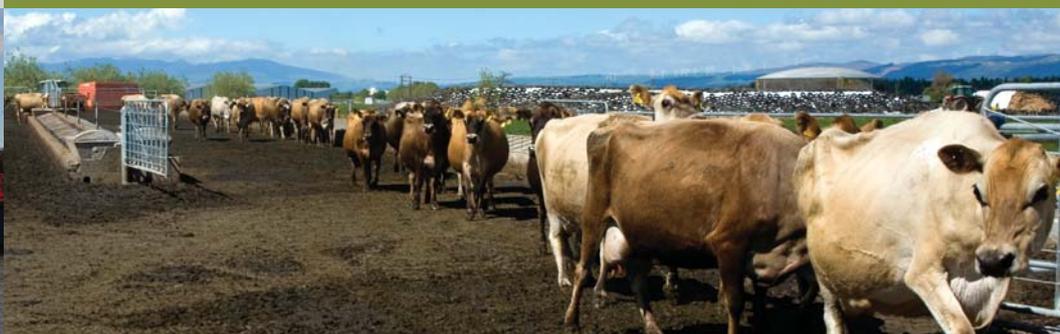




VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

APRIL 2015



Fishing competition reminder

It's not too late to enter our annual fishing competition.

With low tide scheduled at 8.30am and high tide at 2.40pm, **Saturday 11th April 2015** is sure to be a fantastic days fishing. Come and enjoy a day on the water, great camaraderie and no doubt many a story of "the ones that got away".

We hope to see you at the **Wanganui Manawatu Fishing Club** anytime from day-break through to final weigh-in at 3.00pm. To be followed by presentation of prizes and, of course, a great BBQ feast to round off the day.

Entry forms and the competition rules are available from all of our clinics.

Anzac Day falls on a Saturday this year so all our branches will be **closed on Saturday 25th and Monday 27th April**. We will be available for emergency calls.

When money is tight

Chris Carter

When money is tight, and this season is one of those, we correctly reduce spending. Where those reductions are made is the question.

For the past five years Fonterra has reported a steady decrease in average bulk milk somatic cell counts (BMSCC) as dry cow therapy (DCT) treatments have increased. The dry cow period (ideally 60 days) is a very important time for the udder to repair and prepare for the new season.

We know the vast bulk of mastitis cases that occur immediately after calving have their origins from the dry cow period. We also know that up to 50% of all mastitis cases in the entire season, caused by the environmental bacteria such as *Streptococcus uberis*, originate from the dry cow period. It is for these reasons we have been advocating the use of DCT and teatseal over recent years. Last year we had the highest number of dry cow and internal teat sealant (ITS) sales, and in

the spring we had a record decrease in the sale of mastitis treatments.

The results of a well planned DCT programme will be less stress in the shed during your busiest period of year, more milk (infected quarters never return to their potential in the season they are infected), and there will be less culling from acute or chronic mastitis cases, as well as a reduced risk of grades.

We have been working with our suppliers to reduce treatment costs for our mainstay products; Cpravin[®], Bovaclox[™], Dryclox[®] Xtra, Orbenin Enduro and Teatseal[®]. Prices for short acting products start at \$2.03 (excluding GST) per tube.

DCT is comparable to taking out an insurance policy - risk is never completely eliminated but can certainly be reduced. A recent horror story; this summer a farm management decision was made on an autumn calving herd with low clinical mastitis to NOT use DCT. Subsequently the cost of treating infected quarters immediately after drying off was three times the total cost of applying DCT, had this been used.

Call your clinic now to book your Milk Quality Consult and take the opportunity to discuss DCT options with your vet.



Totally Vets current stock health

Dairy

Early drying off decisions need to be made for the lighter body condition score (BCS) cows to ensure that those cows will gain enough condition before next spring. A cow that is one BCS lighter than the herd average will require about one month extra in dry period

length. This is because her feed requirements for maintenance of BCS increase in late pregnancy, robbing her of any chance of gaining condition closer to calving.

Having these cows in a better BCS at calving will not only improve cow health over this time but will also mean that these cows will

HA HA

A man staggers into the emergency room with a concussion, multiple bruises, and a five iron wrapped around his neck. Naturally the doctor asks him what happened.

“Well, it was like this” said the man. “I was having a quiet round of golf with my wife when, at a difficult hole, we both sliced our balls into a pasture of cows. We went to look for them, and while I was rooting around I noticed that one of the cows had something white in its rear end. I walked over and lifted up the tail, and sure enough, there was a golf ball with my wife’s monogram on it stuck right in the middle of the cow’s butt. That’s when I made my mistake.”

