

DAIRY

APRIL 2016

VET NEWS

PROTECT THE FUTURE

TEAT SEALING

ANIMAL HEALTH PLANS



PHOTOS BY RICHARD HILSON

VETservices
www.vshb.co.nz

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

SIMON MARSHALL

Autumn Ill-Thrift is a well recognised condition on pastoral farms in New Zealand. It is generally hard to figure out why young stock stop growing to desired targets but it is sometimes nailed down to trace mineral deficiencies, parasite challenges or fungal toxin ingestion. What is worse is that this is when we want our young stock really starting to grow well to ensure that they are up to weight for mating in Spring. Weight gain in dairy heifers is crucial to ensuring good mating performance and also lifetime performance in the dairy herd.

Breeding values can be used to determine individual animal weight targets. These are obtainable from your breeding company. Software has developed to a point where it will classify animals into groups that need action or not. Even if you don't have access to these BV's then you can rely on the old school plunket line based on the breed of your herd. With regular weighing and use of these values we can figure out whether heifers are growing at the desired rate. Weighing should be done at least quarterly throughout the year. The heifers that are not reaching target weights can then be drafted off and fed preferentially. Also an ill-thrift investigation can be instigated if things are looking like they may be more than just a lack of feed quality or quantity.

Gastrointestinal parasitism can often be an issue in young cattle. Generally young stock are well drenched and in many cases over drenched! What we need to bear in mind with young cattle is that they will more than likely be infected with more than one type of parasite, those being *Ostertagia* and *Cooperia* species. A drench resistance survey completed in 2006 showed that 90% of the farms surveyed had *Cooperia* that could survive the Macrocytic lactone drenches, that is drenches such as Ivermectin, Abamectin, Doramectin, Moxidectin, you get the

idea! So the moral of the story is to use combination drenches and preferably give them orally. The drench intervals should be around 30 days. Also some form of Refugia should be considered, that is leaving some of the parasites in the population not exposed to drench. If you want some ideas about how this can be achieved give us a call as I don't have room here to explain it.

Yersiniosis is a bacterial disease that can cause scouring and ill-thrift. It is often associated with some form of stress on the animals. This may be under-nutrition or trace element deficiency. We see diarrhoea and elevated temperatures in the affected animals. It is relatively easily treated with either oral or injectable antibiotics.

Trace minerals such as copper, selenium or cobalt can sometimes lead to poor growth in heifers. Historical data from blood or liver tests should give you an idea of whether supplementation is required. If no data is available then getting some testing done is a good investment.

We can sometimes see a disease called Polioencephalomalacia in weaners. This is a lack of Thiamine (Vitamin B1, not B12). It will cause brain damage leading to calves that separate themselves from the mob and are often found sitting on their own. They will appear blind and can have seizures if not detected early. It doesn't follow any set pattern but can be seen when a feed change occurs either from good quality to poor or vice versa.

Overall keep an eye on the young stock and be pro-active about keeping a handle on their weights and any impending animal health issues. We are ideally placed to provide advice about dealing with these issues before they occur and if they do unfortunately occur. We can also help with feed budgeting and nutritional advice to ensure optimal growth rates so give us a call.

DRYING OFF IN TIGHT TIMES

GEERT GELLING

As the season is proceeding drying off is not too far away. With the low payout drying off could be even closer than we think, as, depending on the weather in the next few weeks, cow condition might force us to dry off cows earlier in order to maintain or increase their body condition in preparation for the next season. Payout at this level means that supplementary feeding, as maize silage or PKE, to maintain milk production or to improve body condition is not available or not financially viable.

Over the past few years we have seen some changes in the use of dry cow therapy in New Zealand. Adding Teatseal to Antibiotic Dry Cow Therapy has dropped the number of clinical mastitis cases in the next season dramatically. Teat sealing heifers 4-6 weeks before expected Start of Calving has had the same result on the number of heifer clinical mastitis cases. Combining Teat sealing heifers and the use of DCT/Teatseal or Teatseal only in cows has been well proven to minimize incidence of clinical cases in the milking herd early in the next season. Flow on effects include lower number of culls due to lower clinical mastitis incidence, lower average cell count over the season, lower costs of treatment of clinical cases (drugs and labour), less milk loss due to withholding, etc, have all made this approach a financially sound decision on most farms. Having less cows in the peno herd over this busy period at the start of the season is another bonus, especially appreciated by farm managers and staff. As next year's payout is not known at this stage it is pretty hard

to run a reliable economic model on the returns of a dry cow treatment investment. The hard part is that DCT treatment has to be financed in a low payout year with already stretched budgets.

