



VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

JUNE 09



Above Josh Dondertman and Rebecca Carr.

Josh Dondertman and Rebecca Carr enjoy their dairying and instill their enthusiasm into the seven-person team they manage on Kevin and Anna Cvitanovich's 1500-cow herd through two sheds at Waituna West. Surrounding themselves with successful and motivated people opens them up to skills and ideas they eagerly adopt and adapt. "The willingness of dairy farmers to share information is one of the big strengths of New Zealand dairying."

The systems Josh and Rebecca build with real participation from their team are simple, graphic and effective. Involving their team in building systems helps identify opportunities for the growth and development of Josh and Rebecca as well as other team members. Rebecca says, "We need to have people with us who can run the farm efficiently and effectively when we're away."

Planning and goal setting with the owner creates the faith to allow them to get on with farming. Totally Vets are proud to have had Josh and Rebecca represent the region's Farm Manager of the Year at the National Dairy Awards in Wellington on May 16th.

Totally Vets fishing competition

Barny Askin

We were expecting storms, gales, heavy rain and large swells, all of which would certainly have contributed to a pretty unpleasant day at sea. Despite the forecast the sea was completely flat until things chopped up a little in the afternoon, especially for those who ventured towards the horizon, but not enough to spoil the fishing and most fished right up to weigh-in time.

We have been extremely lucky. The popularity of our fishing competition seems to be growing every year and it has become a regular event on the Totally Vets calendar. This year we had a record entry of 160 people on 45 boats.

The Premier Breeding Services Trophy for the heaviest Snapper was won by Jim Joseph with a fantastic fish weighing in at 6.41kg. First prize in the Kawahai section went to Ray Mills (3.3kg), Cod to Nicky Williams (1.89kg), Gurnard to Colin Dalziell (1.04kg) and Terakihi to Jeff Huston (0.85kg). A new

prize, kindly donated by Makoura Lodge, was introduced this year for the most deserving fish of any other species than the traditional categories. This prize was awarded to Kevin Robb for a 0.93kg Bream, apparently a fish seldom caught off the Wanganui coast.

A huge thank you to the Wanganui Boat Club for weighing all the fish, providing the venue and cooking the BBQ. And thank you to the coastguard for keeping a watchful eye on us all.

The generosity of our sponsors makes this event possible so please support their businesses where possible. In no particular order, Bomac, Provect, Merial Ancare, Nutro, Elanco, Turners Sports, Shoof, Nutritech, Bayer, Premier Breeding Services, Blackmore and Associates, Murray's Irish Bar, Stockguard, Fort Dodge, Intervet/Schering Plough Coopers, Garratt Motor Group, Scotts Pumps, The Mad Butcher, Office Max, Ethical Agents, Central Auto, Makoura Lodge, Vetpak, TRC Toyota, Mitre 10, Bernard Matthews, Beaufepaires, Totally Vets, Westpac, Repco, SVS, Pfizer and NRM.

See you all next year





Totally Vets current stock health

Planning for and having your spring veterinary medicine requirements authorised now is one task that can be done to ease the workload later. If you have not been contacted already, please call Totally Vets to arrange your veterinary medicine authorisations.

Horses

Is your horse constantly rubbing up against things? It may well have lice. Check through the base of the mane for the 2-3mm long greyish pests. If lice are present, visit Totally Vets for a suitable treatment option.

Deer

For greatest accuracy, scan hinds 30 days after the stag was removed, and before 120 days after the stag was introduced.



HA HA Swine Flu Hollywood Fatality



I wonder who gave it to him?

BVD high in the Manawatu

Paul Wiseman

Totally Vets clients' dairy herds show very high exposure to BVD virus (BVDv). Two thirds of 65 herds surveyed are actively infected or have recently been exposed to BVDv.

A survey of 350 suppliers across New Zealand in 2007 identified one third of herds as actively infected and less than 10% of herds as naïve. In the Manawatu/Wairarapa LIC district 44% of herds had high Bulk Tank Milk (BTM) BVDv antibody levels and only 4% had low levels.

A high BTM BVDv antibody result suggests the herd was exposed to BVDv within the last two seasons. Up to 40% of high herds harbour a persistently infected (PI) cow.

