



## VETS ON ALABAMA DAIRY NEWS

August/September 2014

Calving is now well underway and we have assisted with a number of these already this season. The calving period can be a stressful period for all concerned and it is important that you recognise when veterinary assistance is necessary.

In general if you have spent 10 -15 minutes trying to assist a calving cow and it has not progressed, then it is important that you call us to help with the situation. The longer you wait to call us, the longer it takes for us to get to you. As a result it could take longer to calve the cow and therefore the chances of a successful outcome for both cow and calf declines.

- Maximise Cow Health In Spring
- Dehorning Calves
- Endometritis – Early Detection
- Planning For Mating – CHECKLIST!
- SEMINAR – Planning For Mating
- Hi From Peter Howard

### Maximise Cow Health In Spring

*Quick check list:*

*Here are a few points on some key issues - **please** ring the clinic to discuss in more detail and arrange a visit if any of the below are of concern to you.*

#### At risk cows

Think of reproduction and your 6 week in calf rate. Research indicates that the earlier we treat 'at risk' cows then the greater chance they have of getting in calf early. At risk cows are those that:

- Had a difficult/assisted calving
- Aborted
- Were induced
- Had retained membranes
- Had milk fever
- Had twins
- Have any abnormal post calving discharge

Get these cows checked ASAP after calving and follow up later in the season with a herd metricheck.



#### Metabolic disease

If you are experiencing an unacceptable level of milk fever - we can help. A target level of 1-3% is possible in most cases.

Blood tests can be of value to check magnesium, calcium and energy levels pre calving and from clinically affected downers. Management of transition nutrition, dry matter intake and body condition is also vital. Often low magnesium/low calcium and low energy are involved and increasingly, low phosphorous is implicated.

## Mastitis

Clinical cases in spring are usually environmental strep infections so should clear up easily-though this is not always the case. High levels of clinical cases through the spring can still be devastating. Clinical infection rates of over 6.5% for the first 6 weeks of the season indicate that control policies need reviewing. Submission of samples to diagnose the bug involved can be useful and will enable a more targeted prevention and treatment programme.

Staph infections are harder to cure and need a different approach to control and treatment. Dairy NZ figures indicate that if your early season bulk count is over 182000 there is still a 66% chance of grading before the end of the season.



## Dehorning Calves

For those clients wanting us to dehorn their calves this year, here are a few reminders that can help to make the job run smoothly.

- Mobs of 30 -40 are a good size
- Best to do when 4 – 8 weeks of age and confined in pens. This helps to cut down the time.
- If they have to be done outside in a paddock a few temporary gates in a corner can help with those few that wander off before they sit down.
- Don't feed them on the morning they are to be done, and give them 4 – 5 hours to recover after dehorning before you feed them.
- If you are wanting to do other jobs such as tagging and vaccinating at the same time, make sure you have an extra worker or two to help out.
- If any calves are unwell, let us know so we can assess them to see if they are alright to do.

### **Clinical Evidence Confirms There Are Benefits Of Using Metacam® 20 At Dehorning**

- Metacam® 20 treated calves had significantly less pain sensitivity at horn buds
- Control calves were almost TWICE as sensitive.
- Metacam® 20 treated calves gained significant more weight over 10 days post dehorning vs placebo.
- The mean difference was 650g / day.



## PLANNING FOR MATING

The industry recognised target 6 week in calf rate is 78% - this can be achieved but early planning is necessary.

### Pre mating check list:

September and October are critical months to plan for mating, so as to maximise in calf rates. As you well know there is a lot to plan and consider including approaches to:

- Metrichhecking-best done EARLY on groups of cows calved 14-28 days.
- Get at risk cows checked and cleaned up
- Bloods sampling for trace element status-copper and selenium status important
- Non cyler management including tail painting and and options for non-cycler treatments. Begin tail paint 5-6 weeks out from mating .CIDRS ARE ABOUT DAYS IN MILK!!!
- Bull management-numbers, ages and BVD status.
- BVD vaccination and control. Bulk milk assessment and vaccinations.
- Heifer synchrony/mating options? The quickest way to genetic improvement/get those heifers calved in early.

For this reason we believe it is a good idea to schedule a **premating consult** with one of the vets to plan and put in dates etc. There is always relatively new research each year so it's good to have a refresher anyway.

Please ring the clinic to arrange your **premating consult** if you would like one.