The challenge this season will be to minimise costs of DCT while maintaining the gains made over the last years, based on teatseals and teatseal combinations.

In order to get some information to base our advice on we have sent out forms in early March to collect some data regarding milk quality and clinical mastitis/cell count history. This will give us a base level of data to enable us to have a to the point discussion regarding DCT for this season. Dairy farmers that have signed up to Infovet (most of you), and are recording clinical mastitis cases in Minda (quite a few, but not most of you...), will have a wealth of data and analysis available to make an informed decision regarding Dry Cow Therapy this year. Infovet is web based, so the easiest way to have a look at it is to come into the clinic. It is possible to run it on farm but we need a reliable and fast WIFI internet connection to run the analysis.

Depending on the data available we will be able to give specific advice on a cost effective DCT plan for your farm this season. Supplying the data asked for on our form will give you the opportunity to get MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK (the slogan used by Pfizer when they introduced Avigra, the cheaper version of Viagra, on the NZ market).

TEAT SEALING

HARRY WHITESIDE

No doubt it's become extremely difficult deciding where best to spend a dollar on animal health this season and for the foreseeable future but teat sealing, particularly of heifers, would be one option where the return on investment consistently stacks up most impressively.

Trial work continues to show up to an 80%+ reduction in the incidence of heifer mastitis with teat seal and we have received nothing but positive feedback about this product in the previous couple of seasons. Adding strong support to these claims, Geert has been able to produce data using Infovet to demonstrate significant reductions in heifer mastitis on local farms that have used teat seal.

Whilst these results have been extremely encouraging in the blanket treatment of heifers we do have a few concerns about use of this product in adult cows this season. Anecdotally a number of farms have decided not to carry out routine herd testing and use of teat seal in high somatic cell count cows could be catastrophic in terms of sealing in existing infections. It is therefore very important to have good individual cow cell count information available before considering whole herd treatment of the milkers with teat seal. The product can however, also be used in combination with all available dry cow antibiotic preparations.

Further work recently carried out on the South Island has demonstrated that product can be used confidently up to 3 weeks out from calving (most of our teat sealing is carried out 6-8 weeks pre-calving) so the decision to teat seal can still be made once the end of season budget has been drawn up.

Aside from the dramatic reduction in heifer mastitis the other reason teat sealing has been so widely taken up across the district is the availability of a specially designed teat seal trailer crewed by a very efficient team of technicians who take all the

strife out of the job. The trailer can be accommodated in all manner of yard set ups and allows us to seal up to 5-6 animals at a time. It is safe and extremely robust and when animals fully cooperate we can see up to 60 heifers teat sealed per hour. Teats are cleaned thoroughly before insertion and sanitised post-treatment before the animals are allowed to walk off and we have had nothing but favourable feedback on the whole process.

If you are a teat seal convert or considering use of this product for the first time this season please do not hesitate to contact us at the clinic.

Furthermore if you would like to learn more about the product or how the trailer works we will be putting on a teat seal demonstration on a local farm in the near future. Notice of this demonstration will be sent soon and has attracted lots of interest in previous years.



TEAT SEAL TRAILER

ANIMAL HEALTH PLANS

GEERT GELLING

Managing animal health has evolved over the years from treating sick animals to preventing the occurrence of sick animals. Veterinary knowledge around animal diseases is developing rapidly with options around testing and diagnosis becoming more available. For most common diseases occurring on dairy farms protocols are available to minimize the impact of these diseases on the farm. Putting the right steps and actions in place to cover animal health issues on a farm will lead to a planned approach to animal health, tailored to the needs of that specific farm, an Animal Health Plan.

To formulate an Animal Health Plan we need a discussion around animal health for that specific farm. There is no one size fits all option. Depending on the history of animal health issues on the farm and depending on the goals regarding animal health a plan can be formulated to tackle those issues and to reach those goals.

Outbreaks of calf diarrhoea might be solved by a vaccination program, high mastitis incidence might need an analysis of clinical cases and cell counts to formulate a plan forward, a positive BVD bulk milk test will trigger a plan to minimize BVD impact on the business, etc. More available data regarding animal health will open up more options for animal health management. EID and recording of animal health cases in Minda has opened up options to manage at cow level instead of at herd level.

