vets

Animail

News & information from your animal health professional + Issue 15 - September 2011

Earlier Conception in Cows

Earlier conception, more MS from drenched cows. More kg of milksolids, and more days in milk.

Plan to treat your herd with EPRINEX® Pour-On for Cattle soon after calving this spring,

Research shows you can be better off not only in terms of reproductive performance, but also milk solid production.

Why? Because treated cows and heifers can conceive earlier than those which are not treated and generate more milk solids (MS) per day.

The difference is significant – heifers treated with EPRINEX® conceived 12.9 days earlier than their untreated herdmates in a New Zealand triaL, while cows given the same treatment in Canada conceived 9 days earlier.

New Zealand cows treated with EPRINEX® also showed production gains of 0.03 kg MS/cow/day.

Both earlier conception and higher MS production in the New Zealand trial are results of the same thing – treated animals do not have to divert so much energy into fighting parasites.

Instead that energy is available for building condition score ahead of the planned start of mating, and/or milk production. Treated animals have also been shown to spend more time grazing. The economics of such improvement in performance looked very positive even before Fonterra forecast a payout of over $7/kg MS for 2011/12.

At $7/kg MS, and with average production of 1kg MS/day, treated heifers would potentially earn $90 more income than untreated, because of their earlier conception and longer lactation.

The cost of treatment is approximately $6 per head, so the financial argument in favour of drenching with EPRINEX® soon after calving is quite compelling in this instance.

What about adult cows? When the daily increase in MS production of 0.03 kg per treated cow is combined with an extra 9 days in milk from earlier conception, the potential return from using EPRINEX® is around $130 per cow.

Again this is calculated at a payout of $7/kg MS, using average New Zealand production of 1.3 kg MS/cow/day, and a lactation length of 250 days.

There is another benefit to be considered in addition to the bottom line,

Improved herd reproduction is in its own right fast becoming a key performance indicator for many dairy farmers in New Zealand.

Getting cows back in calf quickly year after year is now more important than ever.

Obviously there is no one answer to this challenge – implementing a successful herd reproduction programme involves balancing many variables, not least of which is the weather.

But the data clearly shows application of EPRINEX® soon after calving can play a valuable role at this critical time of the dairy production season.

EPRINEX® Pour-On for Cattle was specifically designed for lactating dairy cows. It has nil milk and meat withholding and holds a label claim stating that it 'increases milk production'.

Ask us for more advice on using EPRINEX® post-calving to improve your productivity this spring.

Eprinex 5l still available at $525 - limited stock available

REMINDERS!

- Calf dehorning
- Free Ultravac 5 in 1 for pet lambs and calves - ph for an appointment
- Drench Lambs for tape worm
- Repro - Ready consults
- Horses - check hooves regularly, tetanus vaccination pre foaling
- Pre-mate tail paint your herd before Planned start of Mating

Weight Loss in Geriatric Pets

Weight is an important indicator of the health of our pets. Our pets come in all shapes and sizes. We worry if they are overweight, because they become sluggish and are at risk from diseases such as diabetes, liver disease and arthritis. We try to limit their food intake and provide adequate exercise to reduce their weight.

The other concern that often arises is unexpected weight loss. Some weight loss occurs as part of the aging process, but if there is excessive weight loss in an animal with adequate food intake we must look for a cause.

There are a number of diseases to check for and a number of important signs to look out for. Increased thirst is a feature of many diseases, including kidney disease, liver disease and Cushing Syndrome. Diarrhoea and vomiting may be due to food intolerance, or pancreatic disease. Weight loss with excessive appetite occurs with hyperthyroidism. Tumors occur with increasing frequency as pet's age.

Owners may be reluctant to have their older pets checked when they recognise the weight loss. Sometimes this is because they think it is just age related and there is nothing to be done. Sometimes it is because they fear that a diagnosis of a terminal disease will be made and they prefer not to know.

It is important to remember that many diseases that cause weight loss are treatable or curable. Early diagnosis gives the best chance of a good outcome.

