

SITUATION COMMENT

The milk payout forecast reductions over the last few weeks have had most dairy farmers rechecking budgets and seeking where they can reduce costs for the next financial year. Investing in areas that will maintain or grow production without lifting the cost of production will be critical. High levels of grass utilisation, regardless of system, and days in milk remain two of the biggest drivers of profitability. From an animal health point of view prevention has always been better than cure, so it is important to maintain steps in disease limitation as these are often low cost. Keeping things simple but getting the basics right every day is very important. Remember too, that what we do now impacts on next season.

The *M.bovis* surveillance scheme is still going and is an ideal opportunity for BVD control and monitoring. The scheme will pay for all service bulls to be tested and so only the lab fees for BVD are charged. Currently there are no active cases of *M.bovis* in NZ and this monitoring is part of providing evidence of freedom from disease.

Recent improved weather and warmer temperatures certainly help to boost morale on farm. Calving has gone well, and increased use of transition diets and calcium boluses have helped to reduce milk fever issues. Lambing is now kicking off for most with feed covers a little less than desired generally. We are continuing to see increased amounts of drench resistance primarily to some of the *Trichostrongylus* species. Drench monitoring must play an increased role going forward.

Calf scour problems are similar to other years; however sheep abortion reports are down. Keep up the good work out there everyone.

Morgan Greene MVB MANZCVS

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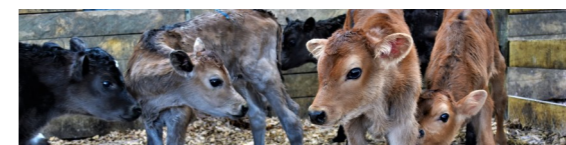
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BIT OF A LAUGH

Why did the scarecrow win an award?

Because he was outstanding in his field.



Pet Reminders

- Check for signs of unexpected pregnancy in cats
- Flea prevention

MAG FOR BEEF COWS

Spring is busy, and dealing with animal health issues is both labour and time intensive. Low magnesium is something commonly encountered at this time of the year. Dietary intake falls below what the cow requires, both from lower amounts of magnesium in fast growing pastures, and higher requirements from pregnant cows. This can cause clinical disease (Grass Staggers), contributing to stock losses, reduced first cycle conception rates, and ultimately eating up time that could be spent elsewhere.

Ensuring cattle have adequate magnesium can be a juggling act. Dairy systems can supplement through the water, on pasture or in supplement mixes. For beef cattle these are impractical, often meaning that they receive nothing leading into the spring.

Rumentrace gives 9-12 weeks of constant magnesium supplementation. Offering 2g mag/day, it ensures lactating beef cows are well supplemented (requiring 1.5g mag/day). Based on the protection period, capsules can be put in from 1 month prior to calving to 1 week before. If scanning into age brackets, they can be given to aged mobs at separate intervals to get cattle through the risk period.

If you have run into issues with Grass Staggers before, or think that your cattle are more likely to be at risk this year, consider using Rumentrace. If you have any questions, feel free to call or pop in for a chat.

Lochie Chittock BVSc

Sheep Reminders

- Lambing
- Check b12 levels in lambs
- Monitor and record lamb deaths
- Get hoggets onto pasture
- Order tailing requirements
- Order scabby mouth vaccine



FOOT INFECTIONS

Mud, wet, and more mud, sums up July and August so it is not surprising that we are seeing foot infections across the species. Constant wetting can soften the sole, and weaken the white line, and soften skin between the toes making it easier for bacteria to penetrate and lameness follows.

For **horses** hoof abscesses can result in a sudden onset of often severe lameness. At times the whole leg can swell up. Treatment requires identifying the sore spot in the hoof, locating and carefully opening a tract to the bacteria, and draining pus (which looks like dirty water) providing some instant relief. A particularly deep abscess may unfortunately erupt from the coronary band, which can take some weeks to heal. The hoof needs to be kept clean and dry – difficult if you don't have a stable! Soaking in epsom salts, and poultice bandages can help if they will stay in the mud. Antibiotics are usually not indicated if you can get good drainage and can actually delay the healing if used in place of hoof drainage. A contaminated closed in wound is perfect for tetanus to grow, and with horses being particularly prone, it is a good idea to cover them through tetanus vaccination at this time.

For **sheep and goats**, they can also get abscesses up the hoof wall, but also between the toes. What may start as scald, if the wrong bacteria gets in (*Dichelobacter Nodosus*) can progress to footrot, a particularly nasty and smelly bug. These animals do often require antibiotics to clear this infection. Penicillin is usually sufficient, but they may need daily doses. Sometimes the infection can travel towards the joint which has a guarded prognosis for recovery. As with horses it is a good idea to move these animals to drier ground. The footrot bacteria can spread through the soil so keep this in consideration.



Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Horse Reminders

- Vaccinate pregnant mares for salmonellosis, Tetanus & strangles
- Watch ponies' condition for founder
- Clip horses out to remove winter coat

COCCIDIOSTATS FOR CALVES

As we're heading into September, many people have calves out on pasture and can breathe a sigh of relief as they feel they have dodged the deadly scours. However, as some may have experienced, there is one to watch out for in your older calves on pasture – Coccidia.

Coccidia is a tough parasite which can survive in calf sheds and on pasture for two years! Once it has been swallowed, it attacks the cells lining the intestines as it completes its lifecycle. Large scale destruction of these cells can result in bloody diarrhoea, weight loss and reduced feed intake. Most calves are exposed to Coccidia in their lifetime but won't get too sick. You'll likely see poor growth rates and failure to thrive. It's those that are stressed, have poor nutrition or have an extremely high burden that succumb to disease. It's also more common to see Coccidia scours after poor weather.