“What did you do?” asked the doctor.

“Well, I lifted the tail, pointed, and yelled to my wife, “Hey! This looks like yours!”



Blake Moore, Richard Ash and John Wyatt

Manawatu Dairy Industry Regional Awards

Chris Carter

The winners of the 2015 Manawatu Dairy Industry Awards were announced at a gala dinner on Saturday 14 March.

This is a great event and one which is supported by Totally Vets as a tier one regional sponsor. Winners and place-getters for the three competitions were:

SHAREMILKER/EQUITY FARMER OF THE YEAR:

First place, Richard Ash (farming on Tutu Totara, owned by David and Sarah Marshall, Marton). Richard also won the merit awards for Human Resources, Recording and Productivity, Business Performance, and Farm Environment.

Second place was Aaron Taylor (Barry and Maree Taylor, Tangimoana). Aaron also won merit awards for Leadership and Risk Management. Ben and Lizzie Ash (North Grove Dairies, Shane Carroll and Nicola Shadbolt, Ashhurst) came in third and were merit award winners for Farm Safety and Pasture and Performance.

FARM MANAGER OF THE YEAR:

First was John Wyatt (Kevin Argyle, Kairanga). John also won the merit awards in this class for Best Practice and Farm Management.

Jarrod and Nikki Greenwood (Ian Strahan, Rangiotu) were second and won merit awards for Strategic Planning, Leadership and Financial Planning. In third place were Jon and Crystal Cranshaw, (farming on the Walker’s property at Rangiwahia). They also won the merit award for their environmental work on-farm.

DAIRY TRAINEE OF THE YEAR:

First, Blake Moore (on Osborne’s farm at Opiki). Second place was Paul Mercer (on Greenwood’s farm at Rangiotu) and third was Simon Wilkes from Levin.

Congratulations to **Alex Meads** who won the Totally Vets prize for **Most Promising Entrant**.

The winners in each of the three classes go on to represent Manawatu in May at the National Awards Dinner being held at the Sky Tower in Auckland. Congratulations to all our clients and good luck for the nationals.

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be more likely to have better milking and reproductive performance during the following lactation.

Trace element testing is best done this time of year to ensure that your cows aren't going into the winter deficient in copper and selenium. The samples can either be collected cow-side by your vet or livers can be sampled at the time of slaughter. See Craig's article on page five for more information.

Sheep and Beef

Be on the watch for black scour worm or *Trichostrongylus* species in both hoggets and rising one year cattle. Peak pasture larval numbers and faecal egg outputs generally mean that worm larval challenges are high in the autumn. The grazing of summer crops or 'cleaner' pastures; grazing young stock with alternative stock species; and getting more

lambs off the farm earlier; will go a long way in reducing this challenge. Reliance on drench alone to control *Trichostrongyles* is often futile if the challenges become too high.

Deer

If weaning is occurring now, then don't forget to vaccinate your weaners against Yersiniosis. They will need a booster three to six weeks later to fully protect them from the disease.

Sheep measles

Juan Klue

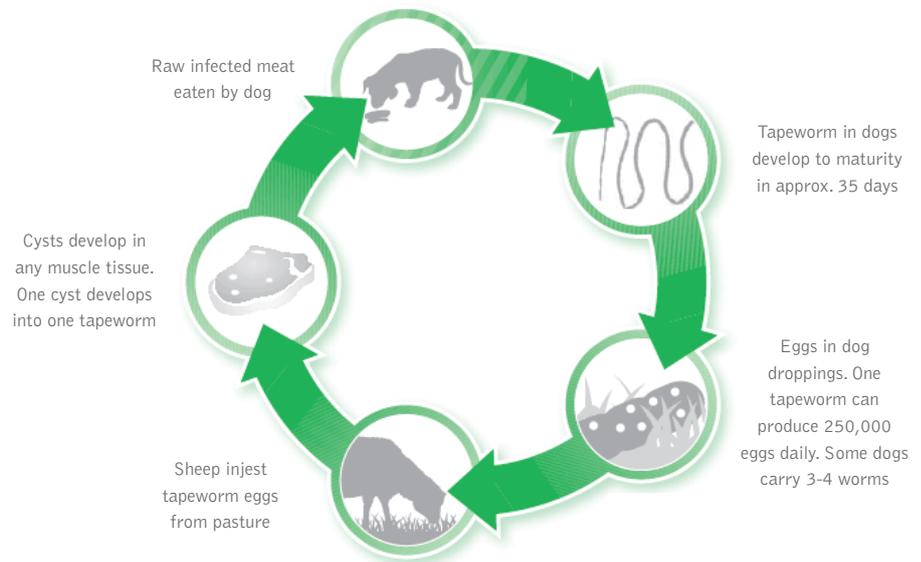
Sheep measles is the common name given to the hard white nodules found in the muscle tissue of sheep and goats. They are caused by *Cysticercus ovis*, the intermediate stage of the tapeworm parasite *Taenia ovis* which is the primary stage found in dogs.