## Endometritis – Early Detection Is The Key

Endometritis is a chronic (often asymptomatic) infection of the uterus in dairy cows which leads to:

- reduced submission rates
- reduced conception rates
- higher empty rates

These calving delays mean delays in getting cows back into milk production, meaning lost days in milk and reduced productivity of the farm.

In a 250 cow herd, the cost of endometritis could be up to \$9,000 per season. Out of 250 cows, approximately 25 will develop endometritis. Of these, it is likely that:

- 5 will fail to conceive (empties), a loss of \$1200\* per cow.
- 20 cows will be 2-3 weeks late to calve, costing up to \$214.00\*\* per cow in lost milk production.
- Extra fertility treatments will cost even more.

### **Metricure® is the proven cure for endometritis**

Endometritis is simple to identify and treat and New Zealand studies<sup>1</sup> have shown that treatment with Metricure® results in significant fertility improvements in at-risk and infected cows.

Research<sup>2</sup> has shown that treatment is most effective in cows examined within the first 2 – 3 weeks of the calving period, and treated within 2 – 4 weeks after calving.

**That’s why it’s so important that you take early action and stop endometritis in its tracks!**

**“Dirty cows” fail to get in calf – Checking the herd for inter-uterine infections is a simple process that results in a good payback.**

**Call us on 578 6965 to discuss your Metra-checking now.**

### **Three steps to controlling endometritis**

1. Identify and record all cows that show at-risk factors around calving, and notify your vet. At-risk factors include: retained foetal membranes, a dead calf within 24 hours of calving, assisted calving, a visible discharge, or cows that have twins.
2. Your vet can identify infected cows using Metrichheck™, a rapid on-the-spot testing device which can diagnose infection by detecting pus. It is important to check the whole herd to ensure all instances of infection are treated.
3. Ensure at-risk and infected cows are treated with Metricure, the proven inter-uterine antibiotic treatment.

**The job’s not done until all at-risk and infected cows have been treated.**

\* The loss in value between an in-calf cow (= \$2000) and an empty cow (= \$800) is \$1200.

\*\* A 2-3 week delay in calving during August, with 1.7kgMS/day milk production at \$6/kgMS, results in losses of up to \$214.00.

Note: Based on predicted prices as at May 2013. 1. S. McDougall. (2001) Effect of Intrauterine Antibiotic Treatment on Reproductive Performance of Dairy Cows Following Periparturient Disease. NZVJ, 49(4), 150-158. 2. D. Runciman. (2009) Comparison of two methods of detecting purulent vaginal discharge in postpartum dairy cows and the effect of intrauterine cephalixin on reproductive performance. AVJ, Vol 87, No 9, 369-378.

## **PLANNING FOR MATING SEMINAR**

SEMINAR	–	TUESDAY 23 <sup>rd</sup> September
WHERE	-	SLIP INN HAVELOCK
TOPICS	-	Planning For Mating Endometritis BVD
WHEN	-	6:30pm
RSVP	-	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> September







## Hi From Peter Howard!

**Hello everyone-Peter here!** I joined Vets on Alabama in late July and I am looking forward to meeting all the clients and working in with the team. I have been in large animal practice for close to 25 years now (crikey! It doesn't seem that long) in UK and for the last 11 years in New Zealand. We emigrated in 2003 (that is myself, wife Sara and children Luke and Fleur) and I have been in dairy

practice in Waikato, South Canterbury and for last 7 years in Golden Bay.

Some of my main interests are in herd health planning and I look forward to working closely with dairy clients to try to maximise health production and profitability. Other interests are basically anything to do with sport (has been difficult for a Pom lately) and I am a self-confessed fishing nut!

### Mileage...

The partners of Vets on Alabama were keen to reduce the response time and mileage fee and also increase on farm presence on farms furthest from Blenheim. I am currently based in Hira so farms close to Havelock are equal distance from Blenheim and farms to the west of Daltons Bridge are closer to Hira. Mileage will be shared between calls from Hira-so we hope that will make mileage cheaper for you. In an emergency or if another vet is needed to cover a call from Blenheim then mileage will have to be charged from there.

**As a way of reducing mileage charges further we are trying to establish a 'run' through Rai Valley area on Tuesdays and Pelorus to Havelock area on Wednesdays. Through the spring and pre mating these visits are intended for routine type work (dirty cows/RFM'S etc). – It goes without saying though that we can attend on any day that suits you, the 'runs' are just a way of organising some routine type work.**

We hope this works well for you.

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