A low BTM BVDv antibody indicates no recent contact with BVDv. The majority of herds with a moderate test result will have had BVDv previously, however current infection is unlikely.

BVDv infection is principally maintained by PI cattle. Typically, once all PIs have been culled or died, the herd becomes naïve and is susceptible to fresh BVDv infection. BVDv can be re-introduced with purchased animals, shared grazing or over the fence. Bulls are particularly important as during pregnancy, a PI bull can cause PI calf crops in outbreak proportions.

BVDv has been widely implicated in reproductive failure. It has a negative influence on general health such as ill-thrift and unexplained deaths in young stock and has been implicated as a factor in high somatic cell count herds.

The incidence of BVDv in Totally Vets catchments is very high. The reproductive costs alone will justify clearing your herd and then protecting it from re-infection. Totally Vets has the tools and ability to manage this for you.

	TOTALLY VETS 2009	NEW ZEALAND 2007	MANAWATU/WAIRARAPA 2007
Exposed to BVDv	67.7%	35%	44%
Current infection likely	30.8%		
No recent contact with BVDv	0.5%	>10%	<4%

Totally Vets prints **Vet Notes** on paper using FSC certified mixed source pulp from Well Managed forests and other controlled sources. The paper is produced under an environmental management system ISO 14001.





Sheep

As the rams come in, check their teeth, limbs and reproductive apparatus as well as general health.

Ewe scanning should be well in hand. Any smaller mobs wishing to avail themselves of Totally Vets ewe scanning service can contact Guy Haynes at 06 323 6161.

Feeding crops in mid-pregnancy avoids metabolic issues associated with changing feeds prior to lambing.

Lambs going onto winter crops can be protected from clostridial diseases with a 5-in-1 vaccine.

Dairy Cattle

Prepare your calf rearing facilities. Clear the drains, block off the drafts, make sure the water flows, lime the floors, and order in the bedding.

Rotavirus is the most common cause of calf scour and is present in most herds.

Plan your herds' vaccinations and discuss colostrum feeding now with Totally Vets.

The use of Teatseal™ in heifers has been proven to be an extremely beneficial tool in controlling mastitis in this most susceptible group. As administering Teatseal to heifers can be a daunting task, Totally Vets has arranged a demonstration on June 15th. Numbers are limited, so register your interest by phoning Totally Vets now.



Transition time for dairy cows

Lindsay Rowe

The transition period is defined as the period from three weeks before calving until three weeks after calving.

This period is fundamental to the whole season's production and reproduction.

Managed well, it can set the scene for top milk yields and maximum fertility. Managed poorly, it will limit potential production and adversely affect herd fertility.

The focus of Transition Management is to:

1. Physically prepare the cow for a change from the dry state to that of a lactating cow. The golden rule is to maintain appetite! During the week prior to calving there is a natural decrease in the cow's dry matter intake - often by as much as 30% and it is occurring at a time when her requirement for energy is dramatically

increasing. Dry matter intake in the two to three weeks pre-calving is the single most important factor in managing the transition cow. She requires at least 11 - 12Kg DM of a high quality ration daily through until calving. After calving, intakes must become totally ad-lib if cows are to perform to their potential.

2. Plan and manage feed carefully to avoid any sudden changes in the diet for the cow as she moves from the dry mob through the springer mob (transition cow), the colostrum mob and finally into the lactating herd. Done well, this will promote efficient rumen function and appetite.
3. Prevent hypocalcaemia (low blood calcium) over the calving period. Hypocalcaemia is a very significant problem in our lactating cows, 'milk fever' just being the tip of the iceberg. Cows with low calcium levels are also much more likely to experience other problems: calving trouble; retained foetal membranes; uterine infections; mastitis; lameness; reduction in appetite and ketosis.

Reduce the risk of cows experiencing these problems by minimising the drop in blood calcium around calving through

the provision of a near ad-lib high quality ration along with the recommended level of anionic salts. Calcium-enriched drenches immediately after calving are beneficial as is the addition of lime-flour to the post-calving diet.