The cysts are commonly seen during post mortem inspection by meat inspectors and, while they pose no risk to human health, they cause blemishes that consumers find very unappealing and hence can result in downgrading, or in severe cases, condemnation of carcasses. Farmers that have issues with sheep measles can lose a significant amount of money from downgraded or condemned carcasses, especially in lambs.

THE CYCLE:

The sheep measles lifecycle is exactly that, a cycle. Without sheep AND dogs in combination, the cycle breaks down. The key being that dogs become infected by eating raw sheep/goat meat, including the heart, that is infected with live *Cysticercus ovis* cysts. Cysts can remain alive for three months or longer before the sheep/goats immune system kills the cysts leaving fibrous, calcified lesions in their place, seen as defects (sheep measles) in the carcass.

Figure one: Sheep measles cycle (from Ovis Management website, www.sheepmeasles.co.nz)



Infected dogs can pass many thousands of eggs in their faeces thereby contaminating pasture, and can survive for four or more months depending on environmental conditions. Eggs can be spread by wind for up to ten kilometers, so just one infected dog can contaminate not only your farm, but all your neighbours farms as well!

CONTROL:

To stop the spread of sheep measles freeze any sheep/goat meat (-10°C for ten days) or cook meat thoroughly to destroy any cysts before feeding to dogs. All sheep/goat offal should also be cooked. Please note that cattle meat should undergo the same treatment to reduce the spread of Neospora, but raw meat from horses, rabbits and possums can be fed to dogs.

Farm (or in fact any) dogs going onto sheep pasture should be treated, ideally before

docking, with drugs containing the ingredient praziquantel such as Drontal® Allwormer and Wormicide Tape. The surest step to break the life cycle of tapeworm infection between dogs and sheep, and to control gastrointestinal worms in dogs, is to employ a monthly cyclic worming plan of:

- Month ONE - Drontal® Allwormer
- Month TWO - Wormicide Tape
- Month THREE - Wormicide Tape
- Month FOUR - Drontal® Allwormer
- And repeat

Farmers who are on a sheep measles dosing programme can obtain 'Restricted Dog Entry' signs by contacting the Ovis Management website www.sheepmeasles.co.nz or phone 0800 222 011.

Get together with your neighbours and put a plan in place today to ensure prevention of sheep measles in your flock.

Trevor's travels

Trevor Cook

The experience of visiting farms in France was insightful and I have many visions that have stayed in my mind, collectively around the housing of livestock indoors.

Seeing hundreds of **Merino ewes** lambing in sheds seemed to demean the breed. Of real interest was their incredible lack of seasonality. They readily get back in lamb two months after lambing and freely lamb in September. Comparatively, March in New Zealand is generally devoid of new lambs. And, no, there was no manipulation of day/night lengths! Seeing Merino ewes suckling 1.6 lambs was impressive.

A heart-warming sight was lambing **Lacaune milking sheep** in a spacious, clean and well-lit barn. These goat-like sheep mothered the 1.6 lambs, that they on average had, and the ewes were milked three times a week, so it looked like a symbiotic set up. But at three weeks of age the lambs hike off to Spain to a specialist lamb meat market. The milk in this case was turned into Roquefort cheese. Just whether any profit dropped out was hard to see, but there was a focus on production. The farm was part of a cooperative that ran a specialised breeding programme to produce superior milking ewes. The average lactation length of these ewes was between eight and nine months.

When a massive barn is filled with ewes rearing 1.8 or more lambs each you would expect a cacophony of mother infant interaction. But the quietness of this **Romane sheep** system was airy. The fact lambs are



taken off at sixty days of age, and fed only concentrates in pens adjacent to the ewes, just added to the strangeness of the silence. The ewes lambed again in ten months which presumably added to their profitability. I struggled with the sense of this production system when the feed costs for the lambs exceeded their sale value. But I realised that it mattered little when the subsidy income for that farm was \$800 per hectare.

