

# MOOSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 09



## VIS VAGING

Recently yet another study (published in the Australian Veterinary Journal) has taken place in Victoria confirming the economic benefits of early detection and treatment of reproductive tract disease in cows. The findings showed that treatment of endometritis, (pus from the uterus), with antibiotics increased the conception rate to first service A.I. Furthermore this study looked at examination and treatment of cows earlier than previously recommended, between 7-28 days post-calving and showed that treatment efficacy increased with this earlier treatment.

Ideally whole herds should be vis vaged at least two weeks prior to mating start date, if this does not suit at least all at risk cows, including first calvers and cows with lower than ideal body condition scores, should be checked.

The vis vag process is quick and easy and will pay for itself. If you have any question regarding vis vaging please call and speak to one of our cattle veterinarians.

## LAME COW WORKSHOP

We are planning a hoof trimming and lame cow workshop in late October/November. The workshop will be held between 10am – 2pm on a weekday and cover theory in the morning and a practical session in the afternoon, with lunch supplied. Peter Best, from Innovative Farm Import, will be attending to demonstrate the use of knives, specialised hoof trimming discs, sharpening devices and safety equipment. The group will be limited to 14 so if you are interested please call the clinic as soon as possible.



# FLUKE AND WORM CONTROL - THE VETS POINT OF VIEW -

## WORMS

### THE FACTS



- Economic impact most likely occurs with young stock, undernourished stock or those with concurrent disease.
- Winter months are the important times for acquiring a worm burden. (Worm eggs and larvae survive on pasture in cool moist conditions, they die in hot, dry conditions and from UV light.)
- Cattle are infected by eating larvae from pasture. (Most larvae live within 5cm of the ground therefore increase worm uptake likely when grazing short pasture.)
- Heavy worm burdens in scouring cows are easily diagnosed but milder production limiting burdens are not so easy. (Faecal egg counts are helpful but worms of adult cattle are poor egg layers, blood test for stomach enzymes are also a poor guide.)

### RECOMMENDATION

- Drench all cows at drying off.
- Further drenching in spring if cattle have been grazing short pasture through winter.
- Selective pre joining drenching of heifers and animals in poor condition.

## FLUKE

### THE FACTS



- Liver fluke disease is seasonal. This is because the life cycle of the liver fluke is closely related to that of the fluke snail.
- Fluke snails prefer warm, moist conditions such as poorly drained regions of the paddock. The snail populations are therefore high during summer and autumn.
- Live fluke infestation follows 6-8 weeks after snail populations increase, fluke pick up peaks around March-April and is finished by June.
- The interpretation of blood and milk testing is difficult in the diagnosis of production limiting fluke infestations.
- Cattle DO NOT get live fluke from drinking snails from water troughs. (The infective stage of fluke is found encysted on stalks of grass which are then eaten.)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Early winter is the optimum time for liver fluke drenching.
- **SPRING CALVERS** – Triclabendazole treatment at drying off. (Triclabendazole is best for treating immature stages of fluke but cannot be used in lactating cows)
- **AUTUMN CALVERS** – Clorusulon treatment early winter.
- Successfully treated cows will be free of a significant fluke burden until at least next autumn. Don't let the drug and chemical sales people tell you otherwise!

## MASTITIS CASE REPORT

### –KNOW YOUR WARNING SIGNALS–

The following is an account of a local dairy farmer, Joe Smith's battle with mastitis.

Joe calved down 300 cows in Aug/Sep last year and believed around 30 cows came into the shed after calving with mastitis. These cases were treated and Joe went on milking. Each fortnight Joe was finding another 4-6 clinical mastitis cases which he was then treating. Joe wasn't overly concerned as most of the cases were not severe and mostly they responded to treatment. As the months went on Joe's cell count was slowly increasing. Finally in November things hit crisis point as Joe was getting even more clinical cases and high bactoscan and cell counts from the factory, his milk was graded. It was at this point that vets became involved.

#### **What could have Joe done to prevent this outcome?**

Firstly recording of clinical cases is imperative for you to know what's going on with your herd and individual cows. Joe was measuring his mastitis level by the number of boxes of intramammaries used per week. The date, cow ID, and drugs used should all be recorded. This recording allows you to monitor mastitis cases and allow early detection of warning signal.

The Countdown Downunder warning signals for significant mastitis problems are;

**More than 5 clinical cases per 100 cows in the first month of lactation**  
**or**  
**More than 2 clinical cases per 100 cows in subsequent months of lactation**

**Average BMCC for the past six months above 250,000 cells/ml**  
**or**  
**More than 5 consecutive 10-day periods above premium threshold**

On recognising a problem exists the next step is milk culture. This culture is important because it allows us to know which treatment is best and may also indicate where the problem is originating, eg; environmental, machine associated, teat health associated.

The problem in Joe's case escalated since it was not identified and managed early; this resulted in penalties from the factory, expensive treatment costs and other hidden economic losses. On investigating Joe's situation it was found that the vaccum pump was faulty, a number of pulsators needed replacment and *Strep agalactiae* was present.

The take home message here is to keep good records, these help in early identification of problems and also assist in culling decision.