Animal Health Plans have been around for a long time in Vet Services (HB) Ltd, varying from elaborate documents in book form for sheep and beef properties to basic animal health calendars for dairy farms.

For most dairy farms we have used a spreadsheet, supplied by the industry 10 years ago, that we have updated over the years. Discussion regarding this plan was often part of the RVM authority consultation in July of each year. Experience shows us that the first discussion might take a bit of time, as all issues need to be discussed. Updating that plan for the next year is often easy as we know what works on the farm and adjusting is often only a matter of fine tuning.

This year we have purchased Vision Animal Health Manager, a software package which will generate animal health plans for all farms and all animal classes. Templates for dairy farms have been updated to suit our requirements. We will be using this program to generate a plan, which will be reported as a Wallplanner, stating the dates for specific actions, and an Events List, specifying actions and animal classes for that day. As with all modern software this software has bells and whistles as well: It can generate emails to remind you, text messages to warn you a week before and/or to tell you that a certain event is due today, etc. The good news is that we can moderate these messages and even turn them off as well, as we said one size definitely doesn't fit all.

LOOKING FOR LONG TERM PARASITE CONTROL IN YOUNG STOCK?

RICHARD HILSON

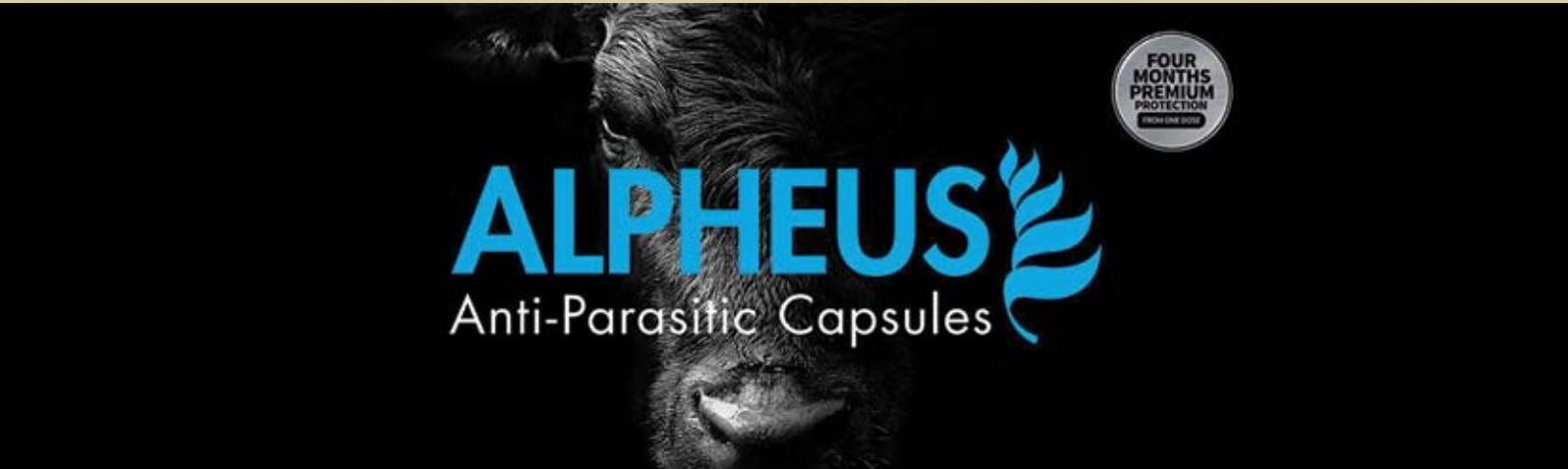
The very new and very clever Alpheus capsule is available for the first time this autumn. It may have a place within your beef or dairy system to simplify autumn parasite control and help in maximising growth rates.

Capsules for cattle aren't new (remember the Ivomec capsule many years ago?) but this one contains a primer capsule to act in the same way as an oral drench to clean out parasites already present in the animal. This is a mixture of oxfendazole and levamisole, a combination already well known to those of you rearing young beef cattle. The capsule then provides a continuous release of abamectin for up to 125 days (four months), aimed at killing incoming parasite larvae and therefore preventing their establishment.

Trial data, all gleaned in NZ, shows excellent retention and excellent growth rates. Alpheus-treated animals grew an extra

14.5kg live weight during their treatment period when compared to animals on a regular 28 day programme with a triple combination.