In the foothills of the mountains there were sheep being wintered outside, but housed to lamb. These old breed sheep were threatened by foxes and wolves. Also running with them were two big white **Maremme sheep dogs**. They protected the sheep from these predators,

but never bothered the sheep. They were very friendly dogs but were not to be patted, as were there to protect the sheep.

The sight that was most spectacular was of 900kg **Blonde Aquitaine cows** in barns. These quiet monsters are impressive in sight only. Their average age to first calf is 39 months and their average calving interval was 410 days. Not surprising then that the average production life is 2.5 lactations. The feed costs for these animals are huge, and in general terms they consume the income that they make!

Just a brief summary of an eye-opening trip and view into an alternative way of farming!

Gossip

Congratulations to **Jackie Haitana** from the Awapuni branch, whose team won the Mixed B Grade competition at the Central Indoor Netball Superleague competition

in Wellington at the end of February. The nationals were held from 13-15th March and, despite facing some very tough competition, the team had a fantastic time and enjoyed the experience both on and off the court!

Congratulations also to Taumarunui clients **Graeme and Annie Carmichael** on winning another silver in the Romney/Traditional category at the recent Glammies awards in Wanaka. They obviously produce a very consistent product, having won silver the previous year as well.

The end of March saw us farewell several staff who are heading off to various new



Trace minerals and your herd

Craig Dickson

Getting the right balance and level of trace minerals is an important part of animal health and production, and a sensible trace mineral supplementation program requires information.

As the end of the season approaches some consideration needs to be given to this component of the farming operation. Before using copper and selenium products, make sure you have enough information to get supplementation levels right. Getting them wrong can adversely affect cow health, with sub-optimal levels leading to reduced performance and excessive levels, as well as being a waste of your hard earned income, leading to ill-health or death.

Going into winter is a good time to be testing your herd's mineral status. Typically this testing would cover off selenium, copper and cobalt levels. There are essentially three

options available for doing this testing. Each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

1. BLOOD TESTS

Testing mineral status on collected bloods is quick, easy and relatively cheap. Blood sampling is generally done on four to ten animals, gives excellent information on selenium and cobalt levels, but is limited in its use for copper. Blood copper levels will give an indication of present copper status but are not particularly useful at assessing copper reserves into the future. The liver is the storage organ for copper so, as far as assessing reserves, liver analysis will give you a better answer.

2. LIVER TESTING ON CULL COWS

Liver samples from cull animals (usually four to six) are a good method of assessing copper, selenium and cobalt levels in cattle. If you are sending livestock to slaughter, now is a good time to get valuable information from cull liver samples. Totally Vets can supply you with a liver sample request form. Two key steps are required:

- **Fax a fully completed copy of the liver request form to theASUREquality office** of your chosen slaughter premises. The number can be found on the back of the

request form. We can fax a copy through for you, ideally at least ONE day's notice is required before your stock arrive for slaughter.

- **A copy MUST also go with the stock truck driver.** Make sure it is attached to your Animal Status Declaration.

You do have to be mindful that the line of cull cows is only **indicative** of the rest of the herd. If these animals have had a long convalescence, or have been grazing a separate area of the farm (such as a location that has not had selenium prills added), then they may not be good indicators of the rest of the herd.

3. LIVER TESTING ON LIVE ANIMALS

This sounds very invasive but is a routine part of what we as large animal vets do. This requires a small incision on the right hand side of the cow into which we pass a sterile tube that collects a small sample of liver. This does take longer than simply collecting blood and is hence slightly more expensive but it does circumvent the limitations mentioned above.

Call your vet to discuss what would be the best way of doing this job to suit you and your farm's requirements.

endeavours. **Natasha Smith**, from our Taumarunui branch, heads off for her long awaited OE, starting with a holiday in South America, touring up through North America and Canada, then to the United Kingdom and time will tell where else! We will miss her incredibly and wish her a safe and exciting journey. **Kirsten Dalziell**, from our Feilding clinic, is moving to the sunny Hawkes Bay to

join her partner, whilst **Hayley Mayhew**, from our Awapuni clinic, is shifting to the capital city. Hayley is taking up a vet nursing job in central Wellington, and her husband **Gareth** is taking on a management role within his company. We wish them both well on their new paths and will especially miss Hayley's most incredible earring collection!

