GREYMOUTH

November/December Newsletter

West Coast Vets

Greymouth Gossip

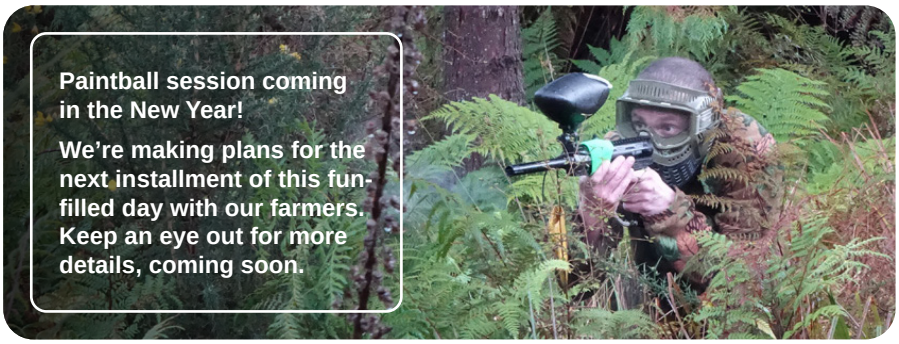
After a very wet spring, the team is taking a bit of time to dry out! Thanks to the casual techs, KD, Louise and Sonya, for their help with getting the disbudding done. Molly has successfully led the tech team in the disbudding charge this season, and is now working hard on her AI run, covering farms from Barrytown to the Waitaha.

Marjan had surgery on her forearm at the end of August and is now all fixed and back at work, so keep an eye out for her on-farm again soon. Kate's knee keeps on improving and she is looking forward to being able to get out and about again in time for summer.

Nadine is growing her family by giving Jackson (now 2 years old) a sibling. Baby number 2 is on its way towards the end of March. Maria was a lone shepherd this season as her mother has been in the Netherlands for the last 6 weeks. All the ewes are now lambed, and Anne has returned from a very enjoyable trip.

With calving behind us and mating underway, we are casting our minds to the summer period. In this run-up to the holidays, we all hope that you can get a bit of time with the family and that you have a very Merry Christmas.

Join us for the next newsletter in the New Year.



Paintball session coming in the New Year!

We're making plans for the next installment of this fun-filled day with our farmers. Keep an eye out for more details, coming soon.

Taking mastitis milk samples

By Nadine Savage

We know that this season to date has been particularly challenging with mastitis levels and SCC higher than usual.

For clinical and subclinical mastitis (diagnosed either via paddle or herd testing), we can test these to determine which bug is causing the mastitis and give recommendations for the best treatment options.

We now have a couple of different testing options available, both in-clinic or sent to the lab, so if you are wanting to get some milk samples tested, please make sure you tell us if they are clinical, subclinical or if they have received antibiotics so we can run the correct test.

It is also really important to ensure that when you take the milk sample, it is as clean as possible. Check the bottom of the pottle for flecks of poo and, if there are any, please take a fresh sample in a new pottle.

Checklist

COWS

- Magnesium and calcium supplementation, as needed.
- Take milk samples from cows with mastitis for the best antibiotic treatment choices.
- Ask for advice if SCC rising.
- Use mating tail paint and heat detection aids to identify non-cyclers.
- AI matings to observed heats.
- Routine lame cow hoof trimming.
- Keep mineral supplementation up (Cu, Se, I).

CALVES

- All calves disbudded?
- Copper supplementation?
- Covexin booster vaccinations.
- Separate heifer and bull calves.
- Ring bull calves.
- Target weaning weight: 20% MLW