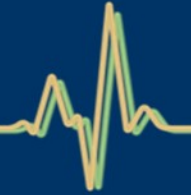




the Vet Advisor



The magazine of Cambridge Vets *treating all animals large and small*

Spring 2015

Coming Soon...

Wondering what all the digging is about on the corner of Empire and Alpha Street?

Well it's the start of the new home for Cambridge Vets. After years of planning, the building is finally underway as a cooperative venture between Cambridge Vets and the Cambridge farmers' Vet Club. The new clinic will be boasting a welcoming reception plus state of the art facilities for small animal and farm animal services. There will be 2 modern surgical theatres, a full imaging suite, separate cat and dog wards, a large treatment room, a dedicated dental area, grooming facilities and a fully equipped laboratory. Coupled with the same friendly team of experienced vets, nurses and receptionists, this will provide the animal health service that Cambridge deserves, focused entirely on the people and animals of the Cambridge area. Cambridge Vets' directors Peter Twine and Bill Hancock are looking forward to a grand opening in early 2016.



The proud new home of Cambridge Vets - opening early 2016

New home of Cambridge Vets

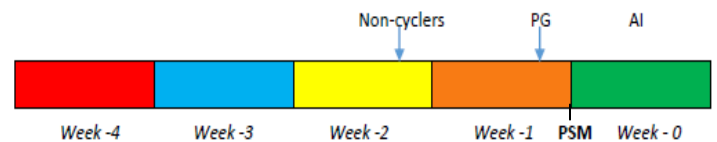
APPS!

There are some great smartphone apps available free to help you with treatment decisions and with-holding times:

- Bovine Mastitis Cure Calculator in the App Store
- Mastitis Treatment With-holding list and calculator at dairywellness.co.nz

Tail Painting

Tail paint should go on a month before mating. If you change colour each week for those girls that have cycled, not only will you recognize the non-cyclers but you can predict who should be coming on and bring them forward with a shot of PG. So cows that cycle during week -2 (Yellow) can be jabbed at day -2 (two days before PSM) to bring into the first week of AI.



We all know non-cycling cows get in calf later and are more likely to be empty. But the old model of cidr'ing all the non-cyclers at the end of the AI period is being challenged. The **maximum Return On Investments is obtained by cidr'ing 10 days prior to PSM**, so they get mated at the beginning. This will give on average 16 days earlier in calf and 16 days extra in milk and a positive cost-benefit. Programs initiated later in the mating season give lower returns.

CALF LEPTO

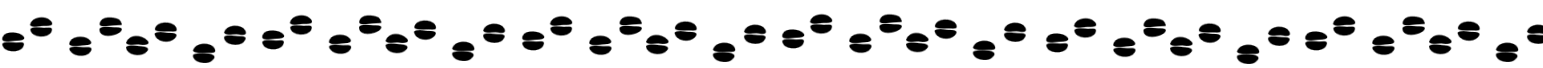
We are recommending that all calves are vaccinated for Leptospirosis in the spring, once they are 4 weeks or older. This follows Massey research which showed that vaccinating calves late summer left them open to infection beforehand. We are happy to do this at the same time as you are running them through the yards for drenching.



BEARINGS IN EWES



Prolapse of the vagina can occur in any species but is a particular health and welfare issue in ewes. Generally farmers will attempt to replace the bearing, retain it and treat the ewe with antibiotics. This can result in a relatively high mortality, as none of the commonly used methods of retaining a prolapsed are particularly effective, and relapses are common regardless of the method used. The disadvantage of using bearing retainers [spoons] is that anything placed inside the vagina is likely to cause the ewe to strain more, making her more likely to push the bearing out again. Sewing the vulval lips together can cause problems as the ewe must be watched closely for signs of imminent lambing or she will rip the sutures or pins out while lambing and thus cause significant tissue damage and pain and high risk of infection. There is a new way of treating a prolapse and it involves fitting the affected ewe with a harness made of wide strapping, which goes around the neck of the ewe, along the back and around the hind legs, and across the vulva. This harness does not work by putting pressure on the vulva but by preventing the ewe from arching her back and straining. Ewes are able to lamb through the harness. The harness is washable and re-useable any number of times. As there is a high likelihood of the problem recurring at subsequent lambings it is advisable to cull affected ewes. Harnesses have been used routinely overseas for some years and now a local company Rurtec has developed a harness that is available for about \$25.



