



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

APRIL 2010



Above The proposed new building at Feilding

## Progress on the new building at Feilding

**Nigel Coddington**

Finally we are underway with building the new clinic. The consents (resource and building) have come through allowing construction, and Colspec have wasted no time in starting. As I write this, they are pouring concrete for the foundations, having done the necessary excavations for this.

Manawatu District Council has been very helpful in the process, working with the team managing and implementing the project. The bureaucracy in our local Council is far less evident than in others.

Hopefully next month I will have more to report on - meantime, I'm sure there will be close eyes on progress on sale days!

## Dry-cow therapy

**Pfizer Animal Health Ltd**

The cornerstone of mastitis control is a dry-cow therapy (DCT) programme.

Dry-cow therapy has two functions:

- To cure existing infections
- To prevent new infections during the dry and peri-calving periods

The ability of antibiotic DCT to cure existing infections and prevent new infections in the early part of the dry period is well known. The antibiotic products currently available have a protective period in the udder of up to 10 weeks. The udder is reasonably resistant to new infections through the mid-dry period. The risk of infection increases significantly in the two weeks prior to calving - just when protection from the antibiotic DCT is tapering off. In addition, NZ work shows that up to 50% of teats have not formed a teat plug seven days after dry-off, and up to 5% of teats never form a teat plug. 97% of new infections are in 'open teats', i.e. those in which a teat plug has not formed. Adding Teatseal® to your DCT programme means the udder is protected right up until the Teatseal® is removed by suckling or hand stripping.

The gold standard approach to DCT is therefore:

- Use an antibiotic with the best cure rates
- Follow this with an internal teat sealant to prevent new infections

There are several studies that support the use of combination therapy, including a 2006 NZ study which showed combination therapy reduced clinical mastitis during the dry period and at calving by 50%, compared to antibiotic alone. Research in the UK by Dr Eric Hillerton, DairyNZ's Chief Scientist, also showed overall infections were reduced by 50% in cows where combination therapy was used, compared to using antibiotic alone.

As well as preventing new infections at calving, the benefits of combination therapy also extend into lactation. A study in the UK measured mastitis levels out to 100 days post-calving. There was an estimated 33-50% reduction in the number of clinical mastitis cases in the first 100 days after calving, compared to antibiotic alone.

We have a cost-benefit calculator available to use during your Milk Quality consult to help assess the economic benefit of combination therapy on your farm. Cutting back on DCT, although saving money short-term, can often cause bigger problems and negate any perceived savings, as well as taking up valuable time treating mastitis cases. Your Milk Quality consult is a great chance to go through the options.





# Totally Vets current stock health

While dairy cow pregnancy testing draws to an end and dairy farmers wonder at the outcomes of last year's mating, sheep and deer breeders begin to measure the success of their mating plans.

Those intending to assess the outcomes of herd and flock mating should be arranging for their animals to be scanned for pregnancy. Scanning is not only a measure of mating success, it is

also a tool to be used to prepare for better returns from lambing and fawning.

Drying off dairy cows is a feature of this edition of Vetnotes. Best practice management of the drying-off process is a significant opportunity to set your herd up for calving, early-season milk quality and a better result from next season's herd mating. Manage it well!



## HA HA Oh to be kiwi

Sammy bought a donkey from a farmer for \$100. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day.

The next day he drove up and said, 'Sorry son, I have some bad news. The donkey died.' Sammy replied, 'OK, just give me my money back.'

The farmer: 'Can't do that. I've already spent it.' Sammy: 'OK, just bring me the dead donkey.' The farmer: 'What are you going to do with him?' Sammy: 'I'm going to raffle him off.' The farmer: 'You can't raffle a dead donkey!' Sammy: 'Sure I can. I just won't tell anybody he's dead.'

A month later, the farmer met up with Sammy and asked, 'What happened with that dead donkey?' Sammy said, 'I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars a piece and made a profit of \$898'.

