

BVD Testing, When and Why

Now is the ideal time to test your bulk tank for BVD antibody. A bulk tank test provides a cheap and easy way to screen the herd for the current level of exposure to BVD. If you haven't tested before, this provides an opportunity to find out to what extent your herd has been exposed to the virus and the results can be used as a reference point for future tests. If a breakdown does occur in the future it will be easier and cheaper to pinpoint the cause.

Ongoing testing shows whether any stock new to the milking herd is likely to be carrying the virus. A sudden introduction of a persistently infected animal to naïve cows will cause a jump in the level of antibody.

For the antibody test please provide 50ml of fresh milk taken from a well mixed bulk tank post milking. The sample should be collected in a sterile container.

If a high level of antibody is discovered then the bulk milk should be tested for the presence of the virus itself. The lab can now detect the virus from 1 persistently infected animal in milk from a herd of 1200 cows! This makes it a simple test to carry out, even in larger herds. Do not forget the rest of the stock on farm, the non-milking stock (bulls, carryovers and youngstock) and any milking cows which did not contribute to the bulk tank on the day of the test. These should also be screened for infection.

Just to remind you of the perils of active BVD infection on farm:

- Infection can lead to immunosuppression which increases an animal's susceptibility to other infections such as pneumonia.
- On average herds exposed to BVD have a higher SCC than unexposed herds.
- Infection can dramatically decrease conception rates and increase long return rates giving high empty rates.
- Infected cows can abort, have premature calves/stillbirths, give birth to calves with congenital defects such as cataracts and give birth to persistently infected calves which can act as a source of infection for years to come.

DON'T WORRY, a combination of good biosecurity, prompt removal of persistently infected animals and vaccination will keep BVD at bay. For more information about ways to control BVD please contact the surgery.

Written By Joe Davis

Reminders

It is Lepto Time. If you are part of Leptosure then you should be arranging to vaccinate your calves, heifers and herd.

Don't forget to keep changing your bulls that are in with your cows, with well rested bulls, so they stay fresh and ready for action. If you have taken the Bulls out already then do ensure they still have plenty of fresh water and feed.

Don't forget to come and see us at the Waimumu field days on the 10th, 11th and 12th of February Site # 889



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WELCOME BACK

Greetings from 2010. What a start to the new year, rain, hail and more rain! Then finally the sun appears (only 2 months late). But who's complaining? The cows are happy, there is plenty of feed around and now things are quietening down we can all actually enjoy the sunshine.

The new year has seen a few changes appear within the VetSouth clinic you all know, there is a baby on the way(1 month left of cooking to go) for our Farm Services Manager Rebecca. Jocelyn, our lovely lady on the end of the phone or friendly face relieving for Angela at Tapanui is moving to sunny Central Otago in 2 weeks, Charlotte our Technician has tied the knot and is now a married woman, while Sarah Morten is next, due to be married in March. Not to forget our resident USA vet Jay, has hit the big 30!!



So it is safe to say that the new year so far has been a doozie! But don't fret we have two new faces joining the Gore-Tapanui team to help fill the gaps that Joss and Rebecca are leaving. Laura Gray started on the 2nd of February and will be working in the Farm Services Team alongside our other new addition within the team Vicki Toogood who starts on the 1st of March. Laura has recently graduated from Lincoln University and Vicki has been working over at the Winton Branch while living in Gore so has now decided the commute to work isn't fun and will be working from the Gore clinic.

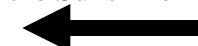
Don't be shy, welcome the newbies to Gore-Tapanui VetSouth, I'm sure they don't bite and will be happy to have a chat.

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The BIG Freeze. Britain in their Winter Brrrr Oh how we love the Sunshine



Bring this number and win a prize off

to the VetSouth tent at the Waimumu field days our lucky prize board. Visit us at site # 889

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Benefits of Early Pregnancy Scanning

Early scanning is carried out 6 weeks after the end of the AB period. This means that cows could be up to 12 weeks in calf. Testing within 12-14 weeks of mating allows for an accurate assessment of the age of the embryo. Testing an older pregnancy becomes less accurate, it is very hard to distinguish a 24 week pregnancy from a 27 week pregnancy.

Why is this of importance?

- Differentiates the cows which held to AB and natural service and identifies the likely parentage of their calves.
- Accurate dates allows for identification of late calving cows which may be candidates for induction. Cows can be monitored to ensure they fulfill the condition score requirements at induction of between 4.5 and 6.5.
- Identifies cows which have cycled and then gone anoestrus. These may have been assumed to be pregnant.
- Allows for early planning of winter and spring feeding.
- You will know which cows to bring back from the run off first and which can stay longer. Cows could even be grouped by approximate calving date before they go to the run off to avoid having to sort them later.

If cows are dried of in batches, accurate calving dates are essential in order to select an appropriate dry cow tube for the length of dry period.

Early scanning gives early and accurate information on the success of the repro programme this season including AB success and the efficacy of any veterinary interventions. I'm sure you're thinking "that's all well and good, but I can't put information in the bulk tank!" But, knowledge is power, and by using it to review performance, such as in the In Calf 4 step programme, you can increase reproductive efficiency and maximize production.

1. Assess herd reproductive performance
2. Identify scope for improvement and associated benefits
3. Consider options for change and select best option(s)
4. Implement selected management option(s)

Written By Joe Davis



Trace - able

For most of us the focus at this time of year is on the herd. How far ahead (or behind!) of last years production are you, what percentage of the herd is a recheck or empty at scanning, and the old chestnut, what on earth is the weather going to do over the next few months?! The calves and heifers have generally headed out to grazing or to the run off, and it can often be a case of "out of sight, out of mind".

