



Bay of Islands
Veterinary Services

Bullsheets

www.bayvets.co.nz

June 2017

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Editorial

June has arrived and it looks like winter is just starting. Great to see the pay-out heading in the right direction, a starting figure of \$6.50 is very encouraging. The America's cup is under way in Bermuda, and Team NZ are looking good, these are great boats to watch and challenging to sail. Let's hope the NZ can go all the way and bring it home this time.

We are spoilt for choice on the sporting front, with the Lions tour kicking off in Whangarei, what a great thing for Northland Rugby!!

The secret of enjoying a good bottle of wine. Open the bottle to allow it to breathe. If it doesn't look like it's breathing, give it mouth-to-mouth!

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Feeding Dry Cows

Many farms milked on to get those extra kilos lost in the dry January, so now they have a bit of catch up to do, i.e. cow condition. So how much do they need?

A cow weighing 450 -500 kg has a minimum maintenance requirement of 8-9 kg DM/ day.

As the calf is developing in the last 2-3 months of pregnancy there is an additional energy requirement of 1-1.5 kg DM /day.

To gain 1 kg in weight a cow needs to 3 kg DM/ day over and above here maintenance requirement.

So if you want your cows to gain weight, at 30 kg/ month , just under one condition score, you would need to feed a total of 14 - 15kg DM per day. Assume your grass provides 11mj ME / kg DM.

Realistically that is a lot to feed at this time of year, hence the use of supplements such as Maize silage, and Hay.

It is best to split your cows into those which are on track to condition score 5 -5.5 at calving, and those which are in need of extra attention to get to the required weight before calving.

Once cows are with- in 4 weeks of a calving it is unrealistic to expect them to gain any further in body condition, so the window of opportunity is narrow to change their condition score.

Drenching Cows

This is the time to consider if your cows need a drench before calving. If liver fluke has been an issue on your property, when the cows are dry is the only time you can treat. Products such as Ivo-mec Plus (injection) and Combat Flukecare (oral) are best for adult cows.

If you haven't drenched your cows at dry off, they may well benefit from one now.

Transition Diets

It is time to start thinking of how

you are going to transition your cows in early July as they come up to calving.

Transition diets ideally are offered to your cows 10-20 days prior to calving.

The objective of a transition diet is to get your cows through calving with the least incidence of metabolic disease and into full lactation as fast as possible.

Ideally the diet has sufficient fibre to maintain rumen fill plus magnesium, either in the form of magnesium chloride, or sulphate to help acidify the rumen (this helps the cow mobilise calcium at calving).

In the pasture based system, the feeding of hay soaked with Magnesium Chloride or sulphate at 100gms per cow per day with the addition of molasses to aid in the palatability is a common practice.

Dusting breaks with Magnesium Oxide is common, and certainly helps reduce the incidence of milk fever and other metabolic disease.

Maize silage is ideal pre-calving as it is naturally low in calcium and so pre- prepares the cow to actively mobilise calcium at calving.

Once calved the addition of lime flour (calcium carbonate) and Magnesium Oxide to the diet is critical, as this will supply a readily available form of Calcium and Magnesium, so the cow can get to her peak production ASAP.

As cows come up to calving their appetite decreases so the feed offered has to be palatable, (that rank old Kikuyu is not ideal) otherwise they will go into a negative energy state and ketosis is the likely outcome.

The addition of Rumensin, either as the powder form over maize silage or as bullets or water trough treatment helps prevent ketosis as it acts as a rumen modifier and so makes more energy available to the cow from feed consumed, and not lost to the atmosphere as methane.

Mineral supplementation especially selenium, is essential in the transition period as the cow is at risk of

mastitis, metritis, retained membranes and metabolic disease, all of which are more common if the immune system is compromised.

Starter Drenches

At calving, the use of a starter drench will reduce the risk of milk fever within the next 48 hours and has shown to shorten the time it takes for a cow to return to heat.

There are several Starter drenches on the market, currently we recommend Starter Plus, which supplies a good dose of calcium plus magnesium and is a good source of energy.

Magnesium bullets

If you have cattle which you are sending off for grazing, and are unable to supply magnesium supplements regularly, then it may be worth considering Rumevite Magnesium bullets.