The farmer: 'Didn't anyone complain?' Sammy: 'Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two dollars back.'

Sammy now works for Telecom selling XT Mobiles

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## Regional New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards

Paul Wiseman

Convenors of the Manawatu, Horowhenua and Rangitikei New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards regional competition, Stefan and Hester Bryant and their able and busy support group are to be congratulated on organising a fantastic occasion. A great night was had celebrating all that is good and positive about the dairy industry.

All entrants have invested considerable time and effort into their entries and judging visits. Whatever the outcome, they will have gained from the experience and process of entering.

The three regional winners compete for considerable prizes and honour.

They will progress to the national finals being held in Rotorua in May. We wish them every success. The entrants crowned the best in the region were:

### DAIRY TRAINEE OF THE YEAR:

- 1st: Amanda Brew
- 2nd: Michael Rigarisford
- 3rd: Kerry Walker

### FARM MANAGER OF THE YEAR:

- 1st: Michael and Susanna Booth
- 2nd: Ewen Macdonald
- 3rd: Hamish Easton

### SHAREMILKER OF THE YEAR:

- 1st: Shayne and Rachelle Hutchison
- 2nd: Kyran and Emma Brown
- 3rd: Kyle and Virginia Marshall



Initial vaccination of weaners with leptospirosis and clostridial vaccines should be under way by now. This allows their annual boosters to coincide with those of the R2s and mixed-age cows.

Hogget vaccination with 5-in-1 should also be carried out now.

Quarantine drenching of any bought-in stock - irrespective of species - is one biosecurity measure that is pretty obvious. The autumn is the peak period for worm egg output and is also when we see most clinical parasitism.

Current pasture contamination carried over the winter is the initial source of challenge for spring-born calves.

Facial eczema (FE) is one of those diseases nobody wants. Having got so far through the high-risk period with very few calamities, it is very easy to become complacent. Sadly, it seems as though April and May are often the months when we get caught out with FE, as stock are asked to graze deeper into the pasture base.



## Vietnam - dairying in the tropics

Craig Tanner

Totally Vets has secured an 18-month contract to provide veterinary services to an integrated joint-venture dairy project in the central northern region of Vietnam. A consortium of Vietnamese businesses, TH Milk Joint Venture Stock Company, is funding the US\$350 million project, which has government support at the highest level.

The group's ambitious long-term target is to meet 30% of the country's dairy product needs. In the short term, its targets are more modest - 7200 cows by the end of 2010, and eight farms of 2400 cows by August 2012.

The first consignment of 1600 New Zealand Friesian heifers arrived in Vietnam in late

February. During a 45-day quarantine period, vaccinations (Foot & Mouth Disease, anthrax, haemorrhagic septicaemia) and external parasite treatments were administered. A second shipment of 1500 heifers arrives 50 days later. These heifers provide the nucleus of the first milking herd, with about 2000 heifers to calve in July and August.

Planning, construction, operational and logistics management of the project is the task of a specialist Israeli agribusiness team, AFIKIM. This group has successfully installed a number of similar turnkey operations around the world, including South Africa, Italy, China, and Brazil.

There are 51 buildings to be constructed in the initial phase to cover an estimated 80 hectares! A quarantine facility is of immediate priority to accommodate the first wave of heifers. Animals will be housed all year, with a total mixed-ration fed down a central alleyway and concentrate adjustments allocated electronically in the milking parlour in response to lactational need.

TVL's contract is to provide a comprehensive range of standard veterinary services with strong focus at both individual animal and herd levels. Both TH Milk and AFIKIM share the view that maintaining animal health

and welfare will be absolutely critical to the success of the project. Accordingly, there is high professional regard for, and expectation of the veterinary team. Routine tests and examinations are conducted on all animals in accordance with Israeli protocols. TVL vets will exercise their professional judgement with regard to treatments and ongoing care.

