

## What's Up Doc?

- Ryan Olesen

As calving season slowly comes to a close, we look back and appreciate the hard work you have put into the herd during the busiest time of the year for farmers. We have seen an increase in metabolic deficiencies compared to previous years, with many more down cows resulting from sunny spells through winter growing more grass quickly but decreasing the quality and nutritional value of most pastures.

Disbudding and metricechecking are in full swing, so please remember to book any appointments early if you haven't already.

As September kicks off, the cows are at the highest risk of spring eczema, so monitor closely and contact us if you see any early signs. Keep Filtabac at the ready, reduce grass intake - provide more supplementary feed such as hay or silage - and make sure the cows have plenty of shade out of the sun.

As calves are weaned, ensure they have a supportive anthelmintic drench to reduce worm burden as they are suddenly exposed to parasites on grass.

Thank you to those who made it to the farmer's pre-mating discussion by Zoetis in August. Laura and Oscar touched on the finer points of the economic benefits of keeping to nutrition and health baselines to maximise milk production and profitability. Some underlying issues addressed in the discussion included how delaying metricechecking for too long may result in endometritis still being present, but not being able to be detected in cows. Conversely, early treatment can increase your 6-week in calf rate, therefore give higher milk production and bigger calves in the following season.

We also welcome a new mixed animal vet, **Gus Condie**, to the Vet Clinic Morrinsville team this month! Gus has spent the last 17 years working in both the UK and NZ, most recently for Vetora (Bay of Plenty) and Tirau Vets. He is currently contract milking with his partner in Morrinsville. We are excited to have him on board.

## What's happening on-farm?

- ✔ Metricecheck August calvers
- ✔ Disbudding
- ✔ Pre-mating heats and tail painting
- ✔ Trace element / mineral testing pre-mating
- ✔ Bull screening and BVD vaccinations
- ✔ Calf vaccinations
- ✔ Bulk milk BVD testing
- ✔ Autumn herd pregnancy testing

## Pre-mating prep: *Get your herd service-ready!*

- Oscar Porras

With most farms over halfway through calving, there's more time to slow down and think about mating, which usually happens at the end of September or early October for most spring dairy herds.

We want to make sure that as many cows get into calf again this season, so preparing them for mating is vital, especially for the new batch of heifers.

Here are some tips to prepare your herd before planned start of mating (PSM):

### BCS

We want our mixed-age cows to be at least a 4.0 BCS and our first and second



calvers to be a 4.5 or higher before mating. Cattle take about 30 days to gain half a BCS on good quality feed, so preferentially feed your low BCS cows at least a month prior to PSM.

### Trace element supplementation

Research has shown that trace elements play a role, not only in a cow's development and production, but also

in its reproductive performance. Doing pre-mating bloods allows us to see whether their ongoing supplementation is sufficient to give them the best chance of getting in-calf. Treating cows with Multimin, an injectable supplement, 4 weeks before PSM (on top of their usual oral supplementations) can lead to 3.3% lower empty rates and cows calving 3.4 days earlier on average.

**BVD**

It is very important that our yearlings, herd, and bulls are free from Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) before the start of mating, since a positive case of BVD in the herd can lead to major negative impacts on animal health, welfare, reproduction, milk production and farm economics. BVD screening, bulk milk testing, and vaccinating (especially the bulls) are some of the basic things we can do to reduce the risk of BVD.

**Bulls**

Bull selection is important to ensure the best reproductive outcomes after artificial insemination (AI). A minimum ratio of 1 bull: 30 cows, based on what's left after AI, then doubling this number to have a half-working, half-resting policy is recommended. Having spare bulls is also wise in case of emergencies. A minimum ratio of 1 bull: 20 heifers, then 1 bull: 10-15

heifers after a synchro programme is recommended.

Before bulls get on-farm, ensure they are tested, fully vaccinated (especially for BVD) and have had a full wellness check. A quarantine drench when they arrive also ensures they are not bringing in any unwanted parasites.

**Heat detection**

At least 75% of cows should be in-heat 10 days before PSM, and 80% of cows cycling at PSM. Identifying cows that are not cycling normally pre-mating is important as this allows you to plan for intervention methods come mating time. Talk to us about which methods would best suit your needs.

Our goal is to help you get the best reproductive outcome for your herd this coming mating season. Ring the clinic if you would like to talk more about anything related to mating.



Receptionist Lesley and vet Jackie are getting the clinic cow ready for mating!