Where do we see these fitting? Obviously we don't want to push the use of long acting products where drench resistance is considered an issue or a consequence. However, this product has a place for helping overcome regular autumn issues with parasitism and may suit many rearing situations. The use of the clean-out capsules is a clever addition and makes the administration simpler. We would suggest that other options be considered in a parasite control plan and part of that includes consideration of refugia and some monitoring of parasite egg counts to confirm the effectiveness of the product- just as we do with other drench options. And there is a weight limitation of 120-300kg but that covers most weaner cattle.



ALPHEUS
Anti-Parasitic Capsules



REMINDERS

From March onwards Worksafe NZ will be carrying out farm assessments in the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne regions

You can book your appointment by calling

Kay Douglas on 06 975 5564 or emailing: kay.douglas@worksafe.govt.nz

SHEEP SCANNING REMINDER

It's never too early or late to book in your scanning!

VSHB PROVIDE:

- ★ A top quality scanning service with dedicated and skilled veterinarians and technicians
- ★ Full veterinary interpretation and involvement
- ★ A full local database of results
- ★ Bench marking of your farm and flock on New Zealand's largest sheep scanning database
- ★ An experienced labour unit included in our price
- ★ A free faecal egg count of your scanned ewes

Give any of the clinics a call today to make sure you get your animals scanned this season!



SEASONAL UPDATE

HASTINGS/NAPIER

So the year is moving pretty quickly with April upon us already! The season has been pretty kind to us with animal condition at a good level. No doubt partly because everyone was geared for the El Nino. This has meant capital stock have been fed better due to reduced stock numbers. Things however may still get quite dry

WAIPUKURAU

As I write this, some rain is falling; great news for a lot of farms. At this stage it isn't a large amount (from 10-20mm) but will certainly provide some help for the coming weeks. Hopefully your rams and ewes have been looked after through February and March and everything's looking tip-top for tupping. Keep

DANNEVIRKE

As I write this it seems like the dry spell may have broken. It has got quite dry in many areas, some missing out consistently, but good rain has arrived now to most! Everything has greened up, all going well it will continue! It may be a tough year to flush ewes into tupping, especially for coastal areas and earlier mated mobs. That being said, ewe condition in general is really good and later mated mobs should be well set up for a decent mating. Spore counts are certainly on the move so beware of facial eczema. If stock are eating low into the sward then this will exacerbate any fungal issues, staggers included.

We are in the midst of scanning still but by the time you read this will most likely be starting to slow down a bit. It will be interesting to see how the beefies scan, get us booked in if you haven't already! We can discuss timing etc if you are unsure. There have been some really mixed results around, but again a

WAIRARAPA

Last week we experienced rainfall over the district, which was a very welcome relief from El Nino. Most districts reported about 20 – 30mm of rain. The local weaner fair went very well with most selling for in excess of \$800 with a top price of \$1280. We have started the drench tests around our farms and the results so far are confirming that worm resistance to various drenches is quite common. The worm egg monitoring we have been doing

CAMILLE FLACK

heading into autumn/winter so be prepared. The orchardists are having quite a good apple pick this season wanting a bit of dry weather over the harvesting period. Same with the vineyards, grapes are being picked all around us hopefully meaning a good batch of wine on its way!

MIKE CATLEY

an eye on FE counts, which have dropped slightly, and with any luck the cooler weather may mean they won't rise further. FEC your hoggets before mating to see if a timely drench is necessary. Cows are looking good and stags are roaring. Exciting times for the deerstalkers among us!

JOHNNY ATKINS

lot of it probably comes back to feeding and condition. Get in and scan early if you are tight for feed and the dry cows can go. Unfortunately it's looking like probably a relatively poor year for our dairy scanning results. Preliminary average empty rate is a couple of percentage points above what it has been previously. The spring was quite late last year so this may be indicative of decreased energy supply and some weight loss at a crucial period. Most farms are running on reduced stock numbers this year, but getting rid of those empty cows, chronic high cell counts, chronic lame cows etc early on will further decrease pressure. Get in and get some body condition scoring done and make early decisions around drying off, especially those skinny cows.

Fingers crossed the autumn weather plays ball, but if it doesn't or you're after any advice feel free to ring for a chat!

STUART BRUÈRE

is showing up moderate to high levels of worm burdens in MA and two tooth ewes. This is not really a surprise as the sheep have been eating down to very low pasture covers. It would be sensible to do FEC's counts on these age classes at ewe scanning time to make sure worm burdens don't become a problem over the late winter.

