

Greymouth Gossip



It has certainly felt like a long summer.

Thank you to all those that came along to our farmer's paintball session in January and had some fun. Nothing blows off steam like a bit of friendly competition. It was fantastic weather for it – hence why we've moved this event from cold, wet June. Hopefully all the bruises have healed up by now!

Marvin ran a lameness workshop in February, where he took participants through some theory (which included fun, interactive elements) and then helped them get hands-on with real cow hooves to practice their skills with a hoof knife. Thank you to all those who attended from both Greymouth and Hokitika areas, we hope you got a lot out of it. This workshop had quite a lengthy waiting list... we'll look at running another one soon for those who missed out.

We bid farewell again to Nadine, who is now on maternity leave, with her second baby expected at the end of March. We wish her and her family all



the best and look forward to seeing her back on deck in 12 months' time.

As the days start to shorten, our team is enjoying the last of the warm months. Laurence ran in the Buller Gorge Half Marathon again, Molly is enjoying being a regular on Wednesday evenings at Surfing For Farmers, and Marjan got her tramping fix over the school holidays, with the family heading into the bush on a few different tramps.

Pregnancy scanning has been in full swing for herds and heifers. Make sure to mark your calendar for this year's Repro Round Up dinner at Greymouth's Union Hotel on Thursday 8th May at 6pm. We look forward to catching up with you all there!

Checklist



COWS

- Continue pregnancy testing (recheck scans or Yes/Nos).
- Body condition score herd.
- Ensure teat spraying method is giving good coverage.
- Rapid milk test (RMT) for subclinical mastitis.
- Bulk milk test for BVD.
- Run a liver fluke and Ostertagia test on bulk milk.
- Prepare dry cow script.
- Order Dry Cow Therapy (DCT).
- Dry off any light cows or lame cows early.
- Lepto vaccination.
- Plan Rotavirus and Salmonella vaccinations.

CALVES

- Supplement selenium and copper.
- Treat for liver fluke!
- Faecal egg count (FEC) test post-drench to see if the product used is working.
- Monitor live weight gain – target 0.5kg of growth per day.
- Lepto and BVD vaccination.

YEARLINGS

- Continue pregnancy testing.
- Treat for liver fluke if you know it's been an issue.
- Check trace element levels.
- Lepto vaccination and Covexin 10-in-1 boosters.

BULLS

- Keep bulls out of herd, heifers and calves!
- Lepto vaccination.



REPRO ROUND UP

Join us for a FREE dinner as a thank you for using our services this season. We'll also discuss the repro data that we've rounded up over scanning.

RSVP essential by Friday 2 May to mariav@wcvets.co.nz or call 03 768 0370.

Thursday
8th May
6pm

Union Hotel,
Greymouth

High cell count cows

By Laurence Cohen

This season has been a challenging one, starting out so wet and then really drying up from Boxing Day.

One issue that is occurring on quite a few farms this season is elevated cell counts and an increase in clinical mastitis. If this is happening to you, you're not alone. Here are a few ideas to help as milking winds down:

Herd testing

One of the key things we want to be able to do is identify subclinical mastitis cows with high cell counts. Herd testing gives us an accurate value cell count and also an indicator of production per animal. A more basic method would be to RMT (rapid milk test) your cows. Once we have identified the girls that are responsible for the highest counts, we can decide what to do with them.

Identifying bacteria

We have in-house milk testing tools to help identify the cause of these high cell count cows. Whether the results

show environmental or contagious bacteria, this knowledge can help you narrow down ways to improve – either by looking inside the shed or outside of it. Knowing the predominant bacterial cause can also help you make culling decisions.

Culling efficiently

Certain bacteria are harder to control than others and culling may provide the best outcome. *Staph. Aureus* can encapsulate itself in the udder and 'hide' from antibiotics. If a cow has had chronically high cell counts all season, or has recurrent mastitis that 'cures' for a few weeks and then becomes clinical again, you might find she has *Staph. Aureus*. Deciding to cull her, rather than treat her with Dry Cow, would be better in this scenario.

Treating with Dry Cow

Research suggests that treating subclinical mastitis cows with lactation antibiotics is not economically viable. The best results are seen through DCT (Dry Cow Therapy) treatment. With the unpredictability of this season, we have already started having early dry cow and milk quality discussions with some farmers. If you want Dry Cow on hand sooner rather than later, please give the clinic a ring and we will get an action plan in place for you.