4. Prevent immune suppression over the transition period. The majority of disease in dairy cows occurs in the second half of the transition period when the cow's natural defence mechanism is reduced following insufficient energy and protein intakes. Working hard to maintain intake through the transition period is crucial to minimise the risk of disease. Ensuring a surplus of available trace minerals is also critical at this time as they may boost the immune system.

Totally Vets Intelact Dairy consultant, Lindsay Rowe, or one of our dairy veterinarians is able to assist you to manage the transition of your herd from a dry state to one of top milk yields and higher fertility

Preparing for calving - it's nearly that time again

Paula O'Reilly

With lactation winding down and winter setting in, it is time to plan for the upcoming spring. The calving season is a frantic, sleep-deprived time on any dairy farm, and the best way to avoid disasters in the middle of August is to plan for them now.

VACCINATIONS

Most herds will be up-to-date with annual leptospirosis vaccinations by now, but it is not too late to get this job done. Remember that vaccinating the herd is the best way to protect you and your workers from the nasty symptoms associated with lepto.

Rotavec® Corona vaccine (Intervet Schering-Plough Coopers, P.A.R. class 1) stimulates the cow to produce antibodies that are then

available to the calf via the colostrum. These antibodies may reduce the incidence of rotavirus, coronavirus and E.coli K99, and help to reduce the severity of diarrhoea should infection occur. The vaccine is given between 12 and 3 weeks prior to calving. With a long calving spread, it may pay to split the herd and vaccinate the later calving cows at a later date. The vaccine can cause injection site reactions, so it is important to ensure deep intramuscular (not subcutaneous) injection in the anterior third of the neck.

EQUIPMENT

While your planned start of calving may be the middle of July, every year a few cows will surprise you, and it pays to have your equipment on hand and ready to go before Daisy decides to drop.

- Metabolic treatments
- Cow cover - TLC can make the difference as to whether a down cow recovers or not
- Hip lifters - new or old, now is the time to get them oiled and ready to crank again
- Calving gear - whether you prefer chains or ropes, calving jack or pulleys, make sure they are in working order and easy to find
- Calving lubricant - have plenty on hand as calves look set to be big this year

CALF SHED

Regardless of whether you are planning on rearing 20 calves or 200, their housing is vital to ensuring good outcomes.

The ideal shed is:

- Well ventilated without being drafty
- Dry and warm
- Sloped from back to front to encourage drainage
- Pens no smaller than 15m²
- Solid separations between pens to isolate different mobs
- Isolation pen for sick animals
- Smooth surfaces that can be cleaned easily and sprayed with disinfectant
- Fresh ground cover
- Sawdust best, followed by wood shavings (post-peelings a distant third)

If you have any questions about how to make the spring as drama-free as possible for you and your cows, contact either branch of Totally Vets.



What's the goss?

Numerous conferences and seminars are scheduled for the June veterinary and farming calendar. It is an ideal time to reflect on what went well and on what might be.

Planning and preparation reduces the impact of springtime surprises. Ensure that you and your staff are up to speed with the animal health issues that the start of a new season brings. A little refresher and training now saves frustration later.

Totally Vets acknowledges and thank those clients who submit grass every week for us to keep a watch on the facial eczema status in the region. Thanks to John Bates, Chrissy Pedersen, Marie Olsen, Ross Argyle, Grant Kearins and Brent Pocock.

A number of clients have assigned Totally Vets third party access to their Fencepost data. Clients can do this via My Profile/Manage access/Invite individuals to have access. As Totally Vets is an existing Fencepost user, clients need to enter Totallyvets in the Fencepost User ID field, then click Find User button to validate the user ID and complete the process.

Rowan and Rachel Baker received the Westpac Business Performance Merit Award at the national Sharemilker of the Year Awards



What are your fertility goals?

Greg Smith

The fertility goals for seasonal herds have traditionally focused on the empty rate with some consideration given to late cows.

