

# Dairy Newsletter

## August 2021



### CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the CVC dairy newsletter for August 2021. We hope everyone is coping with the relentless weather conditions! Due to endless amounts of rain and mud around the South-West at the moment we are seeing lots of **lame cows** — provided is some information below on how best to manage them in your herd. Along with the cold and wet weather we are frequently seeing cases of **pneumonia** in both calves and adult cows. We also have included some information about **bull management** as the time is fast approaching for them to do some work and we want to make sure you get the best out of your boys! If you are having trouble with any members of your herd, please do not hesitate to call us, we would love to help. In the meantime, we hope you are managing to keep relatively warm and dry!

### Camperdown Veterinary Centre

1 Leura Street , Camperdown

Ph: (03) 5593 1077

Hours:

- 8:00am – 5:30pm (Monday – Friday)
- 8:30am – 12:00pm

### Dairy Drug Orders

Established dairy clients can request non-urgent drug orders to be delivered on farm any day. We will endeavour to deliver within 24 hours.

Please follow our CVC Facebook page to stay up to date with the latest COVID-19 news regarding clinic operations. Farm visits are still running as normal. Please be patient and call ahead for drug orders so we have time to prepare them for you.

### NOT ALL LAME COWS NEED ANTIBIOTICS!

Although we have been blessed with an excellent season so far, we are starting to see an increase in the number of lame cows needing veterinary attention. Lameness is one of the dairy industry's biggest health concerns behind infertility and mastitis. Not only does lameness impact a cow's welfare, it will also cause a drop in milk production, loss of body condition and poor reproductive performance. It is estimated that a single case of lameness will cost a producer on average \$220, this includes veterinary fees, drugs and milk withholding.

There are a large number of factors that play into the development of lameness in the modern dairy cow including:

- Track and paddock conditions
- Time spent standing on concrete
- Cow flow along tracks
- Cow behaviour and herd hierarchy
- Genetics/ hoof conformation

Early treatment of lameness is crucial to reducing the impact on a cow's production. Lame cows should be removed from the herd for examination and kept close to the dairy after treatment for close monitoring.

For cows that need veterinary attention, our vets will lift and examine the affected claw for any lesions causing discomfort. A block may be applied to the opposite claw to alleviate the weight while the affected claw heals. Some cows may just need a hoof trim while others will require extensive paring to allow drainage depending on the cause of lameness.

Antibiotics are generally only indicated in cases where infection is present, such as footrot or deep seated hoof abscesses. A short course of Depocillin is usually adequate to manage footrot as the organism is very sensitive to penicillin, provided any stones have been removed from the interdigital space. While Accent is a common choice for treating footrot in cattle, it contains a critically important antibiotic and should only be reserved for special cases or high producing cows where it is not economical to remove them from the vat due to milk withhold periods.



## BULL MANAGEMENT

### Veterinary Bull Breeding Soundness Exam

Bull testing is well underway for the 2021 season as producers get their boys ready for the joining period.

We recommend bull testing be performed at least 6 weeks prior to your mating start date in case any abnormalities are detected or replacement bulls need to be sourced.

The Veterinary Bull Breeding Examination (VBBSE) is a standardised procedure designed to determine a bull's risk for reduced fertility. By determining their fertility risk we can make recommendations about a bull's ability to get cows pregnant.

The VBBSE consists of the following steps:

- **Physical examination**—This includes examining the bull's locomotion from a distance and in the crush. Body condition, eyes, teeth, legs, feet, testes, prepuce and internal reproductive organs are all assessed for any abnormalities that may affect their fertility. Scrotal circumference is measured using a Reliabull device. Scrotal circumference is used as an indication of a bull's daily sperm output and potential daughter fertility.
- **Penis examination**— An electroejaculator or rectal massage is used to get the bull to exteriorise the penis for assessment of anatomical abnormalities or disease.
- **Crush-side semen evaluation** - A sample of semen is collected using the electroejaculator and examined using our iSpem device or a microscope. The new iSperm device is an device which attaches to an iPad and allows immediate analysis of semen concentration and motility.
- **Vibrio vaccination & BVDV testing**—Bulls can be given a vaccination to prevent Vibriosis, a bacterial disease causing infertility and abortions in cattle. An ear notch can also be collected from each bull to determine if they are a carrier for Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus (Pestivirus)
- **Semen morphology**—Semen may be submitted to a specialist laboratory for morphological examination. Morphology can identify microscopic abnormalities which may prevent sperm from fertilising an egg and resulting in a pregnancy.
- **Serving ability assessment**— This is performed in a yard with heat synchronised cows to observe the bulls successfully mating. Serving ability tests are used to identify bulls that have difficulties mounting, poor libido or penile defects that prevent successful matings. This step may not always be performed depending on the situation.



If you would like to book in your bull testing or speak to one of our vets about your bulls, please do not hesitate to contact us.



### Tips for managing bulls in your herd:

- Lameness is a very common reason for bulls not wanting to work. We often place blocks on bulls feet prior to joining to provide additional support while they are out working.
- A reminder that any condition, be it lameness or other diseases that cause a temperature or inflammation can affect a bulls semen production. Any bull that is unwell or lame should be removed from the herd immediately and veterinary attention sought.
- It is advisable to have extra bulls available in case of illness or injury during the joining period.
- Avoid bring the bulls into the dairy yard if possible. Mature bulls that are very heavy will very quickly wear out their feet if made to walk to and from the dairy each day. Bulls can also be dangerous in the milking parlour so it is a good idea to teach your bulls to stay in the paddock rather than come in with the herd.