

MAY 2020

VET NEWS



VET SERVICES
HAWKE'S BAY

WELCOME TO A WORLD FIRST: AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF OUR VET NEWS.

The Covid response has forced all sorts of changes for our business and yours, so this move to an email newsletter is just another change, but not likely a permanent one. We've been busy in ways we never imagined and with some staff working from home, people having to work in teams ("bubbles", if you like) and with less face-to-face options, we have had to do lots of things differently. We hope that you enjoy the articles in here.

We also hope to see you again on farm a bit more soon, as the country moves from "essential only" processes at Level 4 to safe work practices at Level 3. We are mindful of the opportunity we have to play our part in keeping the wheels turning for NZ and we appreciate that you have been happy to stick to the essentials so far. The change from next week will open up some additional work opportunities for more routine work on farms but we will all need to maintain high standards of hygiene and keep our distances. It'll be good to catch up in person, even if it is across the bonnet or across the race!

Richard Hilson

Managing Director, BVSc

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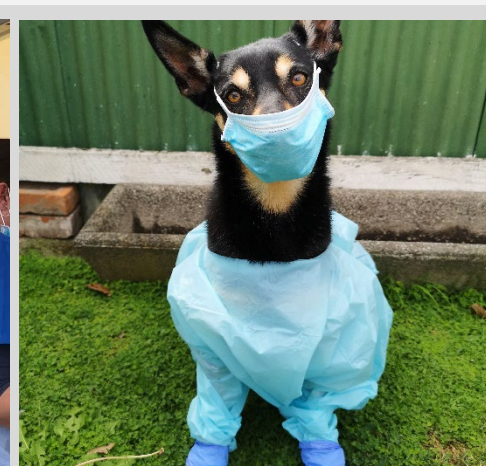
Clare Ryan shares her thoughts

CROP FEEDING

Copper check

DROUGHT SHOUT INVITE COMING SOON

WINTER OFFER FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED FARMERS



In March 2020, just before the reality of the COVID 19 lockdown kicked in, Vet Services (HB) Ltd ran a series of Dairy Seminars in the area. The Waipukurau seminar was hosted in the Springhill School on Wakarara Rd, Onga Onga. The following subjects were presented to a mixed audience of farm owners, managers and staff.



Antibiotics on farm; change in rules and farm specific “bug ‘n drug” testing.

Anne Gelling, VSHB Waipukurau clinic, presented this subject. Worldwide there is pressure on the farming community to lower antibiotic drug use in farming systems. New Zealand has the third lowest antibiotic use on farms in the OECD countries, we are doing pretty well already. Most of the drugs in New Zealand are used for clinical mastitis treatment and dry cow therapy in dairy herds. In order to lower our antibiotics use we have to focus on these treatments.

Selective Dry Cow treatment has been with us for a couple of years. Based on individual cell counts over the lactation and incidence of clinical mastitis over the season a decision can be made to use antibiotics at dry off, or a teatseal only or a combination of antibiotic and teatseal.

A new development in NZ is the availability of a Dairy Antibioqram. To create a Dairy Antibioqram a bulk milk sample is taken from the vat and cultured. The sensitivity for different antibiotics of isolated streptococcus and staphylococcus species is measured, giving us a farm specific sensitivity of

the bugs on that particular farm. This gives us an opportunity to use the most effective antibiotic to treat these infections for Dry Cow treatment and clinical mastitis. When treating a clinical case it is really helpful to know which bug you are treating. In the past sending in samples and culturing in a lab was the only option to determine the cause of the infection.

On farm testing has been around for a few years but did not have a large uptake.

With the introduction of the Mastatest machine that will change. A Mastatest machine will process a sample in 18-24 hours and the results, with farm specific treatment advice, will be sent by email to the farm. Limiting treatment to Ketomax (anti-inflammatory) and stripping of the affected proven to be effective.

Antibiograms and Mastatest on farm culture are now available through Vet Services (HB) Ltd. Anne has extensive experience with both systems, picked up during her years working for an intensive dairy practice on the Waikato. Interested? Please give Anne a call!



Kill Worms – Grow Youngstock

Simon Marshall, Vet Services Dannevirke, presented this part of the seminar. With his background in sheep and beef farming and his involvement with Wormwise NZ he was able to paint a clear picture of preventing and treating worm infections in dairy youngstock. Using the same drench for your replacement calves year after year, without testing its efficacy, could lead to resistance to that particular drench or drench family. Faecal Egg Counts are not reliable in mature cattle, but are perfectly reliable in younger calves till the age of 8 months. Drench checks or, even better, Faecal Egg Count reduction tests are possible in dairy heifer rearing and should be built in to Animal Health Plans. Drench resistance, as nowadays seen in lamb finishing operations all over Hawke's Bay, is a threat, particularly to heifer grazing operations, and should be prevented by using sensible prevention and drench programs.