The final empty rate is the result of a process of several steps and each step has a goal to be met. A slow start to mating cannot be fully compensated for by the bulls so the overall goals should therefore be two fold:

- **6 week in-calf rate** 78%
- **Final empty rate** 12 week mating - 8%; 10 week mating - 10%

The drivers of the 6 week in-calf rate are the 3 week submission rate (SR target 90%) and conception rate (60%). Success in meeting these targets is determined by how the herd performs in the following areas:

- **Calving pattern** 60% by 3 weeks; 87% by 6 weeks; 90% by 9 weeks
- **Non-cycling cows** 15% at the planned start of mating (PSM)
- **Heat detection** 95% of early calved mature cows by 3 weeks

CALVING PATTERN

Calving pattern is determined by the previous mating so cannot be influenced before the planned start of mating (PSM) except by inducing. The calving pattern is an early warning of anticipated SR that is likely to be encountered at mating. If behind target on calving pattern then a concerted effort at mating will be necessary to make a difference. A condensed calving pattern is a medium to longer term goal that requires improvements in all aspects of mating management.

AVOIDING NON-CYCLING COWS

The resumption of cycling is determined by the time since calving and body condition score (BCS). Later calving cows have less time available to them so calving date is important to the individual cow and calving pattern to the herd overall. Weight loss after calving is unavoidable so the aim here is two-fold. One is to have the cows calve with a BCS of 5.0-5.5 to give them a better starting point. Two is to minimise weight loss in early lactation. Weight loss that exceeds 1 BCS is associated with longer non-cycling periods.

It is only possible for cows to gain 0.5-1.0 BCS in the dry period so cows need to be at least 4.0 at drying off to have any chance of making up the deficit. This gain needs to happen earlier in the dry period before the final month of pregnancy. Overweight and light cows are more likely to be non-cycling by PSM. If the number of either of these

groups exceeds 15% then the herd's overall performance will be affected. There is an opportunity to direct feed from those that don't need it to those that do.

HEAT DETECTION

A good indicator of heat detection efficiency is the number of mature cows (> 4 years) that calved at least 8 weeks before the PSM and were submitted in the first 3 weeks of mating. The Fertility Focus report available on MINDApro calculates this for each herd and experience to date is that heat detection is an area that is not up to target. The target is 95% with intervention recommended below 90%. Heat detection needs to be given the highest priority in the daily work schedule over mating.

These goals are an overview and a more detailed discussion is required at an individual herd level. In practice most herds are not meeting these yet. Each herd will be at a different starting point so initial goals will be different in each case. The InCalf programme is a guide for vets and farmers to benchmark herds and then to develop and work through a plan for improving reproductive outcomes. Totally Vets anticipates the InCalf programme will make a difference on your farm no matter where your herd's reproductive performance currently stands.

in Wellington on May 16th. Totally Vets congratulates Rachel and Rowan on their high standards and willingness to share with the dairy industry.

Lance and Catherine Gillespie, who farm at Apiti, received the regional Intellect/Red Sky business performance award this year. Using the Red Sky analysis software, farms can compare and benchmark the only true measure of success, their profitability. Totally Vets congratulates Lance and his farm manager Arno Renes.

Business awards are not the only things Arno can be congratulated on. Arno and Anita celebrated their wedding on April 18th at Makoura Lodge.

Right The happy couple with Anita's mum and dad





Pregnancy scanning sheep

Guy Haynes

There are sound reasons for pregnancy testing your flock. If you are not already scanning then consider the benefits of doing so.

Identify non-productive dry ewes and quit them while prices are high and conserve valuable feed for productive animals.

Priority feed ewes carrying multiples to avoid metabolic disorders and ensure adequate birth weights. This encourages ewe lactation and lamb survival.

Ensure multiple bearing ewes are lambing down in what are traditionally the best docking paddocks on the farm to enhance lamb survival and minimise mis-mothering.

If you haven't already received a booking form in the mail contact Totally Vets now. Pricing remains the same as last year.

Foot balance and shoeing

Lucy Cahill

As the old adage goes - "no foot, no horse".

Most people are aware that regular trimming or shoeing is an important aspect of caring for a horse, whether you own a sport horse, race horse or just a paddock friend.

It is also important to realise that the balance of a horse's feet strongly influences their ability to perform. This is an area that is often not considered until lameness or other problems arise.

