

Greymouth Gossip



We hope you all were able to have a little bit of time over the festive period to relax with friends and family!

Our team had a Christmas party at Paroa to bring an end to the year. It was a Vegas themed night, which was great fun.

In the coming year, you'll be seeing less of Nadine as baby number two is due at the end of March. Nadine is then planning on taking a 12-month maternity leave and should hopefully be back just in time for the tail end of scanning in 2026.

As Nadine bows out, Marjan bows in. She has been working through her return-to-work plan with the physio and occupational therapist and is all go for the start of January 2025, following two years of forearm pain and discomfort.

Laurence made the local paper (for the right reasons) with the scout camp up



in Waiuta over Westland Anniversary weekend. He drew the short straw and was on-call over Christmas, but he managed to have some time off at the start of the new year.

Maria took a couple of weeks off prior to Christmas and spent time with her family, as well as visiting Christchurch. Marvin and his family enjoyed their first Christmas in New Zealand. A highlight of her Christmas, Kate got out for a lovely morning kayak on Boxing Day around the reservoirs at Kumara.

We are looking forward to the rest of summer ahead!

Checklist



COWS

- Take the bulls out.
- Lepto vaccinations for herd (look to upgrade to Lepto-4-way).
- Rapid milk test (RMT) cows for subclinical mastitis.
- Early herd PD testing.
- Start zinc supplementation.
- Monitor our local facial eczema spores through Maria's emails.

CALVES

- Separate heifer and bull calves.
- Lepto vaccination and BVD vaccination (first shot).
- Follow drenching programme and FEC test to monitor drenching necessity/performance.
- Coccidiosis treatment needed?
- Supplement with copper bullets and Selovin LA.
- Will they be at 30% of mature target weight by the end of Feb?

YEARLINGS

- Take the bulls out.
- Lepto vaccination and Covexin 10 in 1 boosters.
- Early PD testing.
- Are they at 75% of mature target weight?

BULLS

- Take out of cow and heifer herds and keep them out!
- Lepto vaccination.

With shed inspections coming up, please ensure all your paperwork is up to date. Give us a call ahead of time if anything is missing.

It's scanning season

By Laurence Cohen



Knowing if a cow is in-calf is a vital part of future planning for the herd and the upcoming season.

Aged pregnancy diagnosis (scanning) allows for clearer expectations and better management in spring, as you will accurately know when cows will be due to calve. Scanning also allows the mating season to be evaluated through conception rates, which may influence how you look to improve in the future.

We age scan by measuring biometrics of the foetus, either body length, trunk diameter or head length. Based on how long these are we calculate the equivalent days.

To accurately age a pregnancy, the foetus should ideally be between 40-100 days. Once the foetus gets over 100 days old, the uterus is getting large and can fall off the edge of the pelvis, pulling it into the

abdomen and making it very hard to see with the scanner. Anything over 120 days generally all we see is the odd foot or cotyledons (which vary in size anyway so cannot be used for aging).

Scanning also allows us to quickly assess the 'health' of the pregnancy. This can help you identify cows that have slipped or that you may need to keep a close eye on. Indicators that the foetus may be dead include: detached embryonic membranes free floating in the fluid, very little fluid, and "dirty" looking fluid. We may also be able to see if the foetus' heart is still beating.

We have two types of scanner: a sector scanner (the metal probe that spins) and a curved linear scanner (the plastic probe). These give quite different imaging outcomes because they

produce images that are 90 degrees different to one another!

Over the coming seasons we will be phasing out the sector scanners and moving more towards the linear scanners as they are lighter.

Another change coming up is we will be moving away from using Infovet and opting to put information directly into MINDA for LIC herds and MyHerd for CRV herds. This will impact overheads and will reduce the cost of scanning by 30c/animal for those herds that have been using the Infovet tablet.

To make this happen we will need access to your herd codes and request permission to view/edit your MINDA. We will contact you directly if this affects you.

Out of sight, out of mind: Facial Eczema

By Marvin Wiens

It can be hard trying to focus on what we don't see! For every clinical case of facial eczema (FE) there are 10 subclinical cases.

FE is caused by a fungus, *pithomyces chartarum*, which grows on dead pasture litter. In late summer and autumn, when periods of warm humid weather are common, the fungus

can multiply rapidly producing large numbers of spores which contain a toxin called *sporidesmin*.