We have a number of vets with a huge amount of experience in this field, across all manner of production systems, so be sure to seek the right advice from one of our team. Anthelmintic resistance has the potential to completely change the way in which we farm and the longer we make drenches last, the better. Definitely something to discuss when updating your Animal Health Plan!



Repro Round-up, scanning results summarised and benchmarked

Joao Dib, VSHB Hasting clinic, presented a bench marking exercise for the scanning results of the dairy farms this season. Most of our dairy farms are recording their scanning results through Infovet. Infovet has a bench marking facility included, which enables us to compare the fertility results, and their performance indicators, between farms and within a group of farms. Comparing your results with national averages is useful, but lacks local detail. Being able to compare your results with your peers in the same area is more to the point and will create some food for thought. With the results of 25 Hawke's Bay dairy farms included in this bench marking exercise we have got access to a reliable local average. It is an interesting starting point for further discussion and management adjustment.

The dairy future at VSHB: AHPs, body condition scoring and more

Geert Gelling, VSHB Waipukurau clinic, talked about the recently launched Fonterra Animal Health Plan. Vet Services (HB) Ltd has been supplying AH plans for dairy farms for the last 10 – 12 years.

These plans are management supporting programs which create a management calendar, including text messaging reminders, to ensure that timely action is taken to stick to the discussed plan. The Fonterra AH Plan is a reporting tool to demonstrate that key animal health issues, like clinical mastitis incidence, lameness incidence, cow condition, cow and calf mortality, have been discussed with the farm veterinarian and that a plan is in place to manage these animal health issues during the season. We will incorporate this plan in the animal health discussion when we renew your AH Plan and the RVM scripts for the following season.

An increasing intensity of the smell of sizzling sausages and burgers from the outdoor BBQ, run by Steve, signalled the end of the seminar. Before rounding up Geert gave an update on the pending upgrade to the Waipukurau clinic, strongly supported by the CHB Vet Club, and introduced a number of new vets who will be showing up on dairy farms in the near future.



Hold all bets for scanning...

How things can change in an instant? High product prices, lots of rain, green grass last year – easy farming deer. Now lower price, drought, lack of feed – really hard work.

Autumn has been sluggish as far as the roar goes. Stags seemed slow out of the blocks and got busiest in early April, not the last week in March. Hinds are not generally in top condition so they'll be cycling a bit later. Second fawners in particular will be slower to start cycling as they will have the most condition to gain, plus have faced the most social upheaval. When we fetal age pregnancies, we often see a 7-10 day delay in mating dates for the younger hinds. And then there are the yearlings, who will also be looking for a decent feed at a time when the best results come from well fed animals.

What does that mean for deer farmers and planning? Firstly, keep the feed up to them. By the time you see this, most hinds will have been mated and the results already pre-determined, so any extra feed that you pumped into the hinds in March and early April will have paid dividends.

Don't pull stags out too soon. End of the first week of May is "normal" and that'll give most hinds a chance for 2-3 cycles with the stags. A late fawn can be removed at scanning but you have no options with a dry hind.

And while we suggest swapping single sires around about 15 April, even a wee delay there could be advantageous. And don't upset the yearlings – same stags, same feed, same routine, until stag withdrawal

What to expect at scanning? Firstly, some abnormal behaviour from us if this Covid thing carries on. We have a team of vets who can scan deer happily but we may still need to watch close contact and social distancing. Not quite sure what that looks like yet! And we will juggle special requests for scanning according to what suits you best, if we can. The drought is far from over so some may want scanning done earlier than normal, or with specific groups of hinds done at different times. We'll do our best. We do usually wait at least 30 days from stag withdrawal to start scanning (so we don't miss the lates) but anything is possible for unique situations.

So, the likely outcome is a higher empty rate for MA, an elevated empty rate for second fawners and some wide-ranging yearling results. In most cases, mating dates will be a bit delayed too, although we don't think we will be measuring that on many farms. The result of the later mating will be apparent in November and at weaning 2021.

Last year, spiker mating results for yearlings were more than twice that where single sire MA stags were used (29% v 13%) and more than three times those of mob mated two year stags (just 8%). The dry this year will definitely effect the yearling mating – hungry young deer don't do so much mating.

