

# Dairy Newsletter

## July 2022



### CVC CLINIC NEWS

Welcome to the July CVC Dairy Newsletter. With many of our clients fast approaching their joining period, its time to talk bull! This newsletter will focus on bull breeding soundness examinations and what reproductive diseases to be on the lookout for. With the early seasonal rainfall, we hope you are coping with the mud. There has been feedback that lame cow shoes have not been staying fixed the way we would like. To improve adherence, the recommendation is that farmers keep shod cows on dry ground for 3-4 hours minimum post-application to allow glue to dry adequately. We are hoping this will help improve the longevity of shoe life and get a better outcome for our cows and farmers. If you have any concerns and want to speak with a veterinarian or our team, please don't hesitate to contact the clinic.

### Camperdown Veterinary Centre

1 Leura Street , Camperdown

Ph: (03) 5593 1077

#### Hours:

8:00am – 5:30pm (Monday – Friday)

9:00am – 12:00pm on Saturday mornings  
for medication collection.

### VIBRIOSIS

Vibriosis is an infection caused by the bacteria *Campylobacter fetus* which can create issues such as **early abortion, extended breeding seasons** and **lower calving rates** in your herd.

Vibriosis is a venereal disease which means it is spread through mating. It can affect both bulls and cows however in most cases, your bulls are the primary carrier. Bulls can be infected for long periods of time with little to no clinical signs. Infected bulls then pass the bacteria on to dams during breeding resulting in poor fertility and reproduction losses.

Vibriosis is generally introduced to a herd though unsuspectedly buying in an infected bull. Vibriosis generally has greatest affect on naive cattle (so is most commonly seen in heifers).

*Campylobacter fetus* causes irritation to the lining of the reproductive tract preventing pregnancy. In some cases the irritation can result in permanent damage to the reproductive system preventing the cow from becoming pregnant in the future. In most cases, cows will mount an immune response and eventually get in calf however pregnancy rates can be reduced by up to 20%.

#### **SIGNS OF VIBRIOSIS IN YOUR HERD**

**Abortion.** Cows can become pregnant while infected but are unable to maintain the pregnancy and therefore vibriosis should be considered as a possible cause in any abortion cases, especially when more than one cow has aborted.

**Poor conception rates.** While vibriosis is generally self curing in cows, when bred with active infection, most cows will fail to conceive.

**Drawn out calving periods.** Some cows will eventually overcome the infection and become pregnant later in the breeding season, whereby extending your calving periods which are harder to manage.

#### **Treatment:**

*Campylobacter fetus* can be susceptible to certain antibiotics. Double vaccination 4 weeks apart has also been reported to help cure vibriosis.

#### **PREVENTION**

**Vaccination:** Two vaccinations one month apart are required for protection and course should be completed at least one month before intended joining time. Both Bulls and cows should be vaccinated initially and in herds with confirmed infection, annual vaccination of replacement heifers and all bulls should be performed.

**Decreasing Bull Age:** Carrying younger bulls and culling older bulls reduces the risk of infection with vibriosis. Bulls over the age of eight should be culled.

**Annually culling dry / empty cows:** This will remove any cows or heifers from the herd that may be carriers of the infection or are unable to conceive permanently from the infection.

**Whole herd AI:** this will eliminate transition of disease.

## BULL MANAGEMENT

### VETERINARY BULL BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAM

Bull testing is well underway for the 2022 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.

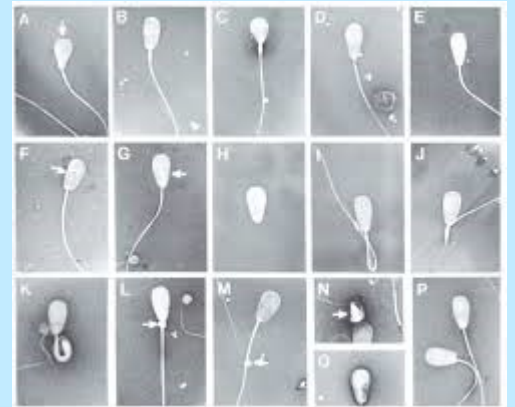
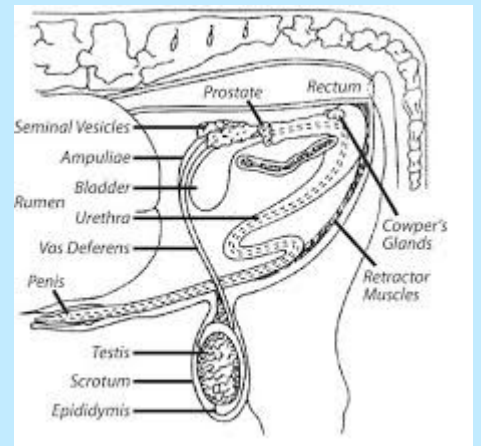
**Crush-side semen evaluation** — A sample of semen is collected using the electroejaculator and examined using our iSpem device or a microscope. The iSpem device is a device which attaches to an iPad and allows immediate analysis of semen concentration and motility.

**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

Any condition including lameness or diseases causing increased temperature or inflammation can affect a bull's semen production and reproductive performance.

Any bull that is unwell or lame should be removed from the herd immediately and veterinary attention sought.

Lameness is a very common reason for bulls not wanting to work. Blocks can be placed on bulls feet prior to joining to provide additional support while they are out working.

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 parlor so it is a good idea to teach your bulls to stay in the paddock rather than come in with the herd.