Recording of production and health data, referenced against performance targets, will form the basis of monthly reporting. Data collection and analysis utilises state-of-the-art technology. Over time, such data will enable robust economic evaluations to support certain interventions over others in this new and challenging dairying environment.

Totally Vets is very excited to be part of this large-scale, international dairy project. For our veterinarians participating and representing TVL, the professional and personal benefits will be enormous and worth the adjustments and sacrifices that will have to be made.

Greg Smith has already touched down north of the equator and we look forward to bringing you regular updates from the 19th Parallel.



# Summary from the deer farmers' seminar

Totally Vets would like to say a huge thank you to Dave Blenkiron from Rangeview for hosting our deer farmer seminar on Wednesday 3rd March.

A handful of good keen men and ladies gathered to hear presentations from four of our vets. The key points from each presentation are summarised below.

## VACCINES

**Ginny Dodunski**

**Yersinia.** There is no reason not to vaccinate. The vaccine gives substantial protection and outbreaks are still seen in late-weaned fawns (see article in March Vetnotes).

**5-in-1.** No real case for vaccinating hinds and weaners. Probably a case for vaccinating stags to be velveted.

**Lepto.** Recent studies have shown a 50g per day weight gain advantage in vaccinated

animals (spring). There was also a 5% improvement in weaning rate in maiden hinds and overall a 1.3 to 9% improvement in reproductive performance. Responses depend on the background level of infection seen in the herd. These benefits are on top of the benefits to human health.

## TICKS

**Greta Baynes**

Greta pointed out the impact that ticks can have on young fawns. Adult ticks can suck 1ml of blood - a newborn fawn only has 600ml of blood - and fawns can be infected with several hundred ticks.

Animals need to be treated in August/September and then every 4-6 weeks until January/February for maximum effect.

Use other classes of stock to 'collect' ticks (e.g. cattle) but remember to treat these animals on removal.

## NECROBACILLOSIS

**Barny Askin**

Necrobacillosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Fusobacterium necrophorum* which is common in the environment. Trauma to the feet, legs and mouth can result in this bug gaining entry to the body and causing several different disease states including severe

lameness and multiple organ abscessation. This disease is very often fatal.

The disease is usually seen in weaners, so with weaning almost upon us, try hard to avoid anything that might damage the feet or skin of these animals during yarding (e.g. minimise rough edges on concrete, sharp stones in raceways, sharp edges of wire etc). Also ensure weaning onto a clean paddock and then shift the day after weaning to another clean paddock.

If you see a mob of weaners going lame after transport, please contact Totally Vets ASAP as early treatment will have the best outcome.

## MAXIMISING PROFITABILITY

**Trevor Cook**

Trevor highlighted how small improvements in conception rate, calf survival and weaning weight could affect farm income. Hinds less than 2.5 Body Condition Score (BCS) have lower values for these criteria and thus reduced performance. It is highly profitable to preferentially feed the tail-end (those below 2.5 BCS) and thus lift herd performance.

**Handouts on topics are available at the clinic.**

## What's the goss?

Bevan Humphreys, a first year superstock driver, forced the eventual winner of the New Zealand Superstocks Champs on Feb 28th at Kihikihi into a four-lap runoff to decide the title. Congratulations to another great sportsman from Kiwitea.

Is this why some call autumn the fall! Brian was busy showing new premises for the Feilding Coach House Museum and explaining that it was quite safe to walk, in the dark, down the centre of the building to locate a light switch. Brian apparently relayed this information while he walked, in the dark, down the side of the building, and promptly fell into the very hole he was trying to avoid. Brian suffered a sprained wrist and fractured ribs.

With a wedding fast approaching, Hamish is in major tidy-up mode. Among the many tasks he just had to do was prune a tree. Rumour has it that the ascent into the tree and the pruning went without a hitch. It was the sudden and unexpected descent that caused the bruising to both body and pride.

Thankfully, we are pleased to report that both Brian and Hamish are racing down the road to recovery!

