



# VET notes

YOUR TOTALLY VETS NEWSLETTER ALL ABOUT ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

APRIL 2016

## 2016 Totally Vets Group Fishing Competition

Carla Sheridan

Round up your crew! Get your entry in! Bait your hooks!

Our annual fishing competition at Whanganui is being held on 16 April. Competition starts anytime from sunrise (high tide is at 5.33am, low tide 12.01pm) and any eligible fish must be queued for weigh in by 3.00pm.

Reports to date say that the fishing off Whanganui this summer has been really good with good sized snapper, terakihi and cod being caught.

Entry forms and detailed competition information is available at all Totally Vets Group branches and Turners Sportsworld in Feilding. For further information please call Carla or Sue at the Feilding clinic on 06 323 6161.

**Here's looking forward to a great day out with plenty of fun, laughter and fishy tales to tell!**

## Dairy Industry Awards 2016

Lindsay Rowe

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March several members from the Totally Vets team were privileged to attend the Dairy Industry Regional Awards Dinner in Palmerston North where excellence in dairy farming was showcased and celebrated.

This prestigious competition has now been in place for more than 25 years with many of the past winners progressing on to farm ownership and to leadership positions within the industry. The winners of the regional awards now go on to represent the Manawatu at the national competition to be held in Wellington in May.

The competition is judged at three levels - Dairy Trainee, Dairy Manager and Share Farmer - with the Dairy Managers and Share Farmers being required to make a two hour presentation detailing all aspects of their farming business. They are expected to have a working knowledge of pasture management, an understanding of the prudent use of nutrients and the disposal of effluent, well thought out and applied staff management procedures, a detailed understanding of the financial aspects of a dairy farm business and the various ways to mitigate the risks to that business.

Entrants are expected to have clear goals of where they are heading and how they plan to



get there, as well as a general understanding of the industry in which they work and the various risks it faces. If they suitably impress the preliminary judges they go through to the next round and get to do it all again for the "finals" judges.

While the profile that this competition brings to those that do well, and while the network and friendships that develop are all valuable, the real value from entering this competition is the focus that each competitor is forced to bring to their farming business and the increased understanding of their business that arises from this.

Congratulations to all those that took part and in particular to our clients **Mark and Naomi Mossop** and **Kyle and Virginia Marshall** who were both selected as finalists in the Share Farmer section, **Renae Flett** (from Peter & Kim Bill's farm) who won the 2016 Manawatu Dairy Manager of the Year and **Karl Wood** (farm assistant on his parents, David and Johanna Wood, farm) the 2016 Manawatu Dairy Trainee of the Year.

**So, go on, have a go next year!**



## Drenching deer

Mark Eames

We know that to reduce the rate of development of resistant worms, combination anthelmintic products are better than single active.

The problem with drenching of deer is that no combination products have been through the process required for labelling. This has resulted in an overuse of single active pour-on drenches having been used in deer in New Zealand and hence an increasing resistance in the worm population.

The saviour here is that vets can recommend an "off label" product as there is no licensed alternative that is appropriate. Given this, we recommend the use of a triple combination that can be achieved by one of two options:

1. Matrix C at one and a half times the recommended dose rate
- OR
2. Moxidectin injection (such as Exodus®1% injection or Cydectin®) at a dose rate of 1ml per 50kg **PLUS** a 50:50 mix of Oxfen®C plus and Oxfen®C given orally at a dose rate of 1ml per 5kg

**Unfortunately, and importantly, both of these options require withholding the meat products from human consumption for 91 days.**

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.



## Looking ahead

Potential animal health issues, tasks to consider and reminders for April include...

### Dairy

- **Drying off** - as feed tightens and milk production is decreasing be sure to monitor cow body condition to ensure it doesn't drop too low. Make holistic decisions around which cows to dry-off when and book in your Milk Quality Consult sooner rather than later! - **article P3.**

- **Herd testing** - Bulk milk somatic cell count will be rising in late lactation. Seriously consider investing in a herd test that will give very valuable information to assist in making both dry-off and dry cow therapy decisions.
- **Facial eczema** - spore counts to date have been the highest ever recorded since monitoring began back in mid 1990's. Continue zinc treatment until spore counts drop to safe levels.
- **Leptospirosis vaccination** - autumn is a perfect time to boost your herd prior to winter (being the highest risk period).