We have moved away from Infovot, so please ensure you allow us access to

your MINDA or MyHerd apps (if you haven't already), so we can use your data to guide the best decision making for you.

Checking the milking shed

As the season goes on, the shed gains wear and tear. So, if you do have high cell counts, a shed check will tick off the common milking machine-related causes. Remember to change the rubber liners, as use and age give them little cracks which allow bacteria to colonise and hide from wash chemicals.

Maintaining a good milking routine

After many long months of milking, people become tired. Remind staff to keep up good levels of hygiene, wear gloves, strip quarters, and teat spray to cover all teats. Check the teat spray and machine washes are at the right concentrations.

If you'd like help with any cell count and mastitis issues, please give us a call. It is a wide subject – too big to include all useful points in a single article! Plus, every farm differs in conditions and the problems, or challenges, they face.

In conjunction with Agrihealth, we're hosting a Mastitis Lunch & Learn on Monday 24th March. Agrihealth will talk about the benefits of milk testing and we'll add some insight about what we are seeing locally. See details below.

Mastitis Lunch AND Learn

Practical advice on how farmers can save money, produce more milk of higher quality and achieve milk premiums



- How to effectively minimise, monitor & manage mastitis
- Learn how thousands of NZ farmers have reduced antibiotic usage by >20% and improved their mastitis cure rates
- Using herd test data to reduce bulk milk somatic cell count
- Tips on how to manage *Staph. aureus*
- Insights from >200,000 New Zealand mastitis test results
- What's happening in the area with mastitis? Local insights from mastitis data on the West Coast

RSVP to mariav@wcvets.co.nz or 03 768 0370 by Thursday 20th March

Monday 24th March

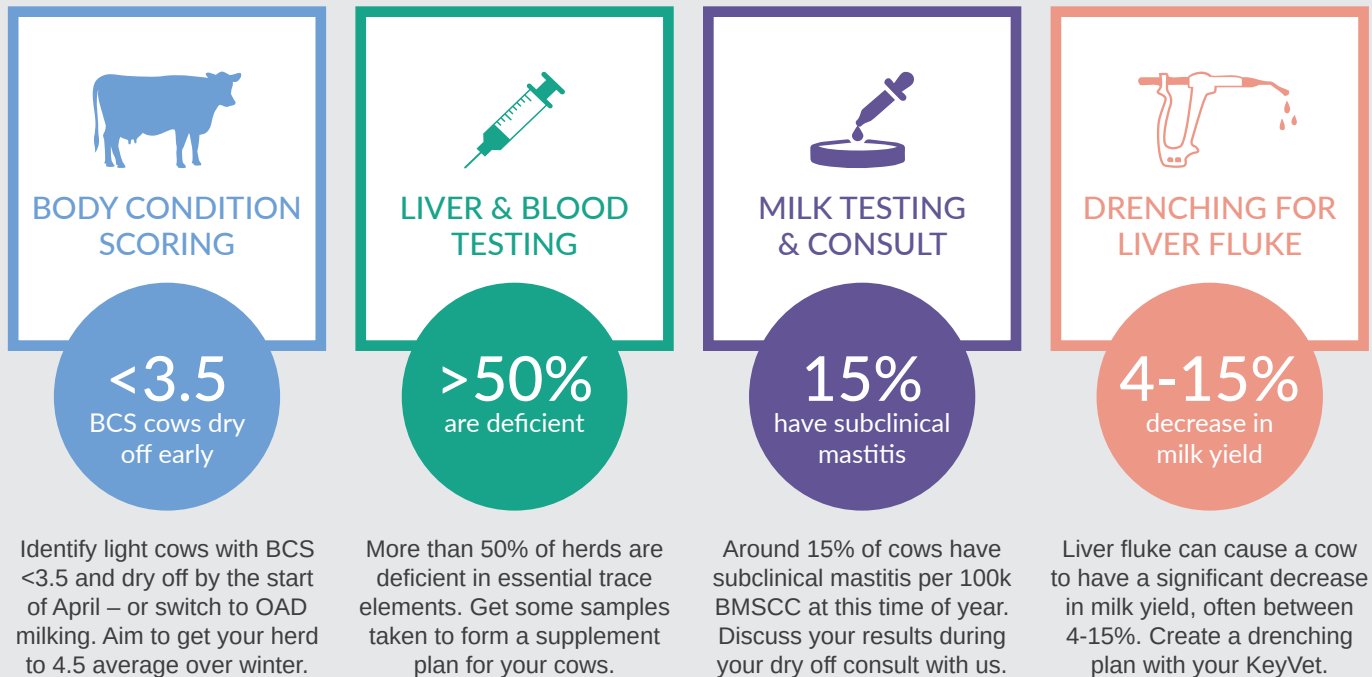
11:00am-12:30pm

Lunch provided

WHERE: Union Hotel
20 Herbert Street, Greymouth

WHO'S INVITED:
Dairy farm owners & staff interested in mastitis management & Mastatest

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?



