



TOPVETS

Moosletter

August 2014

Change to Induction Rules for 2015 Season—No Routine Inductions

There will be no routine inductions on NZ dairy farms from the 2015 calving season onwards. This is the final step in phasing out routine inductions. This means that this season is the last at the 4% limit.

This requirement has been set through a partnership of Federated Farmers, Dairy NZ, New Zealand Veterinary Association and the Dairy Companies Association of NZ.

Good progress has been made with the gradual reduction in induction limits, which began at 15% and reduced to 8% then 4% in recent years. The goal was to phase inductions out completely.

For specific circumstances outside a farmer's control that have direct impact on reproductive performance (e.g. adverse climatic event, disease outbreak), farmers may apply to their respective dairy companies, via their veterinarian, for short-term dispensation to carry out inductions. Any dispensation requests must be accompanied with good evidence of the impact on reproductive performance, and of the steps taken to manage the situation and minimise the chance of it happening again. Requests will be approved or declined by the dairy company.



Welcome to the August Newsletter. Its been great to see the sun over the last few days after the big storm and I'm sure the cows have been enjoying the sun on their backs. No doubt there's still more wet weather to come but hopefully nothing like July's storm.

Recently, Michelle, Karyn and Natalie attended the Zoetis Spring Roadshow in Whangarei and picked up the latest info on a new BVD vaccine, the current recommendations for CIDR programmes and some info about leptospirosis on sheep and beef farms. We have a summary of some key points on the back page.

I N S I D E

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- Feeding Heifers
- New Heat Detection Test
- Quick Reminders/Brief News
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Feeding Heifers is Critical for the Future of the Herd

The average cost of rearing a heifer to 1st calving of \$1200-1500 but despite this level of investment, heifer management is often overlooked. The cost difference between rearing a good heifer and a poor one is not much.

A study done in NZ in 2013 showed that liveweight at 15-17 months of age has a significant effect on the likelihood a heifer will calve and survive to a second lactation.

The onset of puberty is more closely related to bodyweight than age so growth rates are important to ensure heifers are cycling before their first mating.

“Bodyweight at first calving also has a significant effect on a heifers lifetime performance...the heavier a heifer is at calving the higher her milk yield for that and following lactations.”

There are two main reasons for this:

- 1) Heavier heifers have more reserves which they can put into producing milk in early lactation when their energy demand is greater than their intake.
- 2) The heavier a heifer is calving the closer she is to her mature weight and the less energy she needs to put into further growth to achieve her mature liveweight.

A review of LIC data carried out in 2012 found that only 36% of heifers had reached their target liveweight at 22 months of age. Roughly speaking for every kg of liveweight gain at calving you get an additional 0.1-0.2 of milk solids.

“On average NZ heifers are 50 kg lighter at 1st calving than they should be meaning they will produce about 6.5 kgMS less in the first lactation.”

Steps to help ensure better gains from weaning onwards

Supply good quality grain based feeds before weaning to help develop rumen

- ⇒ Helps to increase ability to utilise forage effectively
- ⇒ Helps reduce weaning stress
- Allow access to water ad lib during rearing
- ⇒ Also aids rumen development
- Gradual, rather than abrupt withdrawal of milk supply
- ⇒ Also helps reduce stress
- High quality feed post-weaning and adequate quantity
- ⇒ Don't just throw your heifers on poorer quality feed that is not considered suitable for the milkers
- Sufficient protein is important

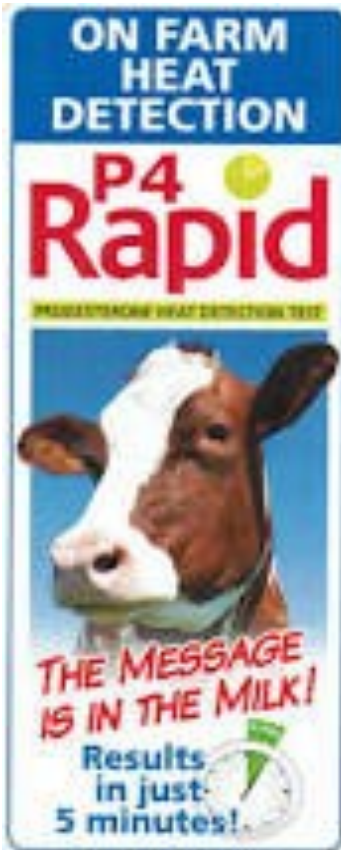
Overall, any expenditure in good heifer rearing should be considered an investment.