Rumevite bullets will supply magnesium for 9-12 weeks after application, and so will ensure adequate magnesium levels in your cows through the transition period and well into lactation.

If you have older cows which are more at risk of either grass staggers/ milk fever, then Rumevite bullets may be the answer.

WITHHOLDING PERIODS/TREATING MASTITIS IN THE DRY PERIOD

If you come across a case of mastitis in a DRY Cow, you can only use a lactating product, I generally recommend Orbenin LA, 3 tubes at 48 hours.

DO NOT USE A DRY COW ANTIBIOTIC, as the gland has involuted (shrunk down) since she was dried off and the slow release Dry Cow product will not dissipate in the gland, and you are likely to get pinged for inhibitory substances once she calves.

Any cows treated in the dry period should be recorded and once calved it may be wise to double the normal 8 milking withholding period to ensure no antibiotic residues get in the milk.

Lactating cow mastitis tubes often have the withhold period expressed as a number of milkings and a number of hours. The withhold assumes twice daily milking. If a different milking practice is carried out then the withhold period should be the longest of the two withhold periods (e.g. on once a day milking it would be eight milkings and not 96 hours).

Dry cow treatments have a withhold period that is for a certain amount of days dry, plus a certain number of milkings after calving. It is important that both these periods are satisfied. For example: A cow treated with a product that has a 49 day withhold plus 8 milkings, calves 40 days after treatment. The milk must be held for 49 days plus 8 milkings after calving. If in doubt consult a vet at the clinic.

Rotavec Corona Vaccine;

This is the time of year when you should be considering whether you are going to use Rotavec vaccine to protect your calves this spring.

Rotavec is a single shot vaccine. Rotavec is now able to be given subcut! So use a 1/2 inch needle. This is best done on a dry day when the cows have a clean coat to avoid swelling.

Rotavec has proven to be a great way to protect your calves from the most commonly diagnosed cause of infective scours, i.e. Rotavirus, plus it

also covers for Corona virus and E coli infection. To get maximum protection you need to vaccinate your cows between 3-12 weeks prior to calving with a 2 ml injection.

Vaccination of the herd 3 weeks prior to calving will give cover for the first 9 weeks of calving, which should cover all replacement calves.

There are several other vaccines available for calf scour protection, but they all need 2 shots with a minimum of 3 weeks between doses. Several can be used as a single booster shot if you have used Rotavec in your herd the year before. Give us a call if you would like to discuss your options.

Once the cows calve, the calf needs at least 2 litres of first day colostrum within the first 6 hours after birth.

To give the best protection, milk collected from the first 6 -8 milkings of fresh vaccinated cows is pooled and stored, to be fed to the youngest calves, especially for the first 2 weeks of life.

Teat Seal and Heifers

If mastitis in heifers has been a problem for you, then the use of TeatSeal prior to calving will be worth considering.

Teatsealing heifers may seem like a daunting task, but it is not as bad as you might think, so long as you have good facilities, patience, and be as clean as possible! It is best to use Teatseal on heifers between 4 -1 week prior to calving.

Iodine Supplementation and the Ewe

If you have noticed poor survival in your lambs, i.e. born dead, or simply fail to get up and feed with good vigour, then low iodine levels in the Ewes may be the problem.

To help counter this problem, iodine supplementation two months prior to lambing is required.

You can either drench each ewe with 280 mg of Potassium Iodide at 8 then 4 weeks prior to lambing, or inject with Flexidine, an oil based iodine supplement 2 months prior to lambing.

New Vet on the Team

By the time you are reading this one of our new vets should be arriving.

Libby Elvins, an experienced vet from England is due to arrive on Wednesday the 7th of June. Libby will be based in our Kaikohe clinic and should be a welcome addition.

Calf Colostrum Trial



The Take Home Message?

1. If a calf is weak and cold, tube it with first day colostrum ASAP

2. Collect your colostrum

from fresh cows, especially younger cows, as older cows seem to have less concentrated colostrum.

3. Treat that first day colostrum as Gold!! Collect it in as clean a manner as possible into well cleaned out containers, preferably into clean stainless containers.

4. Feed your calves on the day you collect them.