ON TARGET!

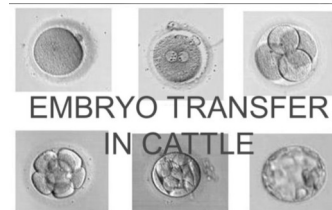
Kelvin is running a calf weighing system, so you can track the growth of your young stock and check they are on target. If you're not measuring it, you can't fix it! We can also tailor plan a Health Program for your young stock incorporating drenching and minerals.

How are your herd's mineral levels?

Are deficiencies putting a brake on production, growth and reproduction?
Is your herd at risk of copper toxicity?
Liver biopsies / blood samples can identify any problems so they can be addressed before impacting on mating. There have been incidents of heifers with broken legs associated with copper deficiency. As this mob is often grazed away or fed differently, they should be tested separately.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- IVF is very common in the Brazilian cattle industry? This is because the cattle breed they have respond very well to Oocyte Pick Up. A needle is guided by ultrasound to collect eggs from small follicles on the ovary, and then these eggs are fertilized and cultured in the lab before being transferred to a recipient cow. The transfer is performed much like AI. The advantages include that you can even collect oocytes from heifer calves or from the abattoir, the embryo can be frozen, and eggs can be collected much more frequently than traditional flushing and embryo transfer.
- Testicular tissue has been transplanted from bulls onto the backs of mice, and can produce sperm? It has also been transferred into the testes of other bulls, and sperm from the donor can be detected for up to 98 days.
- Cloning can be used to save the genetics of elite breeding animals or endangered species. The rare breed of sheep Mouflon has been cloned by putting the DNA of a body cell into the enucleated oocyte of a related sheep breed!



EMBRYO TRANSFER
IN CATTLE

Phantom Cows

Those frustrating cows that have a mating and don't cycle again but are empty!

Risk factors:

- Anoestrous cows
- BCS 4.0 or less at mating
- 2 year old
- >6 year old
- Pure bred
- Late calvers



Effects:

- Longer interval to conception
- Lower pregnancy rate

Options:

- Identify any of the risk factors in your herd, and address the underlying issue
- Early scanning will identify them so you can decide what to do with them

SHEEP

Lincoln University compared 6 dryland pastures' yield, and sheep live weight, produced over 9 years. The key messages in the beef + lamb factsheet 106 are:

- Spring is the critical period for regions exposed to summer / autumn drought. 2/3 of annual lwt production occurs in the spring.
- To finish priority stock as "prime" at weaning, cocksfoot pastures (containing sub clover as their main clover) are recommended to complement Lucerne.
- Total lwt gain / Ha is a better measurement of production than lwt gain/head as it allows for inter-animal variation and changes in stocking rate.

An article in the Sheep and Beef Vets Proceedings 2014 by Judson and Moorhead explored the use of Tonic plantain in sheep and beef systems. They pointed out its high annual dry matter production, winter activity, and animal health and performance. It can be used:

- As part of perennial pasture
- As a monoculture
- In combination with summer brassicas or white clover or Lucerne



There was a reference to hypocalcaemia reported when ewes in late pregnancy transition from high plantain swards onto conventional pasture.

BULLS

The main problem we see with bulls is numbers! Make sure you have ordered enough – about 1 per 25 cows. The average 6 week in calf rate was 75% last year. For a herd of 400 with 6 weeks AI, this meant there were 100 empty cows for the bull. However allowing for rotation gives a requirement of 8 bulls. The other risks are lameness (get them replaced immediately) and BVD (make sure they are blood tested **and** vaccinated). Ease of calving index is a critical check before use. We can do a health and fertility test as bulls come onto your property to assess potential risk.

BCS

Both absolute body condition score and condition lost between calving and mating are critical to fertility. The target is for cows to calve at 5.0 and drop to no lower than 4.0 by mating (heifers 1/2 score higher). Condition scoring your herd throughout the year should go hand in hand with running a nutrition budget. Using a vet accredited for condition scoring ensures consistency and removes the risk of the “sliding” score!

MATING

DETECT DIRTY COWS EARLY

Cows with metritis cost you income. They have empty rates 10-20% higher than “clean” cows, and those that do conceive take about 3 weeks longer to get in calf, leading to fewer days in milk.

