



Cambridge Vets NEWSLETTER

TAIL PAINT

Tail paint needs to go on the cows soon, so we can give them 4 weeks of monitoring before mating. We can't fix what we can't measure; it's really important to have a grasp on how well your cows are cycling before the start of mating. That way, if alarm bells are ringing, there is time to make and implement a plan.



SELENIUM DEFICIENCY

Sean Daly recently wrote an interesting piece (HoofPrint June 2026) on Selenium deficiency and how it is prevalent across NZ. Because Selenium has antioxidant functions, maintaining cell membranes, proteins and DNA, is involved in the regulation of thyroid metabolism and influences the immune response in animals, it has many production impacts, including effects on RFMs and SCC. Extreme deficiency can result in white muscle disease, which can be fatal. He noted that selenium pour-ons given to deficient cattle will lift the levels of selenium for 6 weeks. Testing levels of all trace elements and macro-minerals can be a useful check prior to mating to ensure your herd's health is primed.

HEAT DETECTION

Collars are great for heat detection, assuming everything is working right, but you should check that the automatic drafting system is working well too!

If using tail paint, make sure you can see it!

It is very hard to assess tail paint and ear tags in the yard or from the bottom of the pit. Using a trolley or a mirror on a stick is a good idea.

BCS

Nutrition underpins everything, and the best judge of that is the cow herself. Getting your herd condition scored before mating by an accredited and unbiased scorer will benchmark where they are and help guide any feed decisions before this critical period.



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Gold standard heat detection

Use 2 heat detection aids:

1. Tail Paint

Preparation - Remove any loose hair or dirt from the tail area and ensure the skin is clean and dry.

Application - Use a brush or applicator to apply a strip of tail paint no more than 20cm long and 5-6cm wide and thick enough to cover the skin (but still allowing hair fibres to be visible).

Placement - Apply the paint strip along the spine, starting at the tail head and moving towards the cow's front. i.e. strokes should be back to front. ***If the hair fibres are not visible it is too thick!***

Repainting - Reapply tail paint to cows after they've been in heat to track their cycling and touch up weekly

2. Heat Mount detector

Preparation - Prepare the area two days prior to application. Remove loose hair and dirt (these disturb the oils in the coat and prevent glue from sticking).

Application - Use glue or self-adhesive as recommended by the manufacturer

Placement - Pressure-activated heat mount detectors - The patch is mounted on the backbone with the top of the patch between the hip bones. Adjust for the size of cow and aim for position that will receive maximum pressure from the brisket of the mounting animal

Placement - Scratch-off patch heat mount detectors - The patches are mounted across the backbone, at the highest point closer to the tail



Use the tail paint and heat mount detector information along with the previously recorded heat or mating date to make a decision on whether to submit for AI or not

PREPARING FOR MATING

Bulls, BVD

BVD costs the farming industry an estimated \$150 million per annum. It can cause immune suppression, mastitis, cell counts, abortions, reduced fertility, deformed calves, health impacts and growth checks. There are several risks for an incursion on your farm, and you really do not want that to happen during mating!

- Bulls would be #1 – ensure they are tested and vaccinated
- Heifers returning from grazing would be another – I highly recommend vaccinating these girls before mating
- Cross-fence contact between herds is another risk. Double-fencing those shared boundaries is a good idea.
- Testing the Bulk Milk for both virus and antibodies will tell you if you are likely to have a PI animal in the herd. Then blood-testing can be used to help find the naughty culprit.

Metri-checking

Cows should be metrichecked 2-6 weeks after calving, preferably in an early and a late mob for improved detection. Treating endometritis improves cycling and conception rate.

Cows treated earlier had an incredible 9.6% improvement in 6 weeks in-calf rate and conceived 8 days before their herd mates that were metri-checked and treated later (4 weeks prior to PSM).