However, the summer and autumn are a crucial time in the young stocks development. The heifers are hopefully in calf, but still need to be growing well to achieve their target live weights and maintain a healthy body condition to ensure their transition into the herd next spring is as smooth as possible. The calves have been weaned for a couple of months, meaning the trace element stores they built up from mum's milk are beginning to run out. While parasites, BVD, poor quality or quantity's of feed are common causes of poor growth rates at this time of year, another often forgotten culprit is a lack of some of the vital trace elements our growing cattle need. Selenium, Copper and Cobalt/B12 are the three biggies as far as the youngsters are concerned. A lack of any one of them can cause ill thrift in growing stock, as well as a host of other symptoms such as scouring, poor coats or poor immunity to other diseases.

Alternatively, we see our farmers supplement the young stock at every opportunity, which can be an expensive option if they already have adequate trace element stores, not to mention the fact over supplementing can lead to trace element toxicities.

For this reason it is always a good idea to monitor the trace element levels in the growing animals. Many of you are on our Production Profile Plus (PP+) schemes for the herd. We have very similar scheme running for the youngsters, called Drystock PP+. It involves blood testing 8 heifers, and/or 8 calves, and if facilities allow liver biopsying four of them, to test the selenium, copper and B12 levels. We usually do the sampling in the early autumn (March or April), this allows us to boost levels if required, ensuring the animals stores are adequate to last the winter, particularly if they will be grazing on brassica crops.

Written By Sarah Morten

Transport and Welfare of your Cattle

Remember that transporting animals is stressful for them and should only be done when absolutely necessary.

High standards of animal welfare are important legally and to ensure international market access for our animal products. Good stockmanship is essential for good welfare.

In certain situations an animal should NOT be transported at all-eg. A dairy cow within one month of her calving date.

Special regulations apply to certain classes of stock -eg. Dairy cows in early lactation, Cows with calves at foot.

Farmers must make sure they are obeying these regulations.

For example did you know that cattle are not meant to be transported within 3 weeks of de-horning?

Detailed information can be found at:

www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/codes/transport/index.htm

Contact us at the clinic if you have any queries at all about transporting animals.

Every year at this time, Vets all over the country are called out to provide a works cert. for cull dairy cows, bulls etc.

Quite frequently we are asked to certify animals which are unsuitable to travel, and some which should have been humanely killed some time ago.

To avoid this situation please remember the following:

Do you think the animal is suffering? If you are not sure please phone us for advice.

- Lame cows-a cow must be able to bear weight evenly on all 4 limbs to be transported anywhere (even just down the road) She must be able to walk up and down the loading ramp.
- Any wound anywhere on an animal that is discharging pus or fluid of any kind-(eg. A bloat stab wound or blown out udder) cannot be accepted at the works due to the potential of contaminating the killing floor
- Any cow with nervous signs cannot be transported
- Blind (but otherwise healthy) animals may be able to be transported but special conditions apply and it would be important to notify the works in advance of their arrival
- Cancer eye: this disease causes a lot of pain and should ideally be noticed in the early stages. Once it reaches 2cm diameter, the cow is unlikely to be accepted at the works. Action must be taken early on to treat the cow, or to cull her.
- If the cancer is advanced she should be put down without delay for welfare reasons.
- Any animal that has a fever or any other signs of illness must not be transported.
- An animal with a prolapsed vagina, uterus or rectum must not be transported.

NB. For animals that are issued with a cert: it is still important to send them to the CLOSEST WORKS POSSIBLE.

Also we have to put a time limit on the cert, usually this will be 7 days **MAX** depending on the condition.

So please organize space at the closest works BEFORE you call us out to certify an animal.

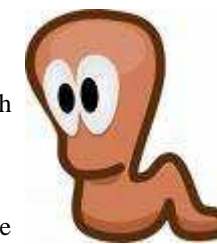
Written By Clare Janse

Controlling Cooperia – A can of worms!

Cooperia is a species of intestinal worm that can cause significant production effects, especially in calves during late summer and autumn. As with other intestinal parasites Cooperia causes scouring, ill-thrift and even death in severe cases. You may be wondering why we have picked out this particular parasite to talk about. The reason is that **you may not be killing this worm even with regular drenching**. New Zealand trials have shown that that this worm has developed resistance to some drenches. There has been a high level of resistance identified to ivermectin based drenches but resistance of this parasite to white drenches has also been demonstrated in New Zealand.

One of the cases in New Zealand was a group of 5-6 month old calves with scouring and ill-thrift. These clinical signs continued despite treatments with white and ivermectin drenches. The problem parasite was identified as Cooperia by faecal cultures. A trial was done and showed that the faecal egg count reduction in this group 14 days after ivermectin treatment was 0% (meaning that the drench did not reduce faecal egg counts at all!!), and the reduction for the white drench group was 59%, also indicating drench resistance (drenches should reduce FEC by at least 95%). The calves were then treated with a clear drench which showed full efficacy (reduced FEC by 100%).

So what does this mean for your calves? Ensure that you are using a **combination drench** in your calves. This helps to slow the development of drench resistance on your property, which is an important issue especially on run-offs and lease blocks where young stock (calves and heifers) are often grazing as the sole stock class. The combination of young animals that are more susceptible to parasites, regular drenching, using single action drenches and grazing only one species of animal is very high risk for the development of drench resistance. Combinations drenches will also give you more confidence that all of the parasites are being killed, preventing those unwanted production losses and ensuring that your young stock get the best start possible. Using a combination drench containing a clear drench to combat Cooperia would be wise at this time of year, both oral and pour-on combinations containing clear drenches are available. Beware of the temptation just use the single action pour-on that was left over from the cows, or buying a single action drench for the calves just because it is cheaper, it will cost you in the long term!



Written By Bianca MacKintosh