VETS ON ALABAMA DAIRY NEWS

August 2015

Discounted visits to treat at risk cows

Experience and research has shown that there is considerable value in treating **'at risk'** cows early in terms of improved reproductive performance - we want you to see this value for yourself.

In view of the low pay out we are offering **15% discount** on farm visit vet fees for visits to treat "at risk" cows this spring. (See below for definition)

Cows should be put up for vet examination in the first 2 weeks after calving if they are defined as 'at risk'. It's a good idea to mark these cows as they calve to make drafting easier-broad tail tape is fine for this available from the clinic.

Please ring the clinic to arrange your discounted visit when you have a group of at risk cows ready.

IN THIS ISSUE

Maximise Cow Health in Spring

Quick check list from Vets on Alabama:

Just 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 cows 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.

Also –it's good to start getting these treated cows onto Minda so that their reproductive performance can be tracked-the power of data!!!

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.

As a general approach we favour a yellow bag (magnesium 20% under the skin only) and calcium 375 (pink) in the vein or under the skin as most downers are actually low in calcium and magnesium. These treatments provide immediate calcium and magnesium but don't last long-that's why we should follow up with an oral calol (if she is swallowing OK) which provides calcium over a longer period (6-8hrs).

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.

Theileria

Remember we are still on the lookout for Theileria in the region. This is the tick borne anaemia infection that is established in the North Island. We are still classed as an unstable area so the disease picture is hard to predict. Keep an eye out for cows that go off colour or slow without any obvious cause and get then checked-particularly if they look pale. We hope the disease does not strike severely in the area but it is possible there may be some cases. The biggest risk is from incoming stock from established 'stable' areas. Talk to us if you are unsure as to the status of any incoming stock.

Importance of Early Detection To Clean Up Your Dirty Cows!

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.

Metricure® is the proven cure for endometritis

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

Research[2] 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.

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

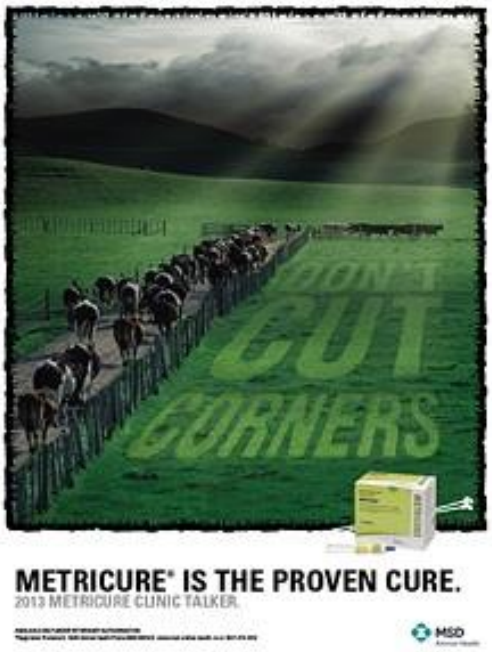
Call us on 578 6569 to discuss your Metra-checking.

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 Metricheck™, 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.



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 cephapirin on reproductive performance. AVJ, Vol 87, No 9, 369-378.

Calving and Wet Weather!

From memory the last couple of springs have been pretty good-well generally dry anyway. This year things seem to be shaping up very differently. As I write we have just come through a spell of very wet and windy weather with more on the way.
It is very common for us to be called to cows with dead calves inside a couple of days after weather events such as this.

Normal calving has 2 main stages-stage 1 is when the calf is positioning itself and the cow is going through the hormonal preparation for calving. Stage 1 involves the cow separating herself from the mob, she has her tail up, may look at her side a lot and be up and down frequently. This phase should last no longer than a maximum of 6 hours. Stage 2 is when there is active pushing and should last for 2 hours max.

In times of severe weather cows may get stuck in stage 1 and fail to progress. This may be due to low energy if she has not fed properly, marginal milk fever (often the case in bad weather) or mal presentation. It is much harder to

monitor your springer mob for calving cows in these conditions as they may not exhibit normal behaviour. The result is the calf dies inside and it is only a day or two later that this may be evident and by then it is often too late.

It's a really good idea to be very fussy about checking springers after and during a very wet period and if you are not sure either put your arm in or call us. Likewise if you have noticed a cow in stage 1 for 6 hrs plus or in stage 2 for 2hrs max without significant progression.