It is important to establish target weights and monitor weights regularly.

TopVets have a set of weigh scales available for hire to weigh animals accurately to keep track of their progress.



P4 Progesterone Heat Detection—New Cow Side Test



The release around the world of an accurate test for oestrus (or bulling) in dairy cows heralds a major advance for dairy breeding programs.

The test known as P4 Rapid is a simple milk based test that indicates whether a cow is cycling. The test takes about five minutes and measures the presence or absence of the hormone progesterone. The absence of progesterone indicates that the cow is in oestrus and can be mated. Insemination by AB when a cow is not in oestrus wastes the insemination, can cause infection or in the case of a pregnant animal, abortion.

The test entails taking a small sample of milk in a palm of a clean gloved hand, and using the small pipette supplied with the test, transferring a defined quantity of milk to a small test tube. The dipstick, after being identified with the cow number and date, is inserted into the tube. After five minutes, the dipstick indicates with one line that the test is working. If a second line is present and as the same intensity as the test line, no progesterone is present and the cow is in oestrus and can be mated. Used dipsticks can be kept as a record.

The P4 Rapid test is distributed by Farmtest Ltd, a company formed by Colin Harvey the animal health entrepreneur. The test will only be sold by veterinary practices and farmers are encouraged to discuss the use of the test in their mating programs with their vet.

Use of the test in research at Massey University has shown the test is a simple aid to assist confirmation of oestrus by other methods of detection. It also aids detection of animals that do not show strong behavioural signs of bulling when in oestrus. The test, when used by milkers aids judgment, and the quick feedback trains staff in being able to reliably detect when cows are bulling. It is best used with a planned approach to mating.

With veterinary advice the test may also be used access the status of cows that have not been detected in oestrus, or may not have started cycling. After the first round of mating, cows that have not shown oestrus can be tested. A retest every second day for 4 days or after 10 days , will show whether oestrus is occurring or not. This will allow decisions to be made if treatment is needed for non-cycling cows. Also cows that have been mated should be observed after 21 days for return to oestrus. If there is doubt the test can be used to detect if the cow is cycling or is pregnant. This avoids presenting cows for AB when insemination may cause damage and also confusion over parentage which can lead to costly genetics tests. The test is also a useful aid in artificial mating programs to confirm that drugs are having the required effects.

The P4 Rapid comes in boxes of 25 tests with pipettes, test tubes and dipsticks. The kits have a shelf life of two years at room temperature. The test kits of 25 tests will retail for around \$7.00 per test, meaning if less than 10 inseminations are saved a year, the kit is paid for. Supplies of the test will be limited this season due to the demand internationally, please contact us at the clinic if you are interested.

Quick Reminders/Brief News

Scholarship Recipient

We are pleased to announce the recipient of the inaugural TopVets Veterinary Scholarship is Claire Misson. The scholarship offers financial support and seeing practice opportunities to a final year vet student.



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PAR Consults

We are in the process of completing all our PAR consults for the upcoming season. Please contact us to book in your consult. Please remember this is a legal requirement for us to be able to dispense PAR's to you without a veterinary consultation.

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Tick Treatment

August/September is often when we see an initial peak in immature tick numbers and also a peak of early adults. It is therefore a good time to treat for ticks to reduce overall tick numbers.

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Kiwi Aversion Training

Ensure your dog hunts only what you want it to and help save the kiwi. Kiwi aversion training is available both for hunting dogs and also pet dogs that live or exercise in kiwi areas. Training sessions are run locally when enough dogs are enrolled.



For more information please contact Lesley on (09) 408 7800.

Zoetis Spring Roadshow—Some Key Points

Leptospirosis in Sheep and Beef Herds

Leptospirosis is extremely prevalent in sheep and beef herds, 97% of sheep and 97% of beef herds have leptospirosis.

Vaccination is an option to help control disease and prevent in-contact humans becoming infected. Cases of lepto in people are greatly underreported, symptoms can be similar to that of a cold or flu.



CIDR programmes

There is a new app available—CIDR Return on Investment Calculator. (Currently only available on Ipad)

Treating non-cyclers early in relation to planned start of mating gives the biggest benefit.

Untreated non-cyclers will on average conceive 36 days after the planned start of mating.

Ultravac BVD

A new BVD vaccine is available with a label claim for foetal protection.

It comes in a convenient pillow pack, is administered by subcutaneous injection and has a 30 day shelf life. In addition the primary vaccination course is flexible in regards to timing of the second booster dose.



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