A team of 13 from Totally Vets took part in the recent 10th annual Relay for Life. The team participated for the third time and raised their status to a "gold star" by raising more than \$200 per team member. A grand sum of \$2960 was donated from individual fundraising and from two special screenings at Focal Point Theatre. Helen Ryan, a vet nurse with Totally Vets and her team of supporters put a huge amount of effort into organising for this event. Appreciation for this effort is



Above Chrissy, Helen and Beks at the Relay for Life.

acknowledged by those who sponsored the team's T-shirts this year.

Feilding farmers Hugh and Helen Winder, have won Best Lamb in the 2010 Meat & Wool NZ Golden Lamb Awards (Glammies) with their Fairlea Texels lamb. They won the most tender and tasty lamb competition, from almost 100 entries. The Winders beat 15 other finalists to have their lamb named the Glammies Grand Champion.

# No.8 HR - a human resource service for the dairy farm

Lindsay Rowe

Recognising that recruiting good people and managing them well is a significant component of a successful dairy farming business, Intelact have developed a Human Resource service, No.8 HR. You can now access No.8 HR as part of our Intelact farm consultancy.

It is available to all Totally Vets' clients and has the primary objective of helping you to get your people strategies matched to your farming business. We can help reduce your time commitment to recruitment by using No.8 HR to access people who are looking for work and who match the skills you need.

No.8 HR can help you recruit and retain exactly the right person for your business and by allowing them to handle your vacancy professionally, you are guaranteed a successful outcome.

Most farming businesses want to choose parts of the recruitment and selection process that they manage themselves. With No.8 HR you can discuss the level of help you require with your recruitment project and take advantage of the tools that are available to minimise your selection risks.

Through No.8 HR we can also provide you with the tools and support that you need to get

the best out of the people in your business and to manage them with confidence within the current legislative framework.

No 8 HR can help you with:

- Employment agreements
- Share-milking and other contracts for service
- Staff development and retention strategies
- HR policies and procedures
- Performance management
- Disputes, discipline, grievance and mediation
- Health and safety procedures
- Change management including restructuring, downsizing and changing the culture in your business

**You can access these services through Lindsay Rowe, Totally Vets resident Intelact Dairy consultant, or through the website [www.no8hr.co.nz](http://www.no8hr.co.nz).**

## Bopriva - a new management tool for bull beef farmers

Paul Wiseman

Pfizer Animal Health has launched a new vaccine, Bopriva™, for the management of non-breeding beef bulls.

Bopriva is a novel vaccine which temporarily reduces testosterone in bulls for a minimum of 12 weeks. This results in a reduction in undesirable bull behaviours such as riding and

fighting. The treated bulls have temperaments more like steers than bulls until the effect gradually wears off.

The main reason for using Bopriva is for winter-grazing management of bulls. Bulls can be treated in late autumn and run together in large mobs through the winter. Vaccinations are generally timed so that the effect wears off in the spring.

Bopriva was trailed on 7500 bulls on 50 farms throughout NZ in 2009. Most farms reported positive effects on behaviour, easier management and the ability to successfully run mobs of bulls as large as 200 or more through the winter. Farmers reported very positive effects on behaviour, management and labour.

Bopriva requires an initial course of two injections, with the maximum effect seen from 10 days after the second injection.

A unique feature of Bopriva is that the duration of effect can be extended by extending the interval between the two vaccinations. This means farmers can manipulate the length of effect to suit their own systems - it also means vaccination timings have to be carefully planned to get the best result. Totally Vets will assist you with these decisions.

Bopriva is strictly for use in non-breeding beef bulls. Treated bulls should not be on sold for use as service bulls as their fertility will be impaired during and after the period of treatment.

Bopriva is a unique management tool which can literally take the hassle out of farming bulls. If you require more information on Bopriva or would like to discuss how it might fit into your system, contact Totally Vets.



# Successful ewe hogget mating

Ginny Dodunski

Hogget mating is one of those jobs where you really have to dot all the i's and cross all the t's to get a good outcome - it cannot be left to luck or a good season.

