



The magazine of Cambridge Vets & Cambridge Equine Hospital

Autumn 2015

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DRY COW THERAPY, MILK QUALITY, P.A.R

Despite the recent drop of rain, the time to dry off the herd will inevitably creep up on us soon. This gives us an opportunity to discuss drying-off options, products and procedures, as well as to give some feedback with a milk quality review of the season. To maximize the benefit you get from this procedure, please make sure you have the information requested in the DCT questionnaire.

There is increasing pressure from overseas to justify our use of antibiotics, and to prescribe them in a sustainable manner that minimizes any impact on human health through antibiotic resistance or milk supply contamination. The consultation, and paperwork that goes with it, is an important part of this responsibility for our profession and industry.

We can do the annual PAR authority at the same time if you wish, but we are implementing a new system to simplify renewal whereby all authority forms will be dated from the 1st of June. Again, please take this opportunity to discuss treatment options, protocols, with-holdings and concerns.

ANIMAL HEALTH PLAN

We have recently designed an Animal Health Plan covering a season on the farm, looking at common health problems, mineral balance, routine procedures etc. It is formulated to be tailored to individual farms, with suggested timeframes and a wall planner summary to go on the office wall. As an addition, there is a section with Animal Health Protocols to keep for the farm team to refer to, so treatments and interventions are consistent and logical. We are very excited about this new service, and are keen to sit down with you and discuss how this might fit your requirements.

GOLF DAY!

Our Annual Farm Clients' Golf Day, with the Alan Bremner Memorial Trophy, is Friday 8th May. It's a great social day for mingling and golfing, and a thank you for your loyalty. Make sure you have booked in a relief milker, baby sitter and taxi so you can come along. As always, we will be putting on a BBQ and beer service, with a meal and prize-giving at the end of the day. Please book in a tee-off time for your team at the clinic.



WELFARE MATTERS!

Cambridge Vets will be putting on a welfare seminar this autumn, with resources from DairyNZ. Make sure you and your staff are up-to-date with current requirements on euthanasia, tail docking, transport etc. Keep an eye out for it!

Turnip Photosensitization

Feeding cows turnips, swedes or forage rape can cause photosensitization similar to Facial Eczema. A recent Massey study suggests that the liver damage associated with this is probably reversible; the liver can heal, depending on the degree of liver damage, meaning cows that look to have recovered can be kept rather than culled as a matter of course. The toxin has yet to be identified but may be the same in all these crops, as the cellular liver damage looks very similar.



Theileria Update

Theileria has extended down to the south of the North Island, with sporadic cases in the South Island.



Autumn is the other peak of tick activity, so you need to monitor your stock carefully for signs of anaemia:

- Pale / yellow mucous membranes
- Milk drop
- Recumbency
- Slowness

There are two big risks at this time of year: autumn-calving cows, and stock movement.

Consider applying Bayticol to the autumn cows at calving, as this is a high stress time for them and they will not cope well with Theileria on top of calving!

Assess the risks of moving stock. If they are in a low-risk area or Theileria-free farm, they are at risk if they are moving onto a property with Theileria or ticks. Conversely, moving cattle from a tick area to a Theileria-free farm may put the existing stock at risk.

We suggest taking a sample set of bloods to give you a picture as to the prevalence of Theileria in a mob or herd, and this will tell you whether there is no risk or a significant risk.

Please phone us if you would like to discuss assessing the risk, and practical measure for reducing or addressing it.

Did you know?

- The number of registered honeybee hives has never been higher? It was 507,247 in 2014!
- More and more people are keeping bees in their backyard as a hobby?
- Since the introduction of Varroa in 2000 beehives have to be actively managed to warrant the colony's survival?
- A colony consists of 1 queen, 50-60,000 worker bees and several thousands of drones (males) in the summer?
- The queen can lay up to 1500 eggs per day in the summer?
- Worker bees can visit up to 2000 flowers per day?
- In her lifetime she can produce 1/12 tsp of honey?

Honeybees are fascinating little insects. I have to admit I have never had a client come into the clinic with sick bees. And who would think of going to the vet with bee problems anyway? They are usually not the experts in the field.

For all of you that keep bees, I hope you will be enjoying your honey :-)
My bees are still struggling to cap the last of it. Uncapped honey is not finished and will start to ferment if you extract it. Don't be tempted!
All honey taken off after December 31st needs to be Tutin (poison) tested before you can legally sell it or give it away.

When you work your hives, watch out for robbing. There are less flowers for bees to forage on and they will try to steal honey from any hive it they get the opportunity. It can lead to lots of deaths so avoid it if you can. Work the hives in the evening when there is less activity. If you notice a hive gets robbed, be quick to reduce the hive entrance to two bee's width to help your bees defend themselves.