Want some idea of the future? In 2007, which was a nasty drought, HB hinds scanned poorly. That year, nearly a quarter of MA hinds, 35% of spiker mated yearlings and 23% of MA stags mated yearlings were empty. Sorry about the rough messages but it would be wise to be realistic about what hind scanning will look like this year.



Some would say down the gurgler!!!

Dry Cow therapy goals for farmers and vets have moved over the past few years with whole herd treatments becoming a thing of the past, using DCT only on cows with evidence of existing intramammary infections, internal teat sealants for non-infected cows and heifers, and an ambitious aim that by 2030 NZ Inc. will not need antibiotics for the maintenance of health and welfare of animals.

This is all part of the world response to Antimicrobial resistance which is one of the biggest global threats to human and animal health.

So what does this all mean for farmers at Drying off:

Don't Panic - DCT is still available after consultation with your vet.

Having herd test results, past season's mastitis cases and trends, culture results for clinicals, and a

dairy antibiogram to identify any resistance problems all helps make accurate treatment decisions.

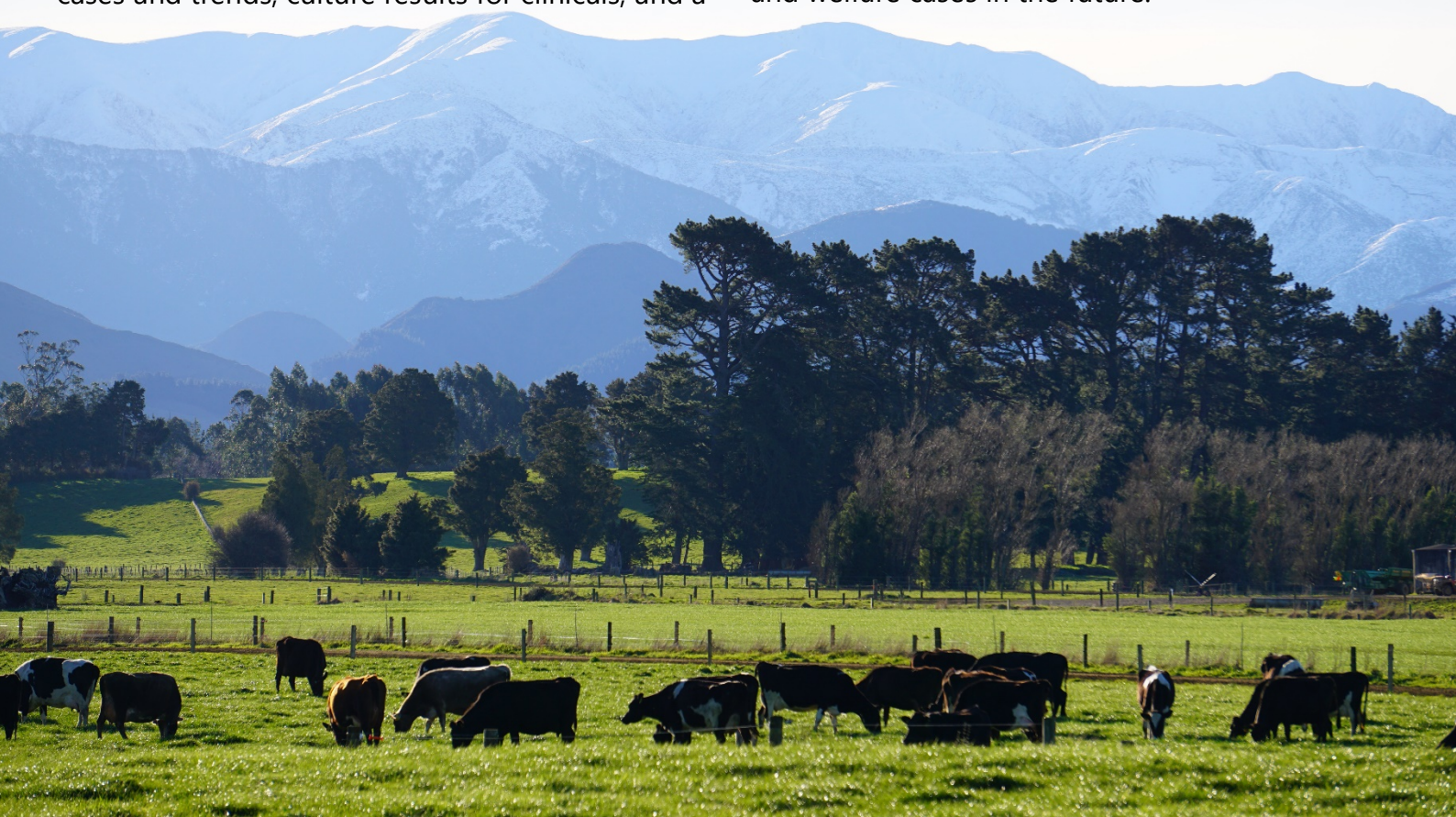
Part herd treatments for high cell count cows is advisable as we only need to use antimicrobials in cows with existing intramammary infections.