Commonly 10% of the herd develop endometritis. Cows most at risk have had abnormal calvings (assisted, dead calves, twins), RFMs, vaginal discharge or milk fever. However other cows can also have an infection unnoticed, which is why we metricheck the herd.

Affected cows are irrigated with a nil milk WH product “Metriclean”. The sooner they are checked and treated, the better the result. We recommend:

- Identify and record all “at risk” cows
- Treat at risk cows; do at 14-28 days after calving to give the best result
- Metricheck the herd and treat cows with pus; at least 35 days before mating to ensure detection.



HEAT DETECTION

There are numerous new technologies for improving heat detection:

- P4 milk test
- Bulling beacons / kamars
- Scratchies
- Pedometry / activity necklaces
- Milk production
- Pressure sensor lights on rump
- Cameras



Any of these can help to improve heat detection, with accuracy varying between 70% and 100%. Scott McDougall presented a couple of studies in June. The average duration of oestrus was only 7 hours, with variation between 0 and 28 hours. While pressure / mounting detectors can be set off by scratching on trees, the walking meters have to take into account variation in grazing travel. Using several together improves accuracy, and automation can take pressure off staff or improve detection where inexperience is a factor. But none are better than a highly skilled person who is motivated and attentive, using their experience in conjunction with tail paint.

SHORT GESTATION Semen

Gestation length is highly heritable, but with not much variability between animals it has taken some time to breed short gestation stock. With inductions no longer being available, using short gestation semen over late cows is a practical tool for compacting your calving spread. It gives about a 10 day impact. Advantages include more days in milk, more time to recover after calving will improve mating next season, and avoiding the purchase and handling of bulls. All very attractive propositions, and SGL has been modelled to give a good cost-benefit.

However, simply replacing bull matings with SGAI will not suit every farm. Those late matings with a small mob of cycling cows can be very hard to spot. In addition, they are probably the lower fertility cows, and by this stage there may be a degree of heat detection fatigue. This has the potential to result in a higher empty rate, especially if there were a large number of non-cyclers.

Also the BW will need to be balanced with the gestation length; many of the calves will not have good milk production traits, so care must be taken not to keep these as replacements. Calving in 2 mobs, or using white-faces may be necessary.



Puppy Pre-School

Puppy Pre-school will be going again from 17th September. This perennially popular session of evening classes are run by experienced Vet Nurses Cindy and Megan. Our Puppy Pre-school is a fun, educational five week course that focuses on socialising puppies of the same age. We work to reduce the chance of behaviour problems such as aggression, fearfulness, excitability and destructiveness. To achieve this we use a training method called positive reinforcement where we praise the good behaviour and ignore or correct bad behaviour. A few spots are still available – enrol at the clinic on 8277099 to embark on an enjoyable and rewarding relationship with your dog!

Canine Behaviour Evening

We had fantastic attendance and feedback about our Canine Behaviour Evening held at the clinic recently. Pictured is Vet Nurse Megan's talk about Boredom Busters. We are hoping to follow this up with a Feline Behaviour Evening so keep your eyes peeled for more details on our Facebook page and website!

Thank you to all those who attended!



AG Day Lambs and Calves

Well hopefully all the calf club calves and lambs are growing well and learning to follow / lead! Don't forget to get them vaccinated for 5in1. This covers the clostridial diseases such as tetanus, black leg etc, all of which can be fatal. Two injections are required a month apart. It may be worth giving them the Lepto vaccinations at the same time, as calves can become carriers of leptospirosis at a very young age. This can lead to them shedding the bacteria in their urine. If people then contract the disease they can become very sick with headaches, aches and pains, and even liver and kidney damage. Most calf and lamb diarrhoea is "nutritional scours", and can be resolved by replacing the milk with electrolytes for a day or so and increasing the liquid feeds to rehydrate them. However if they are unwell in themselves, they may need further treatment for an infection. Rotavirus, cryptosporidia, salmonella and more can cause diarrhoea, and they all need different therapies as well as electrolytes and fluid replacement.



More details are available on our website!

Keep an eye on the navel and joints, as infections are not uncommon. Lambs can also get entropion, which is when the eyelids are turning inward, causing tears and discharge from the eyes. These are all potentially fixable if you spot them early; just contact the clinic for specific advice.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Lyndsay Barton the winner of our Winter drench promotion (pictured right).



Congratulations also to the Speake family who won the Autumn Face-Guard Promotion.

We hope you enjoy your new BBQ this summer (pictured left).



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