If your Varroa treatment is not in yet, do it soon. While the hive is preparing for winter, the number of brood will decline and Varroa gets the chance to take over. Colonies can collapse in a very short time.

More interesting honeybee-facts in the next Vet Advisor. In the meantime, if you have questions about (your) bees, you can contact Cambridge Vets and ask for Cecilia.



True Story....

I was cleaning my boots after a visit on a dairy farm, and got talking to the electrician working in the vat room. I noticed he had a persistent cough, and jokingly proposed that I had some penicillin and a very long needle in my truck. He looked at me quite seriously and politely refused, saying he had already tried antibiotics and none of them had worked. I thought for a few moments, and then suggested that I could give him a large dose of cow laxatives.

"Will that cure my chest?" he asked

"Well no" I admitted "But you'll be too ****ing scared to cough!"

Reproduction

I have recently started a distance learning paper through Massey University on Reproduction and Fertility. It's a bit of a change from when I was a student (last century!) when whiteboards and printed notes were still a novelty, and I am having to get my head round doing everything on-line. It's quite amazing, though, being able to access articles by a simple click on the web-page, and to receive instant feedback from the tutors. My first assessment involved comparing the oestrus cycles of the ewe and the alpaca. Did you know that the alpaca is a non-seasonal induced ovulator? This means she is generally receptive to the sexual advances of the male all the time (unless pregnant, and then she spits at him and threatens domestic violence!), and the actual act of mating is what causes her to release an egg. The strategy of induced ovulation is also seen in cats and rabbits, whereas cows and sheep ovulate every 21 or 17 days respectively, and only in the breeding season for sheep. Interestingly, an Ovulation Inducing Factor has been identified in alpaca semen, and it now transpires that many species have this OIF, but to varying degrees of importance.

It's good to learn, but I forgot how hard studying is....

Dr. Peter Briston

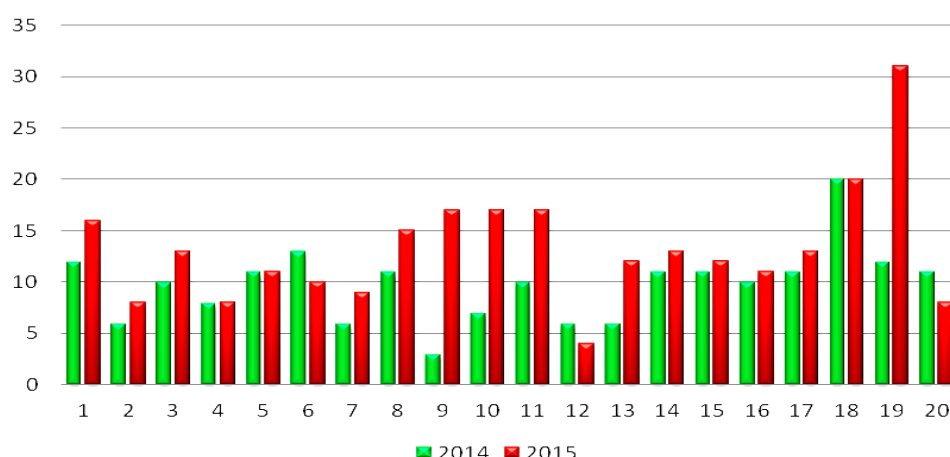
Repro Round-Up

As the pregnancy testing season draws to an end we can take a deep breath and reflect on how we performed.

The average 3-week submission rate across the clinic was 77%. As a key driver of the 6-week InCalf rate it comes as no surprise that this was down. The clinic average 6-week In Calf rate was 67% - well below the industry target of 78%. Only 4% of our farms managed to achieve this 6 week In Calf target.

The graph below (for 20 farms) demonstrates the small increase in empty rates seen across the district with a clinic average empty rate of 13%. This is slightly higher than previous years and one can speculate as to the many reasons why this may have occurred: a reduced payout means tighter repro budgets and the resultant delay in anoestrus cow treatments may be contributing to the higher empty rates seen around the district. We also experienced a cold snap/inclement weather during early mating which may have impacted on follicular activity.

Empty Rates 2014 Vs. 2015



For our Infovet clients we can delve even deeper into various aspects of an individual farm's reproductive performance.

For example we can monitor how effective a "cidr" program has been, the impact older cows may be having on submission rates and how accurate heat detection has been. If you would like more information about Infovet or would like to discuss your repro season please talk to your vet.

Dr Julie Hetherington

on TARGET!

It can be quite frustrating to see a line of small heifers come in at calving, only to turn up empty at scanning and fall out of the system - what a waste! The production, efficiency and longevity of your future herd starts and hinges on the health and growth of your young stock. If you're not measuring it, you can't fix problems.