It is commonly touted that 90% of lameness originates in the foot, making regular, quality hoof care vital in maintaining a sound horse. Both your farrier and vet possess unique skills and knowledge in this area, and can work together to achieve better foot balance.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY FOOT BALANCE?

Correct foot balance refers to achieving the correct alignment of the structures inside the hoof itself, which in turn affects the positioning of the whole leg. Incorrect balance puts abnormal pressures on the sensitive soft tissues within the hoof, which ultimately can result in pain and lameness.

HOW IS FOOT BALANCE ASSESSED?

Balance can be assessed by carefully examining the foot shape, wear patterns, flight and landing of the hoof, and conformation of the limbs.

During a lameness examination, a vet can confirm the foot as the origin of pain by blocking the nerves to this area. This does not tell us why the horse is sore, just where the pain is located.

X-rays of the feet can provide a greater insight into what is going on inside the foot. Typically, two x-rays are taken per foot to assess balance alone, although more are often needed. Shown below are examples of the two views taken. These do not necessarily represent ideal balance.



Above Front-on view "dorso-palmar view"



Above Side-on view "latero-medial view"

From these radiographs your vet can take measurements to assess the balance of your horse's foot and compare it to the "ideal foot" and your horse's conformation. This information allows us, along with your farrier, to develop a management plan to trim and shoe your horse.

Please call Totally Vets Ltd if you are concerned about your horse's foot balance and we will organise for one of our dedicated equine vets to come and assess your horse.

Rational use of a brand new drench family!

Ginny Dodunski

Why the wasting ewes?

Greta Baynes

Tail-end ewes are present on many farms in New Zealand. There are many potential causes including dental disease, chronic lung disease, severe liver damage, parasites, lameness, intestinal carcinoma and Johne's disease.

WHY IS JOHNE'S SO IMPORTANT?

There are many causes of gradual weight loss and death in older sheep on farms. Johne's disease (pronounced yo-nee-z) is a chronic, debilitating disease causing weight loss and death in sheep as well as goats, cattle, alpacas and deer. The disease is untreatable and the increasing prevalence (or increasing awareness) of this invariably fatal disease highlights the significance of Johne's. In short - Johne's causes animals to die.

A tentative link between Johne's disease in animals and Crohn's disease in humans has been formed.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

The causative bacteria *Mycobacterium avium subsp. paratuberculosis* infects animals through the faeco-oral route. This can be ingestion of grass or water on which infected animals are shedding the bacteria, or through faecal contamination of the teats. Younger animals are more susceptible to the disease. One of three things can occur when faced with the bacterial challenge:

1. Animal is exposed to the bacteria but the immune system overcomes the infection
 2. Animal is exposed to the bacteria but does not develop clinical disease*.
 3. Animal is exposed to the disease and develops the clinical signs
- * Clinical = outwardly expressing signs of the disease e.g. weight loss, scour
- * Sub-clinical = carries the disease but no outward signs of infection

WHAT HAPPENS WITH CLINICAL DISEASE?

The bacteria incubate within infected animals for several years, so clinical signs are not usually seen in sheep until they are two-tooths or older (other animals tend to express the disease at different ages). The bacteria affect the lining of the small intestine causing inflammation.

There is some evidence that infected animals are more likely to show clinical signs when stressed by underfeeding, parasitism and pregnancy.

HOW CAN JOHNE'S BE DIAGNOSED?

As already mentioned, not all affected animals will show signs of disease and those that are affected will not present with ill-thrift until the disease process is well advanced. The faecal smear is not a very sensitive test in the early stages of the disease.

There are several blood tests available which are relatively good at picking up animals with clinical disease, but are not particularly sensitive at detecting subclinical carriers.

HOW CAN JOHNE'S BE CONTROLLED?

This is a difficult disease to control for many reasons:

- The bacteria can last many months in the environment
- There is a long incubation period i.e. most animals become diseased when young but do not shed bacteria or show signs of disease for several years
- The tests available are not very sensitive at detecting disease unless it is severe
- Feral animals may carry and spread the disease
- Test and cull
 - Stressed animals are likely to shed more bacteria and young animals are the most susceptible to infection
 - Drench and feed the suspect cases well
 - A blood test on these animals may confirm the diagnosis
 - A post mortem on these animals may alternatively aid in diagnosis
- Vaccination
 - The vaccine available does not prevent infection, but minimises clinical disease
 - Several years of vaccination may significantly reduce the disease on an individual farm.

