



Issue MAY 2013

STAFF NEWS

We were very sad to say goodbye to Christine earlier this year after 7 years keeping the clinic clean and tidy. We would like to thank Christine for her hard work during her time at the clinic and wish her and her family all the best for the future, whatever it may bring.

In early April we welcomed Heather Searancke to Otautau Vets Ltd. Heather has recently moved south from Nelson and will be taking on the role of OVL cleaner. We hope that she settles in to the bustling metropolis that is Otautau and manages to cope with all the mess we make.

We are all looking forward to Sylvia returning from maternity leave later this month. Sylvia will be back in reception part-time and Chelsea will continue in reception on a full-time basis.



Calving Cup 2012

And now for the much anticipated results of the 2012 Calving Cup! Julia has been crowned the OVL 2012 Prolapse Princess for attending the most uterine prolapses, Tessa untwisted the most Uterine Torsions and did the most caesareans, so taking home the 2012 Torsion Untwister & Julius Caesar awards, and Ruby was the winner of the much coveted 2012 OVL Calving Cup with 61 calvings between 1st July and Christmas Day. Congratulations to all our winners and good luck for next season.

Staff Profile

Martha O'Connor MVB - Veterinary Surgeon

Martha hails from the Emerald Isle and graduated from University College Dublin in 2010. Martha comes from a farming background and spent two years working in mixed practice in Northern Ireland prior to joining OVL in 2012. With a keen interest in Farm Animal Medicine, she is enthusiastic about large herd disease management on dairy farms here in NZ. Martha is a sports enthusiast, both as a participant and spectator. With lacrosse, touch rugby, hill walking and even Gaelic football making the list, it is amazing that she has managed to find time for mountain biking and skiing since arriving in New Zealand.



SHOP TALK

Website News

Some of you may have already seen our new "What's New" section to the website, but for those of you who haven't, it is well worth a look to keep up to date on the latest happenings in the veterinary world. We will be posting the latest need-to-know information about disease trends within the area, together with information on shop promotions and clinic news. Check out the information at <http://www.otautauvets.co.nz/WhatsNew/tabid/28094/Default.aspx>

Merial Ancare Autumn Drench Promotion

There has been much excitement about our latest Merial Ancare promotion and the best bit is that you still have a month left to enter the draw.

All purchases of Cattle & Sheep Drench during March, April & May go in the draw to win an amazing fishing prize valued at

\$2,300. Not only will you go in the draw to win this prize pack from our store, but you will also receive rod and reel sets with qualifying cattle drench products and knives with sheep drench products.



Frontline 'Give Fleas the Flick & get your Garden Slick' Promotion

Purchase a pack of Frontline Plus for Cats or Dogs and one lucky OVL customer will win a set of garden tools to the value of \$550.00. This fantastic prize includes a Trowel & Fork set, Garden Hands, Secateurs, Hedge Clippers and a Hose and Sprinkler system.....check out the window display!

5-in-1 Reminder

Just another reminder that we still have some 5-in-1 left in stock at last year's prices. It is available on a first come, first served basis, so get in quick with your orders before you miss out.....

CATTLE SECTION

Digital Dermatitis

Digital Dermatitis is an infectious condition of the foot caused by bacteria called *Trepanomes*. I saw the serious effect it is having in Chile earlier this year in pasture-based dairy herds. It is spreading rapidly there causing not only pain and non-healing lameness but lowered production and serious infertility in some affected cows. The worrying fact is that, in most countries where it takes hold, it spreads rapidly in a newly infected herd. It can spread from introduced cows and also, it seems, on infected hoof paring gear.

The first early lesion looks like a raw sore at the back of the foot (usually the rear feet) between the heels as you can see in the photos. At this stage the sore stings, and the cow or heifer when standing, does not want to put the foot down firmly. She may not be too lame walking; it is more obvious when standing still. With time the dermatitis lesion hardens up and is less painful, but the cow remains a carrier for some time and so a source of infection to other cows.

To my dismay I found out in the last surveillance magazine that at least 5 cases of Digital Dermatitis infection in herds have been found in New Zealand in recent years, at most only a few cows in each herd. I was ready to breathe a sigh of relief that it did not appear to be spreading until today when I contacted a Vet experienced with this disease in the UK. He told me that this is how it has started in every other country, a few isolated cases at first, then rapidly spreading because vets and farmers did not take it seriously. Once it establishes in a herd, it seems as if it is impossible to get rid of it. In Australia the situation has been like NZ, but now it appears to have moved into the next phase and some herds have multiple cases. The bacteria (*Trepanomes*) like dirty conditions on the skin of cows' feet, so the increased use of housing, feed-pads and dirty entrances and exits could be risk factors in the future that could see this disease establish itself here if we don't take some preventive measures.