Autumn parasites

By Marjan Sprock

Autumn is here, so it's time for parasite issues to flare up again.

Liver fluke is a parasite that is pretty common on the West Coast. The life cycle of the parasite (properly called *Fasciola Hepatica*) is slightly different from other parasites as it involves a small snail as a host.

The adult fluke 'graze' on the lining of cattle and sheep bile ducts and livers, creating an inflammatory reaction and scarring. This results in protein loss and anaemia, which can cause chronic wasting.

Fluke snails live in areas with reasonably clean, slow-moving water sources that typically do not dry up in summer. The snails predominately thrive from late summer through to early winter, and this is when the most juvenile flukes are ingested by livestock as they graze in the areas where

the snails live. Fluke infections are often worse after dry summers, when normally wet snail habitat is grazed!

Ostertagia is the most significant parasite in cattle in New Zealand. It is a stomach worm that survives across a range of environments. Larval numbers peak in autumn, so disease is often seen at this time of year.

***Ostertagia* can cause considerable harm to the fourth stomach by reducing nutrient absorption, which leads to a significant decrease in milk production.**

Heading towards late autumn and winter, feed is getting less abundant and farmers are calculating feed budgets. To ensure your animals are not sharing their food with either of these internal parasites, we recommend testing your bulk milk for antibodies. If antibody levels are high, treatment is strongly recommended. As **all liver fluke treatments have a milk withhold**, treating after drying off is your best option to remove these extra 'eaters'.

If you want to do the **annual bulk milk test for *Ostertagia* and liver fluke this autumn**, get in touch with the clinic. We then provide recommendations specific to your farm, depending on results.

Test, treat, and rest assured that all your winter feed is going to feeding and growing your animals, instead of feeding these little parasites! Look at the damage they can cause:



Liver fluke damage in liver slices. Credit Ridgeway Research.



Ostertagia damage in the fourth stomach – this sample is from a sheep. Credit Farmer's Weekly.



An AB tech's wishlist

By Molly Kells

Although it can be considered a nuisance (just another set of rules to follow) having a dedicated AB race makes it easier on your cows, your staff, your tech, and you.

The major reason why AB technicians are not allowed to work in herringbone pits anymore is health and safety.

The risks include: trip/fall hazards (vertical bars and concrete don't have any give, bones do!) and machinery dangers (someone can be scalped if the plant is still running!).

So, what are the benefits of a dedicated AB facility?

- ✓ You're less likely to have injuries to cows, staff, and techs.
- ✓ It makes the job more streamlined and less time consuming.
- ✓ It provides a calmer environment.
- ✓ There's potential for higher in-calf rates.
- ✓ A race is versatile and can be used for vaccinations, blood tests, scanning, and other jobs.

How should you build an AB facility?

The most important thing to consider is the size of your animals; there is no point building a race for Friesians if you milk Jerseys.

There is a preferred angle to build the race on: it should be built so the cow's hind quarters and the back rail are on the technicians left when facing the exit gate. The easiest way to visualize this is if you are standing behind the cow, her head and body should be facing one o'clock not eleven o'clock.

The width of the race is crucial. A width of approximately 1050mm will ensure animals are unable to turn around, and therefore avoid time-wasting and possible injury.

The race needs to allow 1000-1250mm across per cow. Ideally, 5% of the total herd size, or about 20 animals, should be able to fit in the AB race at one time. This means all cows on heat that day should fit in one row.

The top breast rail should be around 850-920mm above ground level, depending on breed and class of stock. The top bum rail should be similarly high – it should be set depending on the average height of your cows so there is no vulva impediment.

Intermediate bars should be added where there are gaps animals may attempt to get through.

Lastly, although LIC doesn't specify your facility needs a roof over it, your tech will really appreciate a dry, covered AB race. After all, a wet tech is a grumpy tech!