When livestock ingest pasture with high spore loads, the toxin can cause severe liver damage and affect productivity and welfare.

Clinical (visible) signs:

- Restlessness
- Seeking shade
- Licking, itching, or rubbing
- Drop in production
- Redness, swelling, or peeling of unpigmented or thin skin
- Swollen drooping ears
- Shaking of the head and ears.

Subclinical signs:

- Reduced production (0.14–0.35 kg of milk solids per cow per day)
- Reduced growth rates
- Reduced fertility
- Weight loss
- Jaundice
- Liver damage.

Not all animals with FE show clinical symptoms, but liver damage can occur even when there are no visible signs. Damaged liver tissue from FE does not regenerate, and animals may develop chronic wasting or die months later. Blood tests can be used to monitor the extent of subclinical FE in individuals.

Even if you don't see clinical signs amongst your herd, we recommend taking pasture samples to make a spore count and take action if necessary.

Oral supplementation of zinc is the best way to protect against FE. It helps inactivate the *sporidesmin* toxin so it does not damage the liver. Zinc can be given to cows through the water supply, mixed through feed, by drenching individual animals every day, or by a slow-release bolus (Face-Guard is recommended for youngstock).

Get in touch for help on how to strategically take pasture samples throughout the FE season and advice on how to best supplement zinc to the animals on your farm.



KEEN TO GET OFF FARM AND ENJOY SOME PAINTBALL FUN?

Join us next Tuesday, 21 January, at Kahurangi Lodge for a FREE paintball session followed by a BBQ. Starts at 11am sharp.

RSVP essential by 20 January to mariav@wcvets.co.nz or call 03 768 0370.





Copper and selenium in calves

By Nadine Savage

Trace elements are essential for the overall health, immunity and growth of cattle.

We talk about trace elements a lot for your dairy cows, but sometimes youngstock can be forgotten about!

When trace element status is in the optimal range, it gives animals the best chance at fighting off other diseases and parasites.

Along with excellent nutrition, trace elements like copper and selenium should be at the top of your mind for ensuring the ideal growth and health of your youngstock.

Copper

Copper is an essential part of many enzymes involved in a range of functions, including bone and tissue, skin and hair pigmentation, red blood cell production, immune function and growth.

Copper deficiency can be confusing, as there are a lot of other factors that can interfere with copper absorption, such as high molybdenum in the soil, zinc levels, sulfur and more.

Copper deficiency can show up as:

- Poor growth rates (ill-thrift)
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of coat colour/scruffy appearance
- Immunosuppression
- Anaemia
- Bone abnormalities.

Supplementation options

Copper bullet

This contains copper oxide rods that are slowly released over time. Bullets **provide about 6 months' protection and, without any information about current copper levels, are the safest option.**

Copper injection

This is absorbed rapidly through the skin where it is then taken to the liver for storage. The injection also provides about 6 months' protection, however, due to the rapid absorption there is a higher risk of toxicity.

Note: if feeding palm kernel it is

naturally high in copper. Not all cattle absorb copper at the same rate, so extra supplementation, especially via injection, could lead to toxicity if they have palm kernel in their diet.

Do not give more than one type of copper supplementation at the same time due to the risk of toxicity. If you think you missed an animal, do not repeat and risk giving them a double dose.

Selenium

Selenium is a vital component of a range of different enzyme processes in the body. It is essential for the immune system and growth of young animals.

Selenium deficiency can show up as:

- Ill-thrift
- More susceptibility to disease
- Retention of winter coat.

Much of the soils used for farmland on the West Coast is deficient in selenium, so animals are unlikely to meet their daily requirements from pasture alone – this is where supplementation comes in, to ensure they are getting adequate levels.

Supplementation options

Selenised drench

This is a very short-acting option that does not normally provide enough selenium for the growth requirements of calves.

Selovin 5 or combined selenium/B12

This is a good short-acting formulation that lasts about 4-6 weeks.

Selovin LA

This is a great **long-acting formulation that lasts around 9-10 months. It's our recommended option for youngstock.**

Supplement plan

Around weaning, when calves are 100kg minimum, we advise that all calves should receive a copper bullet and a Selovin LA selenium injection.