LUCKY WINNER



Peter Gannon the lucky winner of a Honda Farm Bike .
From left – Harold Amner Hastings Retail Manager, Peter Gannon winner of the Honda Farm bike, Grant from Hastings Honda, Peter Bright Eukanuba Farm representative.

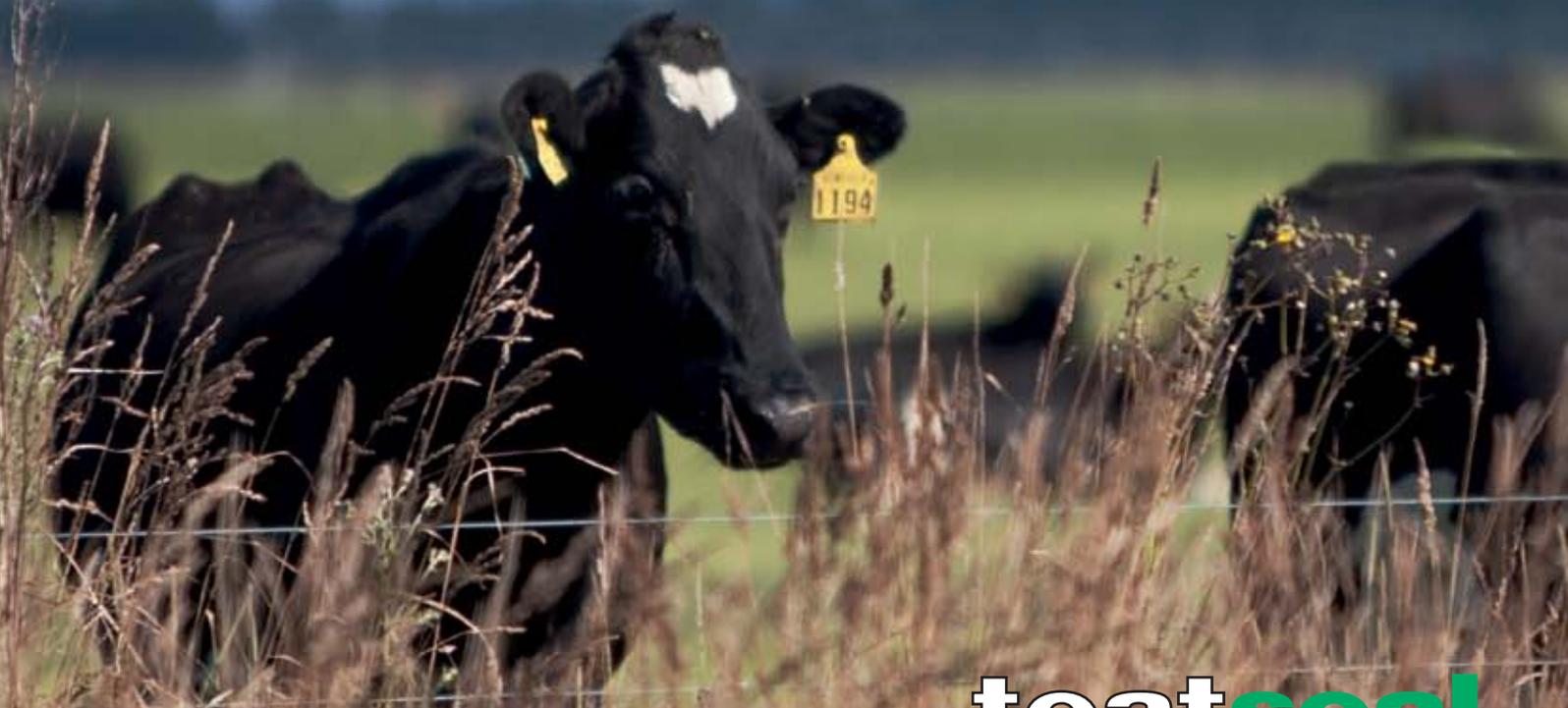
CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Congratulations to those finalists in the Hawkes Bay/ Wairarapa Dairy industry Awards:

- **Mark & Jaime Arnold** who won the Share Farmer of the Year Award, and also received 3 merit awards.
- **Lewis Knauf** who was the Runner -Up Dairy Manager of the Year, and also received 1 merit award.
- **Ray Johnson** who was third in the Dairy Manager of the Year category, and also received 3 merit awards.
- **Rob and Shiralee Seerden** who received 2 merit awards under the Share Farmer of the year category.

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MASTERTON 24 Lincoln Road **06 378 2662**

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