**Pre-mating wordsearch**

*Test your skills over morning tea with this pre-mating wordsearch our techs have put together. Good luck!*

E C H B R T S B F Y P C A B N  
 O I D T V A P U E A R S Q J U  
 D D A E B I E L R F E C Y W T  
 T R M N N L R L T Z G R A C R  
 F G Q E O P M I I H N A M Y I  
 O E G S Y A S N L E A T U C T  
 V N B T C I E G I A N C L L I  
 U F U R F N G B T T T H T I O  
 L O Q U Y T G H Y A C I I N N  
 A L S S E N H X J Z Q E M G V  
 T L I H I O Z T M J O S I E C  
 I I R G E N E T I C S S N D E  
 O C E K V S M I N E R A L S Y  
 N L M E T R I C H E C K Y S A  
 R E R I N S E M I N A T I O N

- insemination
- ovulation
- multimin
- follicle
- estrus
- bulling
- metricheck
- tailpaint
- genetics
- cycling
- nutrition
- scratchies
- fertility
- minerals
- sperm
- pregnant
- heat
- cidr
- sire
- egg
- dam

## September/October – The season of sick cows

- Jackie Davies

As calving calms down, production ramps up and cows start cycling. The lush grass and unpredictable weather breed the perfect conditions for cows to succumb to various conditions.

If you have a cow who has rapidly become unwell, some of the things we may find include:

- Mastitis (especially black mastitis),
- Badly infected uteruses,
- Gut issues/twisted stomachs - such as left displaced abomasum (LDA), right displaced abomasum (RDA), or mesenteric twists,
- Acidosis, also known as grain overload,
- Infectious diseases, such as the dreaded *Salmonella sp.*

Young cows may also have new teeth coming up, which can cause infections or just a reduction in eating.

### Black mastitis

Sometimes, there is some confusion as to what black mastitis is. It is usually caused from an *E. Coli* bacteria, but can occasionally be a really bad *Staph aureus* infection. Not every cow with an *E. Coli* mastitis will have black mastitis.

Mild cases just look watery and have a very high Somatic Cell Count (SCC), but can come right quickly with the right treatment. The bad cases can see cows 'go down' quite quickly. I've had cows I have examined standing, picked up as sick that day, that have died hours later!

If you are seeing watery, or bloody and watery milk, check if any part of the quarter or teat is cold, and re-check later. Cold patches occur where the skin has 'died' and this will fall off, creating an abscess at a later stage (if the cow is treated and survives). These abscesses take a long time to heal, so cows tend to be on-farm dripping pus around for a long time, which is both unhygienic and unsightly. I would recommend culling as soon as you realise this is likely.



One of the problems with *E. Coli* is that the bacteria release toxins as they die. White penicillin kills bacteria so are not recommended, while *Engemycin* stops the bacteria growing rather than killing it, so the toxin release is minimised. *Flunixin*, which is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), can help protect against the toxins, however, most people only have *Ketomax* or *Metacam* on-farm, and these will also help.

### Twisted stomachs

LDA's and RDA's are more likely to occur in high-producing dairy cows, and cows fed grain. It is a lot more common overseas compared to here, but a few still tend to be diagnosed in NZ each year. When something happens, such as a mild milk fever, which stops the abomasum from moving the food through as fast, gas can accumulate, and then it may "float" up on either side of the rumen to cause an LDA or RDA.

RDA's are more likely to cause the abomasum to also twist, cutting off the blood supply and this becomes a severe disease very quickly.

LDA's are not as severe. Cows may still be eating "OK" and, while usually picked up within a few days, will be losing weight more slowly over a few weeks.

A cow with an LDA diagnosed early enough (when the cow is still standing and healthy) can have a good prognosis with surgery.