Here are some examples of different types of AB facilities I have encountered that might give you some inspiration:



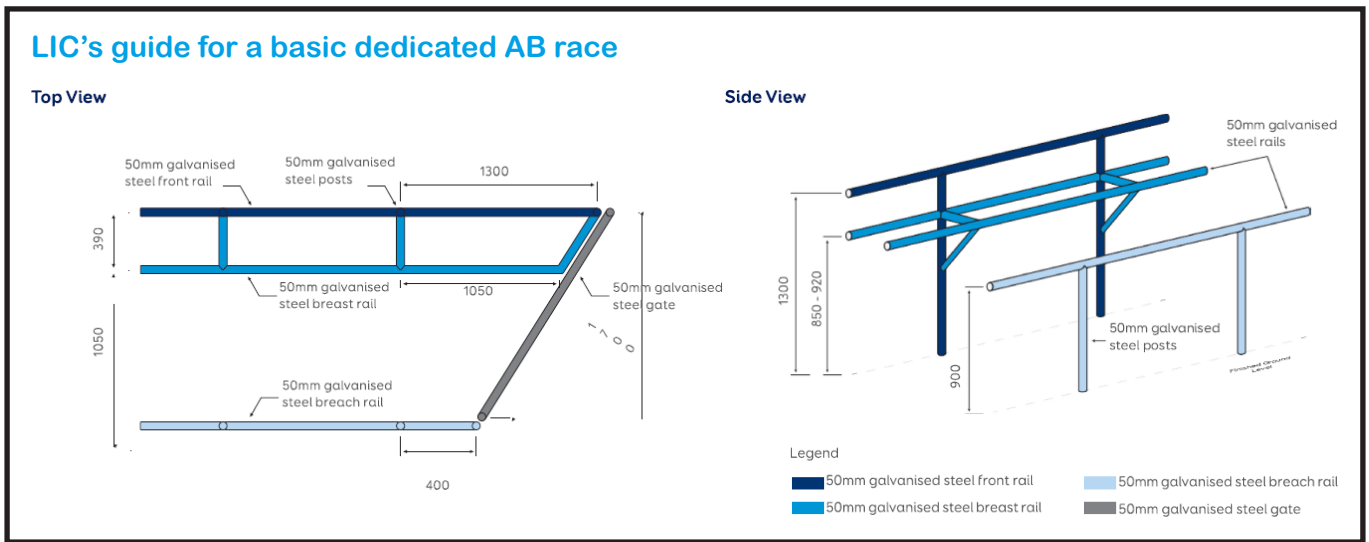
This is a modified race. It has been widened so the cows fit in at an angle for AB and scanning. The back rail folds down to allow easy access for technicians and vets.



This is a detached single race that has been built specifically for AB. Cows row up in the centre and provide easy access. The technician can inseminate from either side if the cows decide to be difficult and turn around.



This is an attached double race – the farmer has basically put another herringbone-style facility in his yard. Since there are two races, difficult cows can go up their preferred side and there is room for a larger group of cows to row up at one time.



What the FEC?

By Marvin Weins

FEC (faecal egg count) testing is the method for determining the number of internal parasite eggs in a poo sample. We use FECs to assess the burden of roundworms in a cattle herd and to determine if deworming, otherwise known as drenching, is needed.

A few months ago West Coast Vets acquired a Parasight machine that allows us to do a FEC in-clinic in just a few minutes. We have previously had to send samples away to Christchurch, or spend a long time preparing and then manually counting the samples!

We can test FEC samples prior to drenching and we can also do post-drench checks.

What FECs are useful for:

- They show if a parasite burden is present and give an indication of how substantial it is – FECs are reported as the number of eggs per gram (epg) of manure.
- They identify the types of worms present, which can guide us to which deworming product will be the most suitable depending on the type of gastrointestinal parasites affecting the cattle.
- They can help determine if the anthelmintic drugs in the deworming product you've been using are effective or if parasites have developed resistance to the drugs.

Factors that affect FECs:

- Age of cattle and recent stress events.
- Type of worms present and length of time cattle have been exposed to worm larvae.
- Immunity developed against parasites.

Using this tool, we can monitor your worm control programme, with the aim of ultimately reducing drenching frequency, or avoiding using the wrong drug.

Call us if you want to know how many samples you should take and when.

Our clinic