Rotten calving's often result in poor outcomes –remember we are here to help!

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 want 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

Leptospirosis – Vaccination of Young Calves

Leptospirosis remains a serious threat to the health and livelihood of farmers. Cases of human leptospirosis have been increasing over the last few years, so there is no room for complacency with this disease. Vaccination has done an excellent job over the last 30 years to protect stock and people alike, but that doesn't mean that there isn't room for further improvement in the way that we do things. For example, in spite of widespread vaccination, male dairy farm workers have a 4 to 7 % chance of contracting leptospirosis, which is a risk 25 to 50 times higher than the average person in New Zealand. Traditional vaccination programmes in calves have delayed vaccination until around 6 months of age. This has been due to a belief that calves are not at a great risk of infection before 6 months of age and also because of doubts about how effective the original lepto vaccines were when given to very young calves. We now know that calves are at risk of lepto infection well before 6 months of age. If they do become infected they can become chronic shedders of leptospirosis in their urine for months or years, presenting a health risk to you any time they are handled. Once they are infected, vaccination is too late to be of any use and will not cure their infection.

Calves should be vaccinated early, before they have a chance to become infected. Fortunately there are now vaccines which are effective in young calves, Leptoshield® and Ultravac® 7 in 1 can both be used as early as 4 weeks of age.

Early calf vaccination with two injections 4 - 6 weeks apart, plus yearly boosters, is the best way to protect you from this debilitating disease.

An ideal time to do early calf lepto vaccinations is at the same time as 5 in 1 clostridial vaccination. Ultravac® 7 in 1 is a combination clostridial and leptospirosis vaccine which means we can do both jobs in one injection. For further information about early calf lepto vaccination and lepto control, talk to your vet.

Treating Non Cycling Cows – Is It Worth It?

Cost or Return on Investment?

NZ research shows that treating non-cyclers prior to the start of mating (day -10) advances their calving date by 16 days compared to no treatment. This means an extra 16 days in milk the following season and a healthy return on investment.

What about low dairy pay-out seasons like this one? The return on investment of CIDR treatment is realised in the following lactation, so we need to consider the expected 2016/2017 season pay-out. But even using this season's low expected pay-out, we can demonstrate that when the cost of extra feed and treatment are accounted for, CIDR treatment is still profitable for most dairy farmers. If you want to see for yourself and you have access to an iPad, we recommend downloading the free CIDR ROI app from the App store. Or talk to one of our vets and we will walk you through it.

Is there another way we can deal with non-cycling cows?

A number of options have been trialled. These include:

1. Once a day milking: If done correctly, once a day milking can improve cow condition and fertility, but this comes at the cost of milk production. A Dairy NZ study showed that OAD milking for either 3 or 6 weeks at the start of lactation temporarily improved cow condition but had no effect on number of non-cycling cows or any of the fertility measures. At the same time, the short period of OAD milking reduced whole season milk production by 8 – 12%.
2. Separation and preferential feeding of non-cycling cows: A NZ study demonstrated that separating non-cyclers out 10 days before planned start of mating and feeding them more actually decreases their 1st service conception rate and 28 day pregnancy rate.
3. Use of vasectomised (teaser) bulls: No studies have been able to show a reproductive benefit from using teaser bulls to get cows cycling (aside from being excellent heat detectors).
4. OvSynch/PG programs: These programs are designed to synchronise cycling cows. NZ non-cycler research found that these programs are less effective and less economical than CIDR programs.
5. Waiting until the end of the first round: Delaying treatment until the end of the first round means you have fewer non-cyclers to treat. But at least 31 days of mating have passed by the time they are inseminated and treatment does not advance conception date compared to untreated non-cyclers by as much as early treatment. So delaying treatment to the second round costs less but is uneconomical. Again, NZ research has shown this to be the case.

Evidence shows that CIDR treatment of your non-cyclers before the planned start of mating is the most effective option. CIDR treatment buys you an average of 16 days extra milk for next season, improves your calving spread and is still cost effective in a low pay out year. Please talk to one of the vets about the options available.

The NAIT Scheme Transition Phase For Cattle Finished On

July 1st 2015.

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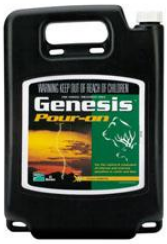

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