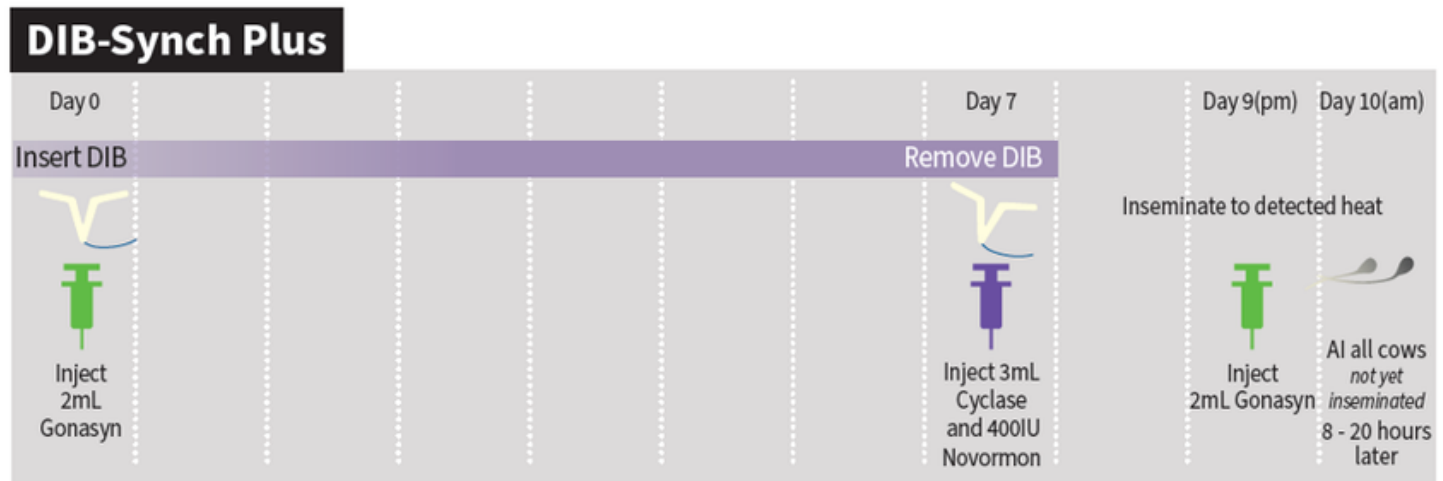
Staff Training / Planning Meeting

Book in a time to go over the signs of heat with staff, and who is responsible for what. Some cows may only sniff or bellow or display bullying signs, rather than the full riding behaviour. Heat detection needs to be done from above the cow, consider using a mirror or a trolley. Is the identification system and drifting mechanism working well enough?

PLAN FOR NON-CYCLERS

The important thing with non-cyclers is to monitor the heats before mating so you know where you are, and to have a plan so they are addressed early. Most non-cyclers are lighter in condition or later calving. Condition scoring may dovetail with heat monitoring; lower BCS non-cyclers may benefit from TLC, OAD milking and feed supplementation.

Non-cycler treatment a week before PSM will improve their 6 week in-calf rate (74% in one study), bring them forward (10-21 days extra milk), and reduce their risk of being non-cyclers next season by 12%.



Alternatively, 2mL Cyclase can be administered on Day 7 with 400IU Novormon, and 2mL Cyclase administered on Day 8.

Another refinement is giving PG 3 days before the program in addition

HEIFER SYNCHRONY

Doing a single Ai day on heifers will give you more A B calves and faster genetic gain for your herd. A synchrony program will see them in calf 11 days earlier on average too, giving more milk and more time to recover. Some recent trials have shown better results with a 5 day insertion for heifers, with 2 shots of PG at removal, and 1 PG at 3 days before insertion.