SO WHAT NOW?

Ideally, farms with this disease should not be selling stock to Johne's free farms. Many farmers accept the loss of a certain number of ewes each year. Johne's may or may not be a contributing factor to your tail-end ewe problem. Contact Totally Vets for more information or to discuss control options on your farm.

Those of you who attended our recent Sheep & Beef farmers' seminar will be up to speed with our thoughts on the possible place for the new sheep drench, Zolvix.

Just a reminder:

- It will be more expensive than the most expensive triple combinations currently available.

- This, plus the fact that it is a single active drench (vs. a combination) means we would not be recommending its use as a routine drench.
- It will make a very good quarantine drench for a number of years as it acts in a completely different way to any of the currently available actives and there is no genetic resistance to it in sheep worm populations worldwide. In contrast, there are rare cases of farms that have worm species

that are resistant or 'nearly' resistant to the less potent triple combination.

- It may have a use as an 'exit drench', which is given to clean out any potentially resistant worms left after a series of drenches with another product. This principle is not straightforward; please call Totally Vets if you want to know how you might apply exit drenching in your situation.

Did the worms die?

Greta Baynes

Totally Vets, in association with Wormwise, completed a number of Faecal Egg Count Reduction Tests (FECRT) this summer, to determine levels of parasite resistance to specific drench families on our clients' properties.

The tests were performed on both sheep and cattle. Sheep results - with national comparisons- are shown below.

SHEEP

All farms showed resistance to at least one drench. Resistant eggs were cultured to determine which worm was responsible.

LEVAMISOLE - CLEAR DRENCH

66% of farms had Levamisole resistant worms. A further 17% of farms showed resistance developing. Trichostrongylus showed resistance on most farms and resistant Ostertagia were present on some farms. Nationally, 24% of farms had Levamisole resistant worms, mainly Nematodirus, Ostertagia and Trichostrongylus.

BENZIMIDAZOLE - WHITE DRENCH

100% of farms showed resistance to this drench. All major parasitic worms showed resistance to this drench. This is the most common type of resistance seen on sheep farms. 41% demonstrated white drench resistance nationally. All the main parasites were involved.

IVERMECTIN

Only 33% of farms did not have resistant worms. Ostertagia showed the most resistance but Trichostrongylus and Nematodirus are also showing resistance on most farms.

Nationally 25% of farms had Ivermectin resistance, although a further 11% showed developing resistance. There were similar results with respect to which worms and their degree of involvement.

DOUBLE COMBINATION - WHITE + CLEAR

Only one farm had resistance to the double combination. On this farm a variety of worms showed resistance. Nationally 8% of farms had double-combination resistance.

TRIPLE COMBINATION

All farms tested had 100% efficacy with this drench.

With these results, we can provide drenching recommendations throughout the year and advise on ways to minimise further resistance developing.

Keep an eye out for the cattle results in next month's newsletter.

PERCENTAGE REDUCTION OF FAECAL EGG COUNT BY DRENCH CLASS

	TRIPLE COMBO	DOUBLE COMBO	BZ (WHITE)	LEV (CLEAR)	IVO (FULL)
Best Farm	100%	100%	84%	99%	100%
Worst Farm	100%	90%	71%	65%	71%
Average	100%	98%	78%	86%	87%



Fertility Factors for Dairy Cows

Getting cows in calf and keeping them that way is becoming increasingly difficult.

Totally Vets invite you to an evening when the basics of getting cows in calf and how to do them well will be discussed.

Wednesday 1st July 2009 at 7.00pm
Rangitikei Club, Bowen Street, Feilding

Topics to be covered include:

- Heat detection
- Bull management
- Cow Health
- Nutrition and Body Condition Score
- Calving Patterns
- Non-cyclers

The presentations will be by Totally Vets veterinarians. Your questions are welcomed. The presentations will be followed by supper.

Join us and look forward to the coming mating season