



Bay of Islands  
Veterinary Services

# Bullsheets

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## Editorial

Its official, Northland has been classified as a drought zone again.

The weather has really warmed up now, and there does not seem to be much rain in our long term forecast, this has made farming challenging for all, especially on the Eastern side of our practice. Some areas had a good rain 2 weeks ago, but with the wind and the sun, that has all but dried up. Most dairy farms are feeling the pinch, having to feed supplement, including Palm kernel to keep the cows milking. Those on once a day should find their cows hold condition with Palm kernel feeding, and or bialage feeding. The only good side is that further down the country, there has been good rain, so there is still a grass market there, which should hold the price of cull cattle up for longer, also the weaner fairs should also be robust. Great to see the Black Caps come out on top in the one day series against Ausie. Nothing like a good Trans - Tasman cricket competition especially if we are the winners.

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### Drying cows off early

As the dry weather has reduced the feed on most properties decisions have to be made about drying cows off and early culling of problem cows.

The success of a dry cow antibiotic in curing a high cell count cow is not related to how high the cell count is.

What is more important is how long she has had a high cell count, whether she was a problem last season and whether there are areas of scarring in the udder that the antibiotic cannot get to. Those cows which are repeat offenders should really be culled.

Cows that are doing low volumes may also have elevated cell counts that have no infection present.

Remember, cows need to be producing 5 litres or more for Dry Cow to work, as it needs good distribution in the under, so don't delay treating those low producers.

Treating the young cows will give the best results.

If you are going to dry some high somatic cell count cows off early, you need to pregnancy test them first, so you don't waste your money treating an empty cow which will then have a meat with holding time.

If you are getting new cases of mastitis, then you need to consider getting a machine test done, to identify if the machines are still correctly set.

As Dry Cow therapy is a big investment in your cows, specific advice for your herd is available from your vet.

### Long term prevention

Cows that are being dried off now unfortunately have a long dry period until calving next season. If you have had a problem with spring mastitis the option of using a Teat seal as well as a dry cow an-



tibiotic is an option worth considering. The cost may be less than a long acting antibiotic, depending which one you use, and the period of protection will last right through to calving. Products such as Cepravin Dry cow will still give a good result as it has such a long contact time.

### Facial Eczema

This year has the potential to be a problem with facial Eczema as there is a lot of dead matter in the pastures and the nights have been warm. The spore counts that we have recorded have been in the 15,000 – 30,000 range, which is not great, but with rain that could certainly become a problem. We need more grass samples to get an idea on how the situation is developing, please bring some into either Kaikohe or Waipapa and we will do the spore counts to see if there is any danger. Remember, cut the grass to the level the cattle or sheep are grazing down to. A 2 litre ice cream container is fine. If your property is prone to eczema, then now is the time to start taking preventative measures.

Alpacas and Llamas are very prone to facial eczema, so the feeding of meal with zinc added is necessary to keep them protected.

#### Control options are:

**Zinc Boluses-** These are the most effective method of eczema prevention.

There are two different types of bolus. The Time Capsule and Faceguard.

Time Capsule offers 4 weeks protection, Faceguard 6 weeks. The Faceguard has the zinc in a different formulation so there is not the risk of damage if you drop them.

Both can be given more than once if the eczema season continues.

These are the best treatment option for calves and lambs.

**Zinc Drenching** -Zinc Oxide can be used as a preventative drench. Depending on the class of stock being treated, daily, twice weekly or weekly drenching can be used.

The zinc drench is quite thick and not all drench guns can handle it. Guns with ball valves e.g. Super-shot usually perform better than the usual drench guns.

**Mixing with feed** - If the animals are being fed a mixed feed then the zinc oxide can be added equivalent to drenching but allowing for a bit more wastage. If feeds like palm kernel are being fed then the zinc can be mixed with it. Zinc Oxide would be the better one as it is more palatable.

**Trough treating** - This is best for dairy cows only as they tend to drink sufficient water to take in the Zinc sulphate. This is one of the

most common and easiest systems for prevention.

This system has some limitations - zinc in the water has a bitter taste. This means that the level cannot be increased quickly, and if there is any other source of water the animals will be under-dosed.

We offer a free Spore counting service from both our Kaikohe and Waipapa clinics.

### Autumn Planning

I know it is summer now, but autumn will be with us in a month or so, so it is time to start planning action for that period.

The first is Pregnancy testing of your dairy Herd.

Many farms have already done early pregnancy testing to identify those cows pregnant to AI. Results have been mixed but most have been happy with the first 6 weeks results.

If you took your bull out at or around xmas, then you can have your whole herd done by mid- February, that way you can make informed culling decisions to help lower your stocking rate.

### Care of Young Stock:

Young stock are your future, so they need looking after, especially with the current dry conditions. You need to consider feeding supplement now to maintain their growth rates, as the dry rank pasture is too low in ME and protein to keep them growing at an adequate rate to reach their target body weights. Palm kernel is one of the cheapest supplements, and has sufficient fat and protein to help maintain growth through tough periods.

Other forms of supplements, such as meal are also good, check the ME and protein levels, as that is what you are paying for. Don't forget to drench them, as they are grazing low, and worms are still an issue, especially lung worm as we go into autumn.

### Water, Water, Water

A man goes to his doctor because he's been feeling very ill for days. The doctor gives him several sets of pills. The doctor instructs: "Take the green pill with two big glasses of water when you get up. An hour later, take the white pill with another glass of water. Take the blue pill with a big glass of water after lunch. Mid afternoon, take the orange pill with plenty of water, and repeat that at dinner. Then, just before going to bed, take the red pill with several big glasses of water." The man is alarmed at the huge volume of medicine he has been given to take, and nervously asks, "What's the diagnosis? What's wrong with me?" The doctor says, "You're dehydrated."