Use of teat sealants for cows with low or no cell count to stop infection over dry period and calving is essential to not introduce bacteria in to milking herd.

Teat sealants for heifer at least 4 weeks prior to Calving decreases mastitis at calving by 87% (but we know it's higher).

Improving Management of drying off and detection of clinical mastitis during lactation by staff training is imperative to make sure all this comes together.

Good stewardship of these products will mean they will be available for appropriate therapeutic and welfare cases in the future.



The drought has changed winter feed budgets and feeding plans, as well as the contingency plans and about every other plan that was conceived. This has meant some people are having to be pretty inventive with the crops grown or supplement they are planning to use.

In our area a common scenario is having to replace beet or kale crops destined for winter that had to be utilised over the summer/autumn. Shorter maturing and lower yielding crops such as oats or ryegrasses are replacing these with many not being sown until late April.

Forage supplements are in short supply and plenty of people are talking about using hard feeds in dry stock that wouldn't normally be used. There's also plenty of Nitrogen being put on to try and maximise growth pre-winter.

All this adds up to a lot of people feeding feeds that they are not familiar with or in different situations than they are used to. If this sounds like you, don't hesitate to talk to us about it as we've seen most problems before! A few things to look out for in general are crop yields, feed quality and trace element status.

One of the most common reasons for poor performance on crops is incorrect feed allowance and/or utilisation. Check crop yields before allocating

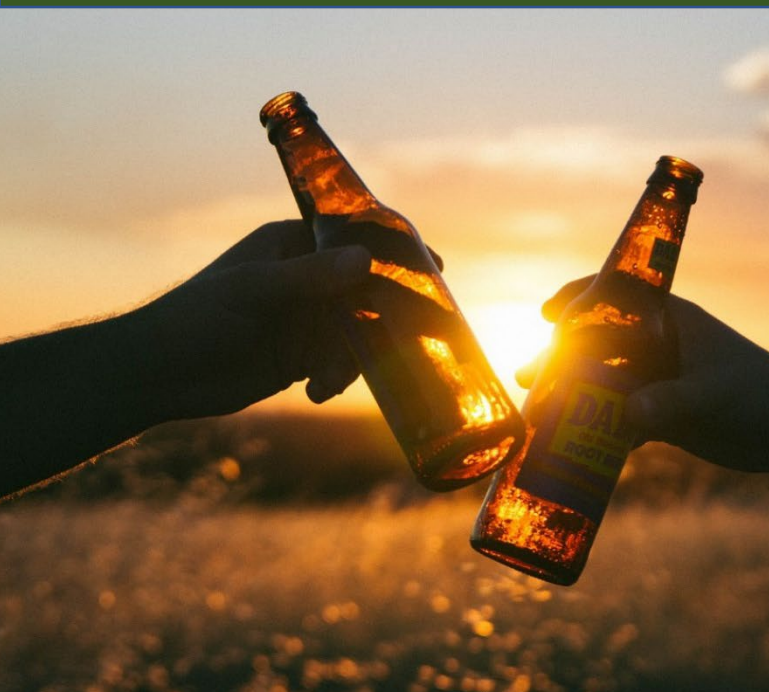


breaks and watch grazing times to ensure they match up with the level of performance you are trying to achieve.

Feed quality can also greatly affect animal performance. A classic example is bailed or silage quality. In seasons like this, when anything and everything is baled and sold, some of it can have the equivalent feed value of saw dust!

Keep an eye on trace and macro elements. This will be important after a tough summer with a lot of soil ingestion and long periods of being fed unbalanced diets e.g. grain feeding. What's more some crops have low mineral status which can impact on animal performance and metabolics.

Once again, don't forget to ask, we're happy to discuss any of the above and provide solutions where we can.



ONE LAST THING

Lockdown put a road block in our Drought Shout planning but we do want to bring the community together and there will be an invite arriving in your mailbox sooner rather than later....

In the meantime, check your neighbours are okay and remember our team are available nearly all the time for a chat. Don't hesitate to contact us if we can be a sounding board for a drought plan, if you have issues with animal health, or just whatever.

Stay safe and we will see you soon.

The Team at VSHB.



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