## Working dog worries... to operate or not?

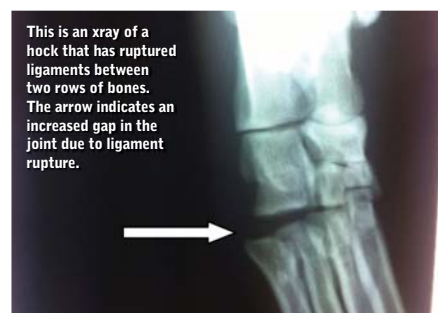
Helen Sheard

One of your best dogs pulls up lame, he has ruptured all the ligaments in his hock and the surgery to fix it is going to be expensive. The key question is; what are the chances of him getting back to work as well as he did before?

Unlike most other joints in the body, both the hock and the carpal (wrist) joints are made up of lots of small bones held together by ligaments. Hyperextension injuries (most commonly done by trapping a foot when jumping off a bike or a foot getting stood on by a cattle beast) can be forceful enough to rupture more than one of these ligaments, causing a very unstable joint. Surgically repairing the ligaments often gives an unsatisfactory result. The ideal is to surgically open the joint, remove the cartilage surface of the bones and fuse the joint with a bone plate or pins, leaving it to heal much as a fracture would.

Studies from Massey University have found that eleven out of twelve owners whose dogs had

their carpal joints fused were happy with the outcome of the surgery, with six dogs returning to full work. A further four dogs could nearly perform all of their duties. A similar study of owners whose dogs had their hocks fused found that thirteen out of fourteen were positive about the surgery. Eleven of these dogs returned to normal or near normal workloads.



This is an xray of a hock that has ruptured ligaments between two rows of bones. The arrow indicates an increased gap in the joint due to ligament rupture.



This is the same hock after surgery to place a bone plate and screws to fuse the joint..

**If you and your dog are faced with injury, decisions are not always easy, we are always here to provide information on options and support the decision making process.**



Ensure that young stock are included in this and that the interval between annual vaccinations never extends beyond 13 months.

- **Trace element monitoring** - pre-winter is a good time for liver biopsies to ensure adequate levels. Samples taken from standing cows are best but results can also be obtained from cull cows - **article P4**.

## Sheep and Beef

- **Mating** - is now in full swing. Monitor plane of nutrition and ensure adequate ram ratios.

- **Facial eczema** - as per under dairy.
- **Planning for winter** - prepare an autumn/winter feed budget and relate it to body condition score management, consider timing of winter shearing, iodine supplementation and book in your scanning.

## Equine

- **Planning for winter** - regular hoof care will help decrease the risk of foot abscesses and timely dental checks will help, particularly in older horses, ensure maintenance of condition through winter.

Air out and check straps on heavier rugs and, if not done so already, now is a good time to ensure elimination of tapeworms and cyathostomes with a good drench!

## Deer

- **Mating** - monitor stag health and condition through mating.
- **Vaccinations** - if fawns are yet to have their first shot for Leptospirosis, along with Yersiniavax® for Yersiniosis, plan for this now.



# Planning for drying off

Sarah Hamer

The dry period is a really important time for udder tissue to regenerate and decisions made here will affect your herd for at least the next six to twelve months.

### WHEN TO DRY OFF?

To dry off or not to dry off; that is the question! The date of dry-off should be based around a variety of factors including:

- **Feed availability**
- **Feed budget going into winter**
- **Milk production** - dry off cows producing less than five to six litres of milk per day
- **Bulk milk somatic cell count (BMSCC)** should be monitored as it tends to increase in late lactation. High somatic cell count (SCC) cows should be identified by a herd test and dried off earlier

- **Body condition score (BCS)** of individual cows. Those in poor body condition should be identified and dried off at an earlier date to allow more time to recover before calving
- **Length of the dry period** - expected calving dates should be used to ensure that ALL cows get at least six weeks dry period (eight weeks is preferable). Less time than this has been shown to cause decreased production in the next lactation