So what am I asking or suggesting? Look out for lame cows with a lesion like those in the photos. Separate the cow and get your Vet to come and take a biopsy. Then we can work out a plan of action.

Neil Chesterton
– Veterinary
Services
Inglewood



Internal Teat Sealants

An effective dry cow teat sealant will provide a physical barrier for the teat orifice during critical times of the dry period when bacterial populations remain elevated. Dairy cows are susceptible to new intramammary infections in particular at the beginning and end of the dry period. Cows are naturally protected against these infections during the dry period by formation of a keratin plug in the teat canal. However, time of teat canal closure varies amongst cows and some teats may never form a plug; these teats are thought to be most susceptible to infection. Many infections arising in lactation are due to initial infections from the dry period; recent research suggests that even infections beyond the first 30 days of lactation can be traced back to subclinical infections in the dry period. An effective internal teat sealant is long-acting and will provide a physical barrier for the teat orifice during critical times in the dry period.

There are different scenarios where internal teat sealants can be considered. A cost-benefit calculator is available at the clinic to help you ascertain whether there is an economic benefit to using a teat sealant in certain circumstances. By providing us with some data with regard to mastitis incidence on your farms, we can yield farm specific figures.

Instances to consider internal teat sealants include:

Heifers

Teat sealant use in first-calving **heifers** around 4 weeks prior to calving is increasing in popularity. It is of particular benefit on farms that have experienced problems with mastitis in heifers particularly in early lactation. Heifers are a valuable asset and mastitis in their first season can affect their lifetime milk production. Since teat sealants have no bacterial killing properties, it is of paramount importance that a hygienic infusion technique is strictly adhered to. As such we recommend that personnel from OVL administer teat sealant to heifers.

In Combination with Dry Cow Therapy

Research has shown that when used in combination with dry cow antibiotic infusion, teat sealants can provide an additional reduction in dry period mastitis in comparison to dry cow therapy alone.

Infusion of antibiotics into the udder at drying-off has been the major management tool for the prevention of mastitis during the dry period, as well as treatment of infections persisting from the previous lactation. However, even with the use of antibiotics, 50% of new intramammary infections occur during the dry period. A large percentage of new infections result from environmental organisms, which could be prevented with the use of Internal Teat sealants.

A combination approach has been shown to be of particular value in high SCC cows and where a long dry period with high environmental bacterial challenge at calving can be expected. Despite the high cure rate for high-SCC cows with dry-cow antibiotic, there is elevated risk of re-infection late in the drying-off stage as the antibiotic reduces in effectiveness. Teat sealants can protect against re-infection in these cows. With the dry conditions this season, many herds are drying off

cows for considerably longer than the seven weeks for which most durable dry-cow antibiotics are effective. While antibiotic treatment will last 52-56 days at most, a teat sealant will last longer than 100 days in the teat sinus, compensating for any inadequacy in the natural keratin plug to keep bacteria out. Equally, research has shown almost half of teat canals have not closed properly seven days after drying off, when most Southland cows are out on muddy crop paddocks! If a cow is going to be dry for more than 10 weeks, a teat sealant should be considered in addition to Dry Cow Therapy.

These are some instances where teat sealants can be considered. Please feel free to contact us at the clinic to discuss your mastitis concerns and the cost-benefit analysis of implementing some of these options.

Martha O'Connor

Mamyzin® Milk Quality Awards

Otautau Vets Ltd would like to congratulate Ternstone Farm Limited as winners of the Mamyzin® Milk Quality Award 2012.

The team at Ternstone Farm has paid careful attention to mastitis prevention this season, with demonstrable spectacular improvement in udder health. The unanimous efforts after consultation with veterinary staff at Otautau Vets Ltd produced low Bulk Mean Somatic Cell Counts (BMSCC) and low mastitis incidence this season to date. We congratulate them on this biometric testimonial to conscientious work achieving fine animal welfare and production results.

Giles Gill

In-Calf Project & Fertility Focus Report

Your herd Fertility Focus report is a concise single-page report designed to enable you, with the help of a trained InCalf Advisor, assess the current reproductive performance of your herd. The report uses existing herd data to calculate and present the most important measures of herd reproduction, allowing comparison of your herd's performance against top performing herds in New Zealand.

To give you a 'real life' example of the potential improvements and financial gains that can be made, the figures at right relate to a farm with which we have been working over the past couple of years to improve both the nutritional and reproductive management.

	6-Week In-Calf Rate	Empty Rate
2011/2012 Season (13 Week Mating)	68%	11%
2012/2013 Season (12 Week Mating)	82%	5%
Industry Targets	78%	6%

Financial gain from 2011/12 season to current season by closing 6-week In-Calf rate and Empty Rate Gaps by 14% & 6% respectively:

6WICR Gap	14%	x	\$4	x	350 cows in herd	=	\$19,600
ER Gap	6%	x	\$10	x	350 cows in herd	=	\$21,000
Annual Total Benefit to the farm						=	\$40,600

As you can see from these results, there has been significant financial gain for this farm and we hope to further exceed these targets next season.