## 1. MATING WEIGHT

Be strict with yourself about setting a realistic cut-off weight. It is better not to mate light hoggets. Put them with a harnessed teaser and keep the ones that are marked, but don't lamb them in the current season.

40kg minimum should be the target. Enough said. Perceived 'sire' problems of birthing difficulties due to 'oversized' single lambs are often due to mum not being big enough to start with.

## 2. VACCINES

For a bit over \$3.00 a head, Toxo and Campylobacter vaccination are a must; you open yourself up to too much risk by not covering for these. Protecting maiden ewes against these diseases increases scanning and lambing percentage even where disastrous abortion storms are not seen. Just do it.

## 3. TEASERS

Should be introduced exactly 17 days pre-mating; a ratio of about 1:300 is fine. Having a teaser in for longer than this runs the risk of a whole bunch of hoggets having their second cycle just before you put the live rams out; not what you want!

## 4. RAMS

Mature rams give a more consistent result than ram hoggets; use at about a 1:80 ratio. Recent work by Paul Kenyon and co at Massey has shown that mature rams that had been previously used with mixed-age (MA) ewes were just as successful at mating ewe hoggets as 'fresh' rams. These rams had been joined with the MA ewes for 17 days and then put straight in with the hoggets, so might not be truly reflective of ram use on farms where

MA ewes are mated for two or more cycles. Nonetheless, it's good to know.

If using ram hoggets, run them at a ratio of 1:50. They may be less efficient at getting later-cycling hoggets in lamb.

## 5. MATING PERIOD

Two cycles maximum, 30-35 days is better.

## 6. MID-PREGNANCY SHEARING

Will increase lamb birthweights - work from Massey University shows a 300g increase in birthweight in lambs born to shorn hoggets.

## 7. FEEDING AFTER MATING

Target a minimum of 100g/day liveweight gain from ram removal to lambing (this allows for the weight of the foetus and placenta). Excessive feeding levels (250g+ gain per day) may increase lamb loss.

## 8. ANIMAL HEALTH

Watch the worm situation this year - it is not going to be pretty! Barber's Pole worm has caught some early, but heavy *Trichostrongylus* ('black scour') infestations are already being seen and these are likely to continue to impact through until May.



## Dairy seminar

Please accept our apologies for having decided to postpone the Totally Vets dairy farmer seminar on "Growing Great Heifers".

The original seminar date chosen clashed with the Sharemilker of the year field day at Shayne and Rochelle Hutchinson's. There

was no way we were going to detract from Shayne and Rochelle's event!

"Growing Great Heifers" addresses one of the key issues facing dairy farm productivity and profitability. That is, ensuring heifers enter your herd for a lifetime of performance. The seminar has been rescheduled for Thursday 29th April.

**WHERE:** Rongotea Tavern

**WHEN:** Thursday 29th April, 2010  
10.30am for an 11.00am start  
Lunch at 1.00pm

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The costs of successful heifer-rearing
- Measuring successful heifer-rearing
- Feeding for success
- Controlling animal health issues
- Mating
- Totally Vets' offer to you

**RSVP to Hayley at 06 323 6161 or Julie at 06 356 5011 by Friday 23rd April**

# Totally Vets annual fishing competition

Our sage augurs as well as the bloke down the pub inform us the tides and moon will be in alignment in mid April, so the Totally Vets Annual Fishing

Competition will be held on Sat 17th April launching from the Castlecliff Boat Club.

The competition begins at first light, with the weigh-in at the boat club at 4.00pm followed by a BBQ and prize-giving.

To be eligible for the competition all boats entered must have a Totally Vets account holder on board.

Entry forms and copies of the rules and regulations are available at both clinics.

Please get your entry forms back to us ASAP as the number of boats may have to be restricted if the competition continues to grow.



Above Blair Cottrill with a 9.58kg snapper in 2008.

