



Bay of Islands
Veterinary Services

Bullsheets

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July 2016

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Editorial

Winter is here, well at least it has been pretty wet, but the ryegrass is growing so most farms have good cover going into calving. Let's hope the winter stays as a mild one.

Interesting to see the vote from England, leaving the EU, the world could be a little different but I don't know how it will affect us yet.

Fishing !!

We are running a competition with Merial Ancare to win a trip out in the Gulf for a day's fishing. We did this trip a few years ago, and it proved a winner with every one coming home with fish to fry. Check out our enclosed mailer, and be in to win.

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Transition cows

The 2 weeks either side of calving are critical for setting cows up for a good lactation and preventing disease and death. How well cows handle the change from dry to milking has a large influence on how soon they will start cycling after calving as well. A number of different **problems** can occur at this time. They can be linked with each other so should not just be considered in isolation.

APPETITE DRIVES PRODUCTION, THEN PRODUCTION DRIVES APETITE.

If you can keep cows appetites up over the transition period they will make more milk. After this their milk production drives their appetite, and you just have to feed them!

Metabolic Problems

Milk Fever

Milk fever generally occurs within 48 hours either side of calving. The supplementation with magnesium pre-calving and for the first third of lactation will help prevent milk fever.

The feeding of Mag chloride prior to calving, either with maize, or palm kernel will also help prevent milk fever as it aids in control of the cation/anion ratio in the diet. Mag Sulphate in the water line will also help pre-

vent milk fever, but is limited if it keeps raining, as the cows will not drink enough. Dusting the breaks with Causmag at 60 -100 gm per cow is good method to ensure they are getting enough magnesium. Other treatment options are magnesium bullets, such as **Rumetrace**, which will provide magnesium for up to 3 months.

Oral-mag drench will do about 10 days from a single 100ml drench, so is an option.

Cows that are most at risk of milk fever are fat cows (carry overs) and older cows i.e. >6-7 years.

These cows need extra attention. If you are good with their calving dates, then an injection of Hideject 8-10 days prior to calving will help them start to mobilise calcium. A Rumetrace bullet to get them through the transition period should also help.

Once cows are calved the addition of lime flour (calcium carbonate) to their diet will help prevent milk fever and should drive production.

Ketosis

This is a disease caused by fat breakdown products in the blood. Obviously fat cows like carryovers are the most at risk. Ketosis can be a cause of down cows or contribute to down cows due to milk fever.



Ketosis is caused when there is more energy going from the cow than coming in. Prevention of ketosis is based around keeping cows intakes up over the calving period.

The use of **Rumensin bullets or premix** in feed will help reduce the incidence of milk fever and ketosis in these at risk cows. This needs to start 10 -14 days before the cow calves to give the best protection.

Metabolic products

Make sure you are well stocked with metabolic treatments, the sooner you can treat a cow and get her back on her feet the better the long term outcome. **Calpromag or Blue Cross 4 in 1** is the best all round treatment where both low calcium and magnesium levels are suspected. **CBG injt** is better for straight milk fever (low calcium). Anything with low magnesium (those angry ones that want to attack you) are best treated with a **calpromag or 4 in1** in the vein and **Magnesium Sulphate** under the skin (don't ever put mag sulphate in the vein). Cows with ketosis are best treated with 4 in 1 plus **Ketol Extra or Starter Plus** oral products.

The use of a Starter drench e.g. **Starter Plus** on the day the cow calves will go a long way to prevent milk fever and ensure the cow gets into lactation with the best start. We have a special running – get 200litres of **Starter Plus** on farm at a cost of under \$4 a litre including GST!!

Mastitis

The period around calving is the main time cows get infections.

Dry cow therapy may or may not still be giving some protection depending on the product used and the length the cows were dry.

Once the teat canal is open, bugs can get in and cause mastitis. Most cows form a teat plug to prevent this, but not all.

If a cow or heifer has bagged up and is dripping milk, bacteria can obviously get in.

Prevention

Calve cows in as clean an area as possible. If a cow is starting calving and it is possible put her onto the clean break, do so as she's not interested in eating at this stage.

Milk cows as soon as possible after calving.

If cows are dripping milk pre-calving, milk them. Just make sure they are marked if they are with colostrums etc. so you know they haven't calved!

When milking the colostrum cows, pay particular attention, look for any signs of mastitis and treat early if you find some. Once the cow enters the herd, again keep a close eye on the most freshly calved as these are the most prone to infection .

Make sure you use a good teat spray with emollient, at the higher concentration to help prevent any new infections.

Calf Management

Many of you will be planning to vaccinate your cows pre-calving with Rotavec to help prevent calf scours. You need to be doing that now as dependent on the product you use, cows need to be vaccinated between 2 and 3 weeks before the first cows are due to calve.

But remember the calves MUST get colostrum for the vaccine to be effective.

Calf sheds need to be dry and draft free but with good ventilation an access to fresh water.

In an ideal world calves should be picked up twice a day and immediately fed two litres of first day colostrum. But reality is most pick up once daily, but please ensure you get at least 2-3 litres of first day colostrum ASAP.

Wear gloves when feeding calves, this has come out as one thing you can do which will help minimise the spread of disease.

Sick calves should be isolated from the rest, maintain hygiene around the sheds, keep equipment clean and use disinfectants such as Virkon or Trigene.

Spray the shed out weekly with Virkon or Trigene, this will help stop the build-up of bacteria and viruses which cause diseases.

The most valuable treatments for scouring calves are fluids, fluids and more fluids in the form of electrolyte solutions. An oesophageal (tube) feeder is the best tool for delivering this safely and rapidly to calves no longer wanting to suckle. Any calf that is starting to look depressed with scours will benefit from treatment with antibiotics either injection or tablets – but remember you can't give this to bobby calves.

Inhibitory Substance Grades

Make sure all cows that had dry cow therapy are outside the withholding time and have had 8 milkings before they are milked into the vat.

If you milk your cows once a day make sure the milk withholding time is the correct number of milkings, not days.

Mineral Supplementation

Over the transition period minerals such a Selenium, Cobalt and Copper need to be optimal. There are some good products which can help lift these minerals over this important period. Please give us a call to discuss your mineral requirements as we can supply products which will best fit your needs.

NEW!!!

Ewe-lambing time Prolapses!!

There is a new product on the market which helps prevent prolapses / or stops the repeat of prolapse vaginas. Called the **Bearin Prolapse Harness**, it is a reusable product that appears to offer better outcomes than the usual products.



Married Life

After being married for thirty years a wife asked her husband to describe her. He looked at her for a while then said, "you're A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K." She asks, "what does that mean?" He said, "Adorable, Beautiful, Cute, Delightful, Elegant, Foxie, Gorgeous, Hot." She smiled happily and said..."Oh that's so lovely ...what about I, J, K?" He said I'm just kidding.

The swelling around his eye is his going down and the doctor thinks there are no broken bones!