This month sees **Allie Quinn's** return, from her year in Vietnam, to our Awapuni Branch. We as colleagues and friends, and no doubt you as clients and friends, are very much looking forward to having her smiling face and great expertise back on local ground! Allie's return sees **Colin Wakelin** moving to a part-time role, commuting to work in our Taumarunui branch three days a week.



Has your pregnancy test result matched expectations?

Greg Smith

The popularity of early pregnancy testing has been strong again this year and means that most herds have either completed this already or have only the re-checks to do.

Overall the empty rates are similar to last year but there has been a reduction in the average six week in-calf rate (ICR). Over mating it was apparent that submission rates during the second round of AI were lower than normal.

With the results available, now is a good time to review the outcome in your herd. A good starting point is to check the Fertility Focus Report (FFR) available for your herd in Minda Pro. This report not only provides the two final

measures of mating performance, that is the six week ICR and final empty rate, but also the outcome for the different aspects of mating that contribute to these results.

Because New Zealand has a seasonally based system the rate at which cows get pregnant has a major effect on the final empty rate. A late calving cow will struggle to resume normal cycling activity in time to be successfully mated during the allotted mating length. This is the reason that the six week ICR is being promoted as a measure of reproductive performance, that, and because an increase in the number of calvings in the first six weeks also means more days in milk.

Making comparisons and setting targets for six week ICR and empty rate needs to be realistic. While there are published targets based on the best performers in the industry consideration needs to be given to where you are now. So the following are given as a guideline based on what is happening out there at the moment. For six week ICR the level at which concern should be raised is for anything less than 70%; for final empty rate, the length of mating must be taken into consideration for the comparison to be relevant. The 'cause for concern' levels are as follows:

Length of Mating	Empty Rate
6 weeks	Greater than 27%
9 weeks	Greater than 17%
12 weeks	Greater than 11%
15 weeks	Greater than 7%

Often we talk about the results at the same time as an on-farm visit for other reasons, which doesn't allow time to discuss the issues fully or with all the information to hand. A better approach is to put some time aside for a reproductive consult. During this consult the FFR can be discussed in full. In many ways the FFR is like a warrant of fitness checklist that can be used to breakdown the problem into bite sized chunks. The benefit of this approach is that the areas of greatest need can be made the priority for planning ahead for next season. There are also good 'gap calculators' available to put a realistic economic value on making improvements.

If you have questions about your results or about what tools are available to review your herd's reproductive performance, such as the FFR, don't hesitate to contact your vet to discuss these in more detail.

Drenching weaner deer

Barry Askin

After two decades using single active drenches, at dose rates that we now know are sub-optimal in deer, it is hardly surprising that there is a high level of anthelmintic resistance present, in *Ostertagia* type

nematodes, in many of our farmed deer systems.

The most widely used anthelmintic in deer, mainly for convenience reasons but also because of a lack of other more appropriate licensed products, has been moxidectin pour-on. This is not effective on many properties. A recent study has demonstrated a range of 14-94% efficacy (55% average) on New Zealand deer farms.

The latest research indicates that the most appropriate drenches to be using are

anthelmintics not registered for deer and at dose rates not registered for deer. The current best practice recommendations for drenching deer are to use a triple combination of products. This will deal with cases of moxidectin resistance and will also delay the onset of anthelmintic resistance on many properties. An appropriate triple combination could be achieved by use of either:

1. Matrix[®]C at one and a half times the recommended dose rate

OR

Lambing performance starts now!

Ginny Dodunski

The performance of our ewes at lambing is driven by two main factors.

These are:

- Ewe body condition score (BCS) - minimising loss in the month prior to lambing is key.
- Pasture covers - when late-pregnant ewes graze below 1200kgDM/Ha (3.5cm winter-grown pasture) their lambing and lactational performance becomes compromised.

This requires:

- Good condition on ewes now (BCS 3.0 or better, as we know they will lose some weight over winter, and want them to lamb in BCS 2.5).
- A wedge of feed to ration through the winter in the face of declining pasture growth rates.

Pasture cover on first of May is an important indicator of how well a farm is going to get through the winter, and what feed will be available to late-pregnant and lambing ewes in spring. The target will vary for individual farms, depending on the system and lambing

date, but 1800kgDM/Ha might be a typical target, however 2000kgDM/Ha is more comfortable.

WILL YOU GET THERE THIS YEAR?

Pasture growth for April in our hill country can be anything between 12 and 24kgDM/Ha/day. We may get growth rates of 30+ for short periods but, as the temperatures cool and the days shorten, we need to be realistic about what will actually grow for the month.

