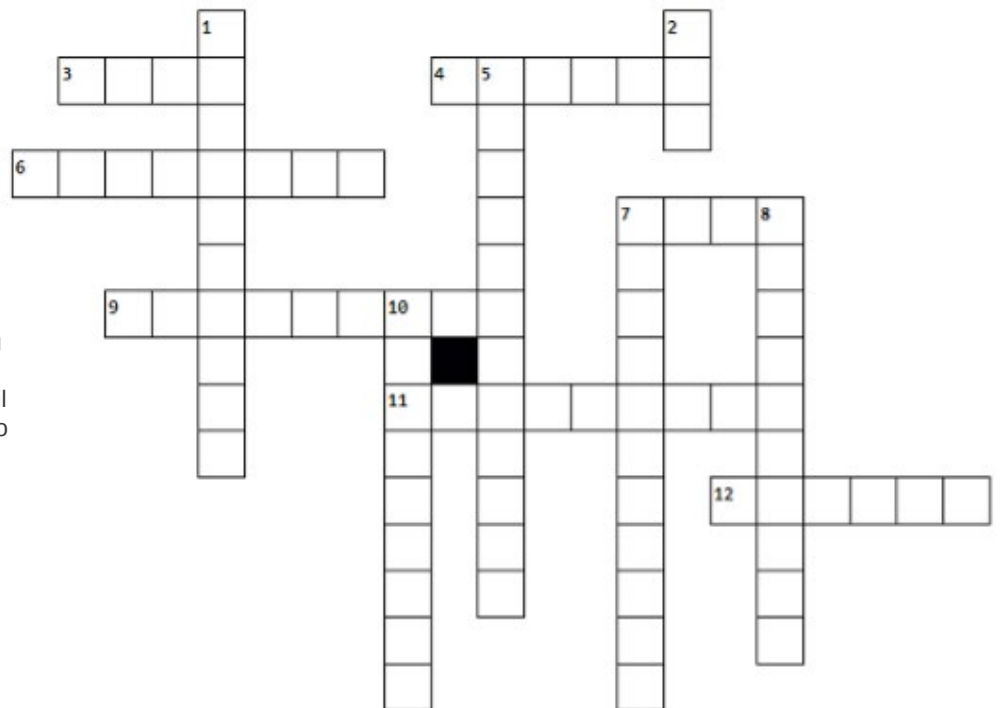
Down

1. What milk should never go in the vat?
2. What is the minimum amount of weeks to wait to disbud calves?
5. What do you give a scouring calf?
7. What does it mean when a bull calf is born with one testicle?
8. What is a hermaphrodite calf called?
10. What is the best way to protect your herd against disease?

Across

3. What makes a calving easier?
4. What colour metabolic bag should not go in the vein?
6. What is it called when a cow has inflammation of the udder?
7. What is a baby cow called?

9. What is the most common cause for a down cow?
11. What must calves get in the first 12 hours of life?
12. What is it called when a calf comes out backwards?



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What's black and white and eats like a horse? *A zebra!*