If you would like to improve your herd's reproductive performance to meet and hopefully exceed the Industry targets, please contact the clinic and speak with one of our trained InCalf Advisors.

SHEEP SECTION

Flock Performance Indicator : How well is your farm performing?



The Flock Performance Indicator is a simple tool developed with the assistance of MSD Animal Health. It collects basic farm information such as mating numbers, scanning results, abortion information and lamb losses or sales, helping farmers to benchmark where their performance sits in relation to national averages. The form can be completed quickly and is confidential, but allows us to compare (anonymously) your performance to all our OVL clients, painting a picture of our local performance in relation to national averages. The guide will also help you and your vet to identify key health issues that are impacting on your productivity and ultimately your bottom line.

Possible causes of poor scanning results, poor lambing results, high lamb losses and abortions are included in the guide, together with a list of simple ways to investigate these causes. For example, if

Continued over page

SHEEP SECTION cont.

poor scanning performance exists, causes such as poor ewe condition, parasitism, lameness or Toxoplasmosis may contribute. Blood sampling or condition scoring some of these dry ewes is listed as a means of investigation.

Benchmark figures are given for 'easy', 'hill' and 'high country' farms as there is variation in the performance on these different properties. It is important to remember that these figures are only a guide and each farm's specific circumstances must be taken into account when comparing to these figures.

Some examples of benchmarking figures for 'hill' farms are:

Dry ewe percentage <2%

Scanning percentage >160%

True lambing percentage >125%

- (lambs sold or retained/ewes to the ram)

Total ewe deaths <4%

Does your farm fit in with this level of performance? And if not, do you know why not?

Your annual consultation with your vet could be the ideal time to have a look at this data for your farm. We can help you work through this user-friendly guide and help to improve production on your farm.

CONGRATULATIONS

Southland Ballance Farm Environment Awards

The Southland Ballance Farm Environment awards were announced last month and we would like to congratulate Abe & Anita de Wolde after being named Supreme Award Winners. They were also recipients of the

- Ballance Agrinutrients: Nutrient Management Award
- PGG Wrightson Land & Life Award
- Massey University Discovery Award
- LIC Dairy Farm Award
- Meridian Energy Excellence Award.

This award is a tremendous achievement and is a testament to the hard work of both Abe & Anita and their employees.

REMINDERS

Cattle

- Late pregnancy test at least six weeks after the bull has come out
- Lepto vaccinate whole herd at drying off
- Check cows 7-10 days after dry-off
- Manage brassica feeding carefully with sufficient supplementary feeds and allow at least two weeks transition from crop to grass feeding
- Consider Pink Eye vaccination if high challenge
- Pre-winter mineral check for cows
- Pre-winter drench for calves
- Clostridial (7-in-1) vaccination at weaning
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2013/14 season
- Investigate any abortions
- Milking Machine Test
- Consider Lice Pour-on (e.g. Tempor)
- Rotavec vaccinate cows pre-calving
- Start Magnesium supplementation with Mag Chloride pre-calving.

Sheep

- Drench hoggets prior to going on to winter crop
- Delay putting pregnant ewes onto winter crop for six weeks after the joining date
- Consider Louse pour-on for Off-Shears
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2013/14 season
- Investigate any abortions
- Flexidine/Pre-lamb Iodine or LSD drench.

Deer

- Last Lungworm drench for fawns
- Mineral check Copper/Selenium to assess winter reserves
- Organise TB test before spring rush
- Book in Restricted Veterinary Medicines (Prescription) consultation for 2013/14 season.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON SUBSCRIPTION FROM OTAUTAU VETS LTD. NO PART MAY BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION. THE INFORMATION IT CONTAINS IS PROVIDED IN GOOD FAITH, BUT READERS ARE ADVISED TO CHECK THE RELIABILITY OF ANY INFORMATION BY CONTACTING OTAUTAU VETS BEFORE ACTING ON IT.

Best Wishes from the vets: S Giles Gill BVM&S, Louise F Ingram BVMS (Hons) MACVSc, Jen E Gordon MA VetMB, Rosemary R Gill BVM&S, Teresa A Skevington BVSc, Louise Fieten BVMS MRCVS, Ashleigh S Braithwaite DVM, Aileen Scott BVMS, Julia E Nuttall BVSc, Ruby A Davidson BVetMed, Martha O'Connor MVB MRCVS



BESTPRACTICE



Otautau Vets Ltd
71 Main Street, PO Box 77
Otautau, Southland, New Zealand
Phone: 03 225 8134
Fax: 03 225 8170
info@otautauvets.co.nz
www.otautauvets.co.nz