If you signed up to our Complete Calf Care plan, all the copper and selenium products needed for your calves will have been delivered to you already. If not, please get in touch with the clinic to get it sorted.

Let's ensure your calves have the optimal trace element status to aid them as they grow!

Summer is here! But do cows like the warm weather?

By Marjan Spröck

When summer arrives, we finally find ourselves taking those extra layers off and our bodies are enjoying warming up. But what about cows? They cannot take a layer off and often have a black coat...

Cows feel hot sooner than we do. Dairy cows need to maintain a constant body temperature of around 38-39°C. They are sensitive to any factor which influences the thermal exchange with the environment – like air temperature, wind, and humidity.

When an animal's heat load is greater than its capacity to lose heat, it starts to suffer from heat stress. Heat stress often occurs in barn environments, but can also occur at grazing on hot days.

Signs of heat stress

The first sign of heat stress in dairy cows is **clustering around the water trough or forming large groups as they try to get shade from each other's bodies.**

Cows with heat stress prefer to remain **constantly standing**, instead of lying down, so the air can move around their whole body and belly to help cool them down. Heat stress can therefore increase the risk of lameness as they stay on their feet!

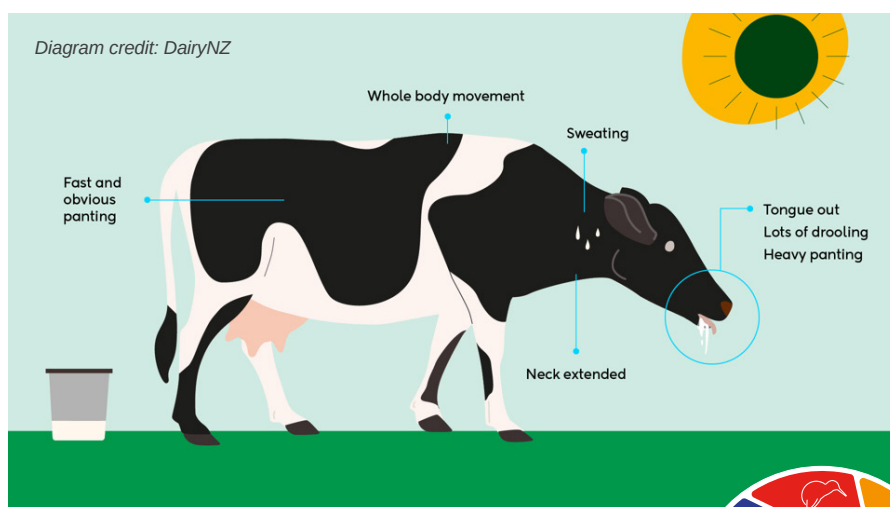
Other, more obvious, signs of heat stress are **panting** (breathing faster than usual) and **drooling** (increased saliva production).

As most of the heat produced in dairy cows is due to rumen fermentation, the cow will reduce her dry matter intake by 10-30% to lessen the heat forming. Eating less also has the impact of **reducing milk production.**

Heat stress can also affect reproductive performance.

Managing heat stress

- 1. Have plenty of water sources/ troughs available in paddocks, in laneways on the way to the shed, and in/near the yards.** As we get into summer, cows will be drinking more. Their water intake can increase by 10-20% in hot weather! This increases even more if the cow is producing heaps of milk. However, cows are unlikely to walk far to drink if the water trough is a long distance away.
- 2. Cool cows down by providing shade, ventilation and cooling.** The installation of large fans and sprinkler systems is often said to be a solution, but could be costly. Simple improvements in basic ventilation, such as a side opening for extra air flow in a shed, are less expensive but often remarkably effective to reduce heat stress.
- 3. Reduce any loss in milk production by addressing that dry matter intake decreases when temperatures increase.** Maintain nutrient intake and increase energy density with greater amounts of concentrate and/or by-products. Consider more suitable forage options – low quality stemmy forages generate more heat when fermenting inside the rumen, while high quality forages are digested faster and result in less heat being produced. Feeding more concentrates, and using higher quality forage should help the cow maintain her energy requirements for good milk production even though she eats less dry matter.
- 4. Change feeding times.** Cows tend to eat less overall during the day compared to overnight, but they eat more often and in smaller quantities. Feeding 60% of the ration between 8.00pm and 8.00am will increase feed consumption.



Our clinic