## Drying-off

Craig Dickson

Budgetary decisions made at the end of last season saw expenditure on dry cow therapy pruned in many herds.

By the end of last season, the forecast payout for this season was back to what most would have liked - how quickly things change! Some of you have paid for this decision with increased mastitis problems this season.

The dry period remains the best window of opportunity for reducing udder infections in your herd. Dry-cow therapy (DCT) achieves better cure rates than treatment during lactation. It also protects cows from new infection during the dry period and early lactation.

### EARLY DRY-OFF

There are a number of cows that would benefit from early dry off:

- Cows producing less than five litres - these cows are trying to dry off anyway, so let them
- Cows that have a persistently high individual somatic cell count (ISCC) i.e. >500,000
- Cows with teat-end lesions
- Low body-condition cows

Early dry-off obviously depends on other factors like feed supply, cow condition and bulk tank somatic cell count (BTSCC).

### COWS TO CULL

There are cows for which culling is the only way to deal with the problem. The chances of curing infected cows using DCT reduce with increasing age, multiple mastitis cases, mastitis involving multiple quarters and the presence of *Staph aureus* infections.

### WHOLE HERD OR SELECTIVE THERAPY

Take the chance to discuss this with your vet at dry-off consult time.

Consider selective DCT for herds with less than 50% of the herd with an ISCC greater than 150,000 cells/ml and where clinical cases in the first month of calving are less than 10%.

The Australian "Countdown Downunder" suggestion is that if you answer yes to any of the following then you should blanket DCT:

- Is your average BTSCC for the past six months above 250,000 cells/ml?
- Did more than 30% of your cows have peak ISCCs above 250,000?
- Did you have more than five clinical cases per 100 cows in the first month of lactation?
- Did you have more than an average of two clinical cases per 100 cows after the first month of lactation?

For those of you who adopt the selective DCT option, the SAMM plan suggestion of treating cows with an ISCC above 150,000 and heifers with an ISCC above 120,000, plus all clinical cases is a good starting point.

### PREPARING FOR DRY-OFF

Cows that are producing less than 10-12 litres per day should need no special preparation for drying-off. Cows producing more than this pose a slight problem. Herds that reduce feed intake around dry-off show an increase in clinical mastitis during the dry period and also a higher BTSCC during the following lactation. These higher-producing cows show increased risk of dry-season mastitis. A sensible reduction in protein intake for a week leading up to drying-off and for a week afterwards is probably beneficial. Hay and maize silage could be utilised. Water should not be withheld.

### DRY-COW TREATMENT

Guidelines for treatment are:

- Dry off abruptly, don't skip days, and preferably don't skip milkings
- Treat immediately after the last milking and clearly mark treated cows if the rest of the herd is still being milked
- Treat every quarter of each cow
- Sanitise teat ends properly: use a swab moistened with methylated spirits, or medicated teat wipes, before treatment.
- Insert the nozzle of the dry-cow antibiotic tube no more than 3mm into the teat canal
- Spray teats after treatment
- Put cows in a dry, clean paddock
- Complete full treatment record

Drying-off can entail the use of several veterinary medicines that require the authorisation of your vet. Avoid delays by ensuring your vet puts these authorisations in place before you need the product.

# WIN A FABULOUS HOLIDAY ON US!

EXCLUSIVE TO TOTALLY VETS



Purchase qualifying Merial Ancare product during April and May and go into the draw to win a **\$2500 TRAVEL VOUCHER**. Please see Totally Vets for further details.



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## Great odds with Totally Vets



Such was your response to the Totally Vets outdoor furniture promotion we were able to add another set of furniture to the draw.

We congratulate those who won a magnificent suite of macrocarpa outdoor furniture and thank all of you who participated.

The winners were Chris and Brendon Print from Kairanga, Tony and Lorraine Meads from Waituna and Anthony and Lynda Gray from Pohangina.



Above Julie, Chris and Brendon



Above Lynda and Tony Gray and family, with Nigel and Corrina