### DRY COW THERAPY

The SmartSAMB recommendation is to ensure that all cows are protected by some form of treatment during the dry period. Dry cow therapy (DCT) and/or internal teat sealants (ITS) use is the cornerstone of mastitis control, both at dry-off and in early lactation. The two main functions are:

1. To cure existing infections (DCT)
2. To prevent new infections during the dry period and at calving (DCT and ITS)

Options include:

- **Short acting DCT** - to cure existing infections and prevent new cases at drying

off. However, after around 30 days the concentration of antibiotic is decreased so there's potentially minimal protection in the late dry period. If there is a significant environmental challenge, such as calving down on a feed pad or grazing winter crops, we would likely recommend that you use a long acting product and/or an ITS

- **Long acting DCT** - gives good cure rates of existing infections and can protect against new infections and, depending on product used and dry period length, right up to calving
- **ITS** - form a wax plug to prevent new infections. This plug remains until it's stripped out once calved. If used on their own, ITS should ONLY be used in low SCC cows
- **Combination therapy** - treating cows with DCT and ITS prevents new infections at calving and early lactation

Some farms will treat their whole herd, while others are selective and use DCT on only 'at risk' cows. 'At risk' being those treated for mastitis during lactation, cows with a SCC of greater than 150,000 cells/ml and heifers with greater than 120,000 cells/ml. Analysing results of your past herd test(s) is vital to be able to make useful decisions on selective DCT.

**Our vets are available to assist you with these decisions. Completing your Milk Quality Consult early will ensure that you have a suitable plan in place for drying off.**



# Testing for trace elements

Sarah Clarke

Trace elements play a critical role in animal health and ensuring they are at optimal levels goes a long way to helping animals stay fit, healthy and producing well. In general, the three key ones to consider are:

## COPPER (Cu)

Soil Cu levels are poorly related to pasture Cu levels, so soil testing results are not helpful. Cu is ingested in feed and deficiency is generally caused by inadequate Cu in the diet.

Serum Cu levels only give a "snapshot" of the Cu available to the animal at that time. This may be misleading as animals will maintain "normal" blood Cu levels until the stored Cu supply in the liver is exhausted, at which time blood Cu levels will drop sharply. Seeing as Cu is stored in the liver, analysis of liver tissue is a more meaningful sampling method. Stores are typically lowest through winter and late spring so testing in the autumn is generally the best time to establish if supplementation is required.

Cu levels can vary considerably between individual animals making interpretation of results more difficult so, in order to accurately estimate the Cu status at a herd level, the taking of ten or more samples is advised.

## SELENIUM (Se)

Contrary to other elements Se levels show a soil-plant-animal relationship, so soil and herbage testing can give information valuable to assist management decisions. However samples from the animal are still the most accurate indicator.

Serum Se reflects current intake or supplementation, while whole blood estimates Se adequacy over the preceding three months. Liver samples provide a useful indicator for Se status and can be done in conjunction with testing to establish Cu status.

Se levels are much less variable than Cu, therefore smaller numbers (three to four) can accurately predict a herd status.

## COBALT (Co)

Co intake affects vitamin B12 concentration in the blood which changes rapidly in response to changes in dietary amounts.

As such, vitamin B12 concentration in either blood or liver samples can be used to establish Co status, however values may be variable and are influenced by management and/or concurrent disease.

**Investing in trace element testing is a cost but ensures time and money is not wasted on unnecessary supplementation. It also makes sure those that need extra get it and those that have enough aren't given too much.**

**"Targeted dry cow and teat sealant programmes are key for lower mastitis in spring time"**

Ryan Carr  
Production Animal Veterinarian

## Lower your spring time stress

Book your Milk Quality Consult now with your vet and check out your dry cow therapy options

Prices starting from **\$2.10** (inc GST) per tube

## A pour-on drench for drying-off

A SPECIAL OFFER EXCLUSIVE TO TOTALLY VETS AND TARARUA VETERINARY SERVICES

For the control of internal parasites and lice

**\$0.90** (inc GST) per 500kg cow  
Based on a 20L drum