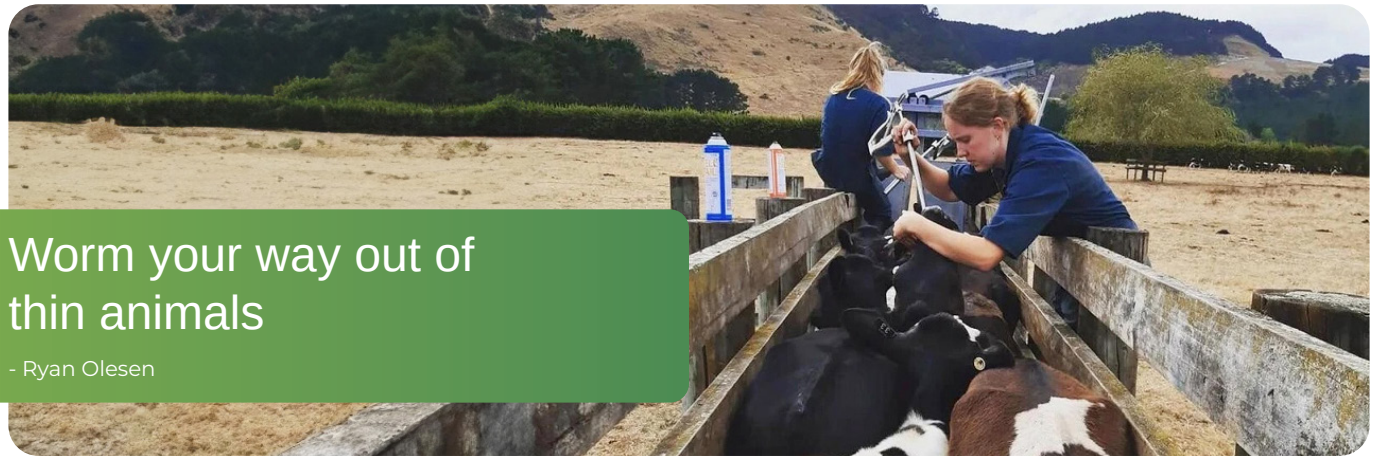
You may have heard about cows being rolled to correct a displacement. This could work, even without surgery, as the abomasum "floats" back to where it is supposed to sit while the cow is upside down. However, there is nothing to stop the displacement occurring again later. Surgical approaches attach the abomasum down to prevent reoccurrences.

There are many other illnesses out there, and every season there will be different 'common' diseases, so keep in touch with your KeyVet for your sick cows. As always, there is a better chance of recovery with earlier treatment.

What happened to  
the lost cattle?

*Nobody's herd.*





## Worm your way out of thin animals

- Ryan Olesen

Parasitism is a major cause of production loss in livestock. Based on current information, many New Zealand farmers are using anthelmintics in a manner which will result in drench-resistant worms and drench failure.

Once present on a farm, worm resistance to anthelmintics is permanent. Therefore, selective drench use and herd management is key to delaying the presence of drench resistant parasites.

Every farm is unique, so effective worm management may differ for each farm. Complete eradication is neither an appropriate goal nor an achievable one. Most of the year there are more worms in the pasture than inside the animals in various life stages and healthy animals harbour worms (and always will). However, cattle and sheep may be affected differently by a parasite burden.

Well-fed animals are less affected by worms than those under nutritional stress and some animals have a genetic variability to being less-susceptible to parasites (and can therefore be selectively bred for resistance to roundworms).

Older animals also build more of an immunity than younger ones, which is why the most vulnerable cattle (and sheep) are youngstock when first introduced to worm burden on pasture. This also means older animals can be used to reduce the number of infective larvae on pasture with effective grazing management.

Anthelmintic drenches are a way of managing worm burdens in cattle and sheep. However, each anthelmintic is a finite resource and should be used to achieve the greatest sustainable benefit for each farm. Use of long-acting drenches may hasten the development of drench resistance.

Routes of administration also vary in the effectiveness of each drench. Pour-on drenches have a higher difficulty to enter the animal's system, due to the protective nature of skin, compared to oral or injectable products. However, due to the size of the animals and numbers being drenched, pour-on's are a greater convenience product because of their ease of application.

For a drench to be effective, it must be administered correctly. Key points to remember include:

- Under-dosing will result in an increase in drench resistance. Over-dosing puts the animals at risk of drench toxicity. Weigh representative stock to ensure the correct dose is given.
- Select a dose volume based on the bodyweight of the largest animals in the group.
- Read drench labels carefully (active ingredients, dose rate, withholding periods, expiry date and storage conditions).
- Set and check the reliability of the drench gun by squirting several doses into an accurate measuring vessel.

- Re-check the dose delivery each day the gun is used, or after every 200 doses, whichever comes first.
- Ensure your drench gun receives regular maintenance.

## Wormwise factors to consider when drenching cattle

- Adult stock should not require routine drenching. Adult cattle develop an immunity, making them less susceptible to parasitism. Only those suspected of ill-thrift should be considered for worm drenching.
- Worms are only one reason stock may be thin or scouring (other reasons could be Johnes, lameness, bacterial infection, viral diseases etc) - make sure you know what you are treating.
- Drenching intervals should seldom be less than 28 days.
- Aim to keep drenching to a minimum.
- Consider stock age/class, condition, feeding levels, stress.
- Drenching needs to be combined with appropriate grazing management.
- Drenching plays a valuable role in animal health. Its use should be part of a worm management strategy, with advice from your animal health adviser.

## Our clinic

62 Moorhouse Street,  
Morrinsville  
3300

Phone : 07 889 6738

Email: [office@vetcm.co.nz](mailto:office@vetcm.co.nz)

[www.vetclinicmorrinsville.co.nz](http://www.vetclinicmorrinsville.co.nz)



Source: Wormwise; Beef & Lamb NZ.