If you're not weighing your young stock regularly, call Kelvin on 027 4933 611. He is keen to use our new scales and EID wand to give you an accurate report and actual and target weights, as well as discuss a health program if required.

INFOVET SUMMARY

As always, there are a variety of potential reasons for a poor mating outcome, as reproduction is a multi-factorial issue. We have this year identified herds that had BVD, herds that had bull issues, and herds that missed body condition targets. We highly recommend doing an InCalf Assessment of your farm's reproductive performance - it will highlight areas of risk if you need to improve things, and will give a benchmark to keep up with, if you are already brilliant!



BODY CONDITION SCORE

BCS target at calving is 5.0 (5.5 for heifers). The herd should be maintained between 4.0 and 5.0 throughout the year for 85%+ of the cows.

Cows calving 1 BCS below target will take 8-10 days longer to cycle, have a later calving date the following season, and produce 15kg MS less on average.

Cows cannot gain BCS in the last month of pregnancy, and can only gain ½ BCS per month beforehand, so BCS as well as calving date needs to be taken into account for drying off date.

Current recommendations are to get your herd condition scored 4 times a year:

- Pre-Drying-off (220 days - February); to make drying off decision and plan feed budget
- Pre-Calving (90 days - April); to check progress for the calving target
- PSC; the benchmark target
- Pre-mating / PSM; to assess BCS loss post-calving

If you would like an unbiased assessment, we have certified BCS vets available to help.



Now is the time to start planning for winter. If you are using winter crops, ensure the herd go through a transition phase over several days, both onto the crop and off the crop. A sudden change in diet can have all sorts of medical and metabolic impacts, such as rumen imbalance and acidosis. Also double check your feed budget, and that you know how much dry matter is in the feed break!

Small Animal / Pet News: We welcome Sarah Lee back - not only does she bake exceedingly good cakes, she is also a wonderful veterinarian - as we wish Richard Willis "Bon Voyage". RW will be travelling and working around Europe for 6 months, returning to us in October. **Puppy socialization, and behaviour classes** are being held in the clinic - please phone us on 8277099 for more details if you are interested.

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FACIAL ECZEMA

Spore counts are likely to remain high till the end of April, so don't stop zinc treatment just yet. Having said that, I'm currently writing an article on zinc poisoning, and my new concern is the risk of high zinc levels in our soils which can impact on microbes and plant growth, potentially lowering the fertility of our soils. We administer a very high dose of zinc to protect the liver from sporidesmin toxicity, but it is all excreted in the faeces. This is then spread / irrigated back onto the paddocks as effluent, and over the years there is a risk it will build up in the soil and plant levels. In fact, I have already seen this on one farm, where the cows were grazing a sacrifice paddock that was an effluent irrigation zone. In short – are we poisoning our own farmland? I believe it is time we started looking seriously at alternatives strategies to zinc supplementation for ameliorating the impact of Facial Eczema on our livestock. The sheep industry have managed to breed FE resistance / tolerance in their rams, and the AI companies are now looking at this in bulls – farmers have the power to encourage this. Other options include using crops with lower FE risk, such as chicory or tall fescue. As always, pasture spore counts and blood GGTs (liver damage) are the best way of assessing FE risk, and a guide for intervention.

Dr. P Briston

Clinic Gossip—Vietnam!

One of our nurses, Kimberley, recently went on the trip of a lifetime: 'If you're umming and arring over whether or not to go to Vietnam... Just go! It was my first trip overseas and I thought I would throw myself in the deep end-feet first. I'm glad I did. It was amazing! A whirl-wind of a trip with a 10 day intrepid travel tour group and an extra day on our own in Hanoi to end the trip, it was an action-packed holiday filled with very cheap cocktails and sights which will impress even the most well-travelled. For a country so heavily based around it's horticultural industry (rice being the main export), it also has a lot to offer if you're after a shopping splurge! Tailor made clothing is Vietnams specialty and you can pick up a new outfit for next-to-nothing. I would recommend going with some pictures of what you want (they make ANYTHING) - and bargain! Even though everything is so cheap, they expect that you will haggle the prices down. The Vietnamese themselves are hard-working and very resourceful. Nothing is wasted. They were making jandles out of old car tyres for example. They often work 7 days a week from dawn 'til dusk without complaining - this is their norm. Family is hugely important to them and in one house (about the size of a cabin) they will often have extended family living with them - grandparents, aunty/uncles and cousins. Their history is rich, the scenery is beautiful and their pets are surprisingly well kept! So, if you want to go somewhere which has a lot of everything, - go Vietnam!'



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