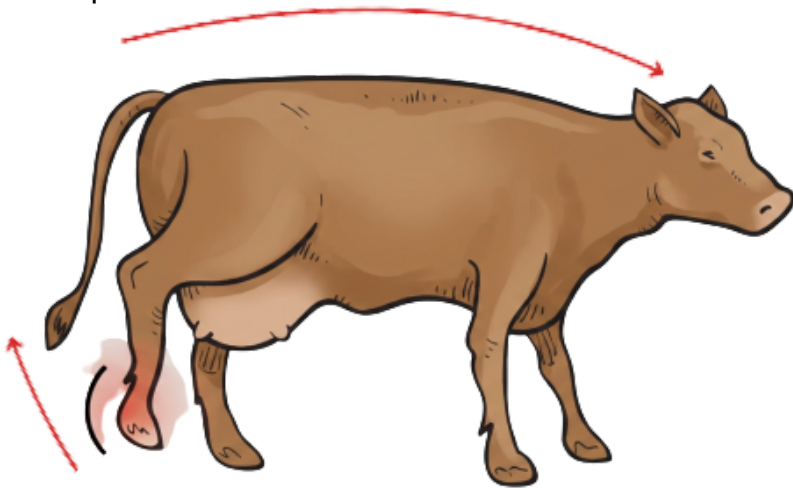


Why Wait

This program will bring cows forward by a week. Cows cycling 7-10 days before PSM get a PG shot at -2 days, cows cycling the week before get injected on day 7. This does mean the tail paint colour needs to be changed on day -14 and day -7 before PSM to identify when they cycled.

LAMENESS

We are entering the peak lameness period.
Some pointers here:



- Look for signs of lameness (slow, altered head position, head bob, favoured leg, short gait, arched back)
- Draft these cows off immediately into a mob that does not walk far
- Lift and examine the foot - it may be a stone that needs removing!
- Use blocks or slips, and pain relief for cows with hoof pathology (white line, sole ulcers etc). They make a huge difference in speed of recovery and repro and milk production!
- Allow cow lots of space and time - both moving up the race and within the yard. This allows them to avoid stones and to move around each other without excess pressure.
- Overgrown hooves benefit from corrective trimming, good feet less so.
- There are some great videos online

<https://agrihealth.co.nz/video-library>

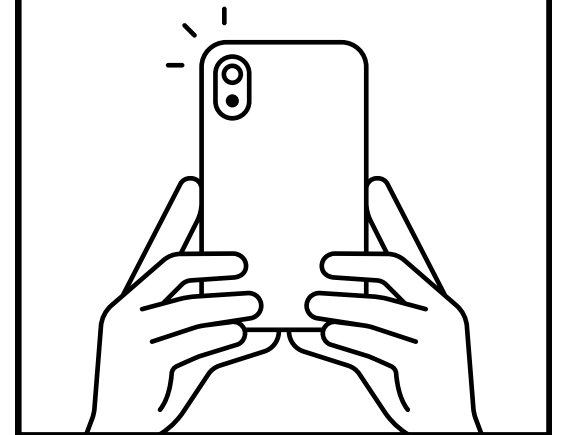
FACEBOOK

Did you know that Cambridge Vets are on Facebook? We have a page for both the Companion Animal and the Production Animal Departments. Follow our pages for topical news, offers and clinic Newsletters.



AG. DAY PHOTOS

Cambridge Vets is a strong supporter of the local school Ag Days. In addition to free 5in1 vaccines, we are offering a prize for the best photo of a calf, lamb or kid (of either species!) sent in to info@cambridgevets.co.nz
Let's Get Snapping!



SCHOOL AG. DAY

School Ag. Days, Group Days and the bigger A & P shows all take place in September - October each year. Our website has some great information and advice, particularly for lamb rearing.

<https://www.cambridgevets.co.nz/farm-animal-services/lifestyle-blocks>



CVS News

Poor Kelvin has had surgery on his shoulder, and is under strict instruction to recover and recuperate! We wish him a speedy recovery.

Lucky for us, Shay has stepped into the tec / product stewardship role. Many of you will have met her teat sealing or dehorning, and will know what a great, positive person she is to have as part of the team. Please say Hi! If you see her in the shop.



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