If your daily feed demand is around 10kgDM/Ha, cover could be increasing by 2kg/Ha/day or 12kg/Ha/day. In the latter case, your average cover will rise 360kg/Ha by May - say from 1200kgDM/Ha to 1560kgDM/Ha, and a feed wedge building. In the case of 12kg/Ha/day growth, with a demand of 10, things will not change much and the farm will start the winter with inadequate reserves.

Doing a feed budget now will show you where you're at, and probably point to some areas where you can either reduce demand or increase the supply. One of the easiest things to do at the moment is to hold ewes back once the ram has been out for two weeks. The gains from feeding ewes at this time come before mating. We have measured in a recent study that weight gain **during** mating has little effect on subsequent scanning performance.

The earlier your lambing date, the higher pasture cover needs to be at the end of August/early September, because there will be a longer period before pasture growth catches up with demand from late-pregnant and lactating ewes.

To maximise lambing performance, ewes should not graze pasture any shorter than 1200kgDM/Ha in late pregnancy and lactation. Depending on a whole lot of factors that might mean set stocking onto 1200 cover. But it might mean set stocking onto 1400.

HOW TO FILL THE GAP?

For nearly all farms there is no way these September pasture cover targets will be achieved without serious de-stocking (not practical or possible for most!) or investment in nitrogen (N) to grow a big wedge of extra grass.

The cost of applying N to save the winter may seem like the last straw that you just cannot afford this season. But the cost of not getting your pastures back up and running quickly will not only impact on this season's lambing, but productive and financial performance, for years to come. Once we get moisture, N is by far and away the main nutrient limiting pasture growth, the supply of which is something you have control over - unlike the rain!

If we have some idea of what your average cover is now, and your stock numbers, we can quickly help you work out how much N needs to be applied to make up the deficit. From a farm system perspective, autumn-applied N usually gives better bang for your buck than N applied just prior to lambing. Your winter management has to be good enough that the feed grown is rationed properly and, given the year, a second dressing closer to lambing could be required.

We can help you work out the numbers so don't hesitate to give us a call!

2. Use of a cocktail of products such as:

- moxidectin injection (Exodus®1% injection or Cydectin®) at a dose rate of 1ml per 50kg

PLUS

- 50:50 mix of Oxfen®C plus and Oxfen®C given orally at a dose rate of 1ml per 5kg

These two oral products mix well but try and restrict the amount mixed to just that drenching episode rather than storing mixed

product. If it is stored as mixed product for a short time then ensure it is well shaken before use.

As veterinarians we are allowed to recommend an "off label" product as there is no licensed alternative that is appropriate. Until such a product is developed, and a registered deer meat withholding period established through conducting residue studies, **either of the above two anthelmintic treatments will have a 91 day meat withholding time.**

Give us a call at the clinic if you would like to further discuss drenching of your deer.



“The bulk of mastitis cases immediately post-calving originate from the dry cow period”

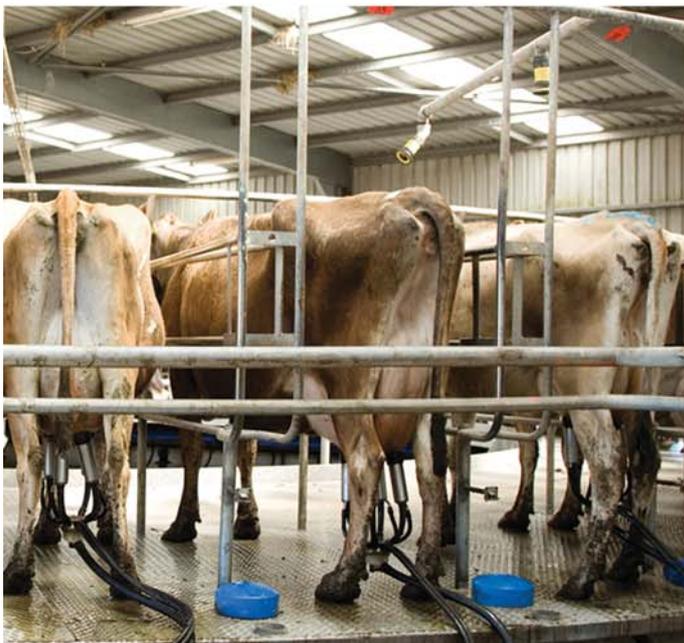
Greg Smith
Totally Vets Production Animal Veterinarian



Lower your spring time stress

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Prices starting from
\$2.03 (ex GST) per tube



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