



# VETS ON ALABAMA DAIRY NEWS

**September 2013**

As we come through calving and the days get longer there are a few areas of herd management that need to be remembered. This month we started dehorning calves and metri-checking herds. This edition has more details in regard to this. We have also decided to re run last months article on endometritis, as there have been a number of questions around checking and treatment. In August we held a dairy reproduction seminar at the Slip Inn in Havelock – this was well attended with over 45 farmers. Thank you to all who came along, as it really makes it worthwhile running these types of evenings.

## In This Issue:

- Endometritis - Don't delay
- Dehorning Calves
- Benefits of Metacam® 20 at dehorning.
- Drenching Calves In Spring
- Doubling your money when you deal with non cycling cows.

## Don't Delay The Detection And Treatment Of Endometritis

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 \$11,000 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 \$250\*\* 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



**METRICURE® IS THE PROVEN CURE.**  
2013 METRICURE CLINIC TALKER.

MSD Animal Health is a division of Merck & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. © 2013 MSD Animal Health. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



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!**

### **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 had twins.
2. Your vet can then 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 \$7/kgMS, results in losses of up to \$250.

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.

**"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.**

## **Dehorning Calves**

Keith Webby

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.

## Treating your Calves for Worms

With calving comes a busy time of year that seems to go on until Christmas! Before doing what you've always done, take a moment to make sure it is still correct for your property.

Here are some basic rules that all farmers should go by:

- Use combination drenches

*We used to say rotate drenches, but now we say use combinations as research has shown this is best for production and preventing resistance. You should always use combination products (double or triple) in all cattle under 15 months of age.*

- Give the drench properly

*Dose accurately for weight and take your time and do it right. Pour-on, injectable and oral drenches can all be given poorly, so make sure you do it correctly.*

- Take care with young calves

*Don't mix drench in with the milk as deaths can occur  
Avoid abamectin containing products in calves under 120kg*

- Take care with yourself

*Choose a drenching method that works best for you and doesn't unnecessarily put you at risk of injury*

There has been a lot of research published in recent years that has changed the advice given around drenching. Unfortunately that can make it confusing if you are told one thing, only to now be told another.

If you do not want to use pour ons or orals. There are options now that include a levamisole combination injection – Eclipse E.

If you are in any doubt, talk to one of our team of production veterinarians to discuss your particular requirements.

## Doubling your money when dealing with your non cycling cows

Nick Hansby

We really appreciate your support at the recent seminar at the Slip Inn. Keith and I have set ourselves a target of lifting the in calf rate this year.

One area that we know we can help is encouraging early treatment of Non Cycling cows with CIDR programmes. Typically 20% of Dairy cows in NZ are not detected in oestrous by planned start of mating.

Across the country, early treatment of non cycling cows has been extensively trialled and shown to advance conception date by 10-16 days compared to the No treatment animals.

The use of CIDR programmes across the country is standard practice, but not in Marlborough, even though our 6 week in calf rates are one of the lowest.