Once the Coccidia has done its damage, it is passed out in the poo of infected animals and will hang around, infecting other calves. As the cycle continues, it can be frustrating trying to deal with calves not putting on the expected weight gains, or losing calves once you've got them out on pasture. Good news - there are some effective measures you can take to reduce disease in your animals.

Many calf milk powders and most calf meals contain a product called a coccidiostat or an ionophore. These help delay the progression of Coccidia so that it cannot cause disease. It is important to ensure you're feeding the right amount of powder or meal. This is normally 1-2kg a day. These products can be toxic if over-fed so try and ensure all calves are receiving their allocation and none are gorging on their mates rations!

Of special importance is that a lot of coccidiostats are highly toxic to other animals! Make sure your dogs, cats and horses cannot get into any food containing a coccidiostat!

Around 2-4 weeks after calves are weaned from meal, you may see a spike in disease. This is due to high burdens on pasture combined with a lack of protective coccidiostat in the meal. A good way to mitigate disease is to drench calves before weaning off meal with products containing Toltrazuril or Diclazuril, e.g Baycox. Turbo initial® is a calf drench that combats internal parasites and coccidia. These offer protection from disease at high-risk times. Drenches can also be given in the face of an outbreak to minimise deaths. Other options to reduce disease include rotating calf paddocks each year and grazing other stock classes on these paddocks to try and clean them up.

As with any disease, good management is key to prevention and treatment:

- Isolate sick animals.
- Minimise stress.
- Reduce contamination on pasture by avoiding using the same paddocks each year.
- Feed a high quality coccidiostat containing calf meal.
- Drenching calves before they come off meal.

Get in touch if you're having trouble with scours in your older animals, we'd love to discuss some options with you!

Holly Gardyne BVSc

INTESTINAL WORM CONTROL

In the first few weeks of life, almost every puppy will be exposed to intestinal parasites directly from their mother, from her milk or the environment. Worms can cause serious health problems in puppies including diarrhoea, vomiting, weight loss and depression. Pups should start their worming from just 2 weeks of age!

We recommend using an "all-wormer" product to target all species of worms including roundworms, hookworms, whipworms and tapeworms. Drontal®, Dolpac®, Endogard® and Milpro® are some examples. The latter is a nice small size for little pups. Note, Droncit is not a full wormer so is not for puppies – it only controls *Taenia ovis* for Sheep Measles.

Pet Dogs

After receiving the first worming tablet at 2 weeks of age, worming should be continued fortnightly until 12 weeks old – roughly the same time as their 2nd puppy vaccination. From 4 -6 months of age, worming tablets should be administered monthly. Ongoing worming should then continue at three-monthly intervals into adulthood.

Farm Dogs

Dogs which are exposed to farm environments need to be wormed for *Taenia ovis*, the parasite involved in sheep measles. This program requires a dog over 6 months of age to have additional monthly worming tablets, containing praziquantel to specifically target tapeworms. Droncit® and Wormicide® are tapeworm specific products that can be used for this purpose. Like pet dogs, farm dogs will also require all-wormer products at three-monthly intervals.

Our clinic offers a worming tablet mail out service to farm clients with the monthly statements. Please enquire with one of our friendly team members if you would like your new puppy to be added to this program.



Roundworms in the poop one day after worming a seemingly healthy 4 week old puppy for the first time (2 weeks too late!)

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

Cattle Reminders

- Dairy calves—disbud
- Plan bloat control
- Mastitis - Review control programme
- Pre-mating trace element check
- Metrichick cows
- Blood test bulls for BVD
- BVD vaccination booster
- Plan non-cycler protocol
- Mating plan review

DEALING WITH BROODY HENS



A broody hen is one that wants to sit on her eggs in order to hatch them. The instinct to become a mother is strong at this time of year and hormones can go into overdrive, even when there are no fertile eggs to hatch. A highly broody hen will not even care if they are her own eggs, she will simply sit on anything (or nothing if the instinct is strong enough).

Being broody, in most cases, is a good trait. But what if you just want eggs and not chicks! Here are a few suggestions to try:

Remove eggs: Hens are often compelled to sit on eggs left in nesting boxes. If you remove these from their comfortable nesting box once, or even twice a day during Spring, there will be less of a temptation to sit on them for long periods of time.

Distraction: Give the hen something else to focus on. Remove her from the nest and lock her out of the coop for a few hours. Take care as she might get a bit aggressive. Let her interact with other chickens. Introduce new foods or take her to a new area of the garden. At night, put her directly onto the perch with the other chickens. They are less likely to seek out a nesting box during the night because of the risk of predation. With any luck, she would have forgotten about her quest come morning.

Mesh Cage: One of the physical changes that a broody hen undergoes is to lose feathers on her breast. This specialised type of moult is called a "brooding patch" as it allows eggs to have close contact with warm skin. The "mesh cage" method aims to cool down the brooding patch area by stimulating air flow into the hen's undercarriage. Without warmth and direct contact with eggs, a chicken's pro-baby hormones will eventually subside and she will soon abandon her post.

Kate Taylor DVM

Deer Reminders

- Stags—copper pre-velvetting
- Hinds—copper pre-calving
- Supplementary feed stags
- Sort stags into velvetting mobs