Magnesium Supplementation

The amount of Magnesium required by modern-day dairy cows has increased, due to increased fertilizer use and average cow genetic merit. A cow's requirement will also increase in cold, wet weather that depresses grass growth and cow intakes, low Magnesium levels and/or high crude protein levels in spring pasture. Therefore, the old recommendation of 10-12 grams of Magnesium per cow per day is no longer appropriate. Blood tests from at least 10 cows pre-calving will give a good estimate of Magnesium levels in your herd and can guide decisions on appropriate levels of supplementation.

Magnesium deficiency causes grass staggers. Clinical signs may include nervousness, ears pricked, nostrils flared, eyes alert and head held high. Signs can progress to stiff movement, reduced appetite and milk production and the cow may stagger when forced to move quickly. Cows can die from grass tetany as muscles, including the heart, begin to contract uncontrollably.

Magnesium is also important for production of hormones that contribute to calcium absorption and, so, aids prevention of milk fever (Calcium deficiency). Therefore, Magnesium supplementation for 2-3 weeks pre-calving will reduce the risk of milk fever. Dry cows should receive a diet containing 0.35% Magnesium, while lactating cows should receive a diet containing 0.28% Magnesium. The amount of Magnesium needed depends on the type of Magnesium supplement given, as outlined in the table below:

Magnesium source (% Mg)	Example product	Magnesium required (gm fed/cow/day)				
		12 gm	14 gm	16 gm	18 gm	20 gm
Mg Oxide (55%)	CausMag*	44	50	58	66	72
Mg Sulphate (10%)	Epsom salts	122	142	162	182	202
Mg Chloride (12%)	Mag chloride	100	117	134	151	167
Mg pidolate	More-mag	80-100 ml	80-100 ml	100 ml	100 ml	100 ml

* the amount of CausMag has been doubled allowing for field losses when dusted on pasture

Begin supplementing with Magnesium 2-3 weeks pre-calving and continue until cows are no longer being challenged with high N and K diets, inclement weather and/or high milk production. This can be in from early November to pre-Christmas. However, high producing cows may require Magnesium supplementation into summer.

** NEWS FLASH **

The New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA) has warned that some suppliers have been importing 65% strength magnesium oxide (MgO) (39% Mg). The 'industry standard' is minimum 90% MgO (54% Mg). Please check the bag label – if you have purchased 65% MgO, either supplement with more product to compensate and/or provide additional Mg supplements (e.g. drenching, bullets)

Non-Cycling Cows

Non-cycling (anaoestrous) cows are an unwanted nuisance on farm. They are best dealt with sooner in order to get the benefits of earlier calving cows, more AB calves, a compacted calving spread and more days in milk. Early treatment has shown cows to have 10-16 more days in milk than non treated cows. This occurred by advancing the conception date of treated cows by 10-16 days compared to the non treated group.

Factors that influence the number of non-cyclers include: poor heifer rearing, young first calvers, breed (friesians more than jerseys), body condition score, abnormal calving, uterine infections and days since calving.

The best way to identify non-cycling cows is by pre-mating heat detection. Ideally this should be started 35 days before the planned start of mating. All cows are painted with tail paint. Those that cycle are painted with a new colour and those that don't cycle will still have the original colour. It takes at least 3 weeks for the non-cycling cows to be identified. All cows that haven't cycled by 9 days before the planned start of mating should be treated. The CIDR treatment programme is shown in the diagram. Herds that are having difficulty with non-cyclers have the option of adding Pregnecol to the non-cycling programme. This involves adding Pregnecol at day -2 from mating (i.e. at the second visit) when the CIDR is removed. Its purpose is to stimulate superovulation to increase the chances of conception.

It is recommended that all non-cyclers are treated with the CIDR programme regardless of their cause of anoestrous. Studies have shown this to be economically advantageous rather than trying to identify the cause by examining the ovaries. Ideally all non-cyclers that are treated would have calved at least 28 days earlier. It is important to book well ahead to have the vet out to treat non-cycling cows as many farms will be implementing their programmes at similar times. The demand for a vet may be high.

Attached is the diagrams that show the various non-cycling cow treatment protocols.

Herds having difficulty with non-cyclers can add pregnecol here

Day -9 am	Day -2 am (2nd Vet visit)	Day 0 pm	Day +1 am
Insert CIDR Inject GnRH (2ml Receptal)	Remove CIDR Inject PG (5ml Lutalyse)	Inject GnRH (2ml Receptal)	Fixed time AI 16-20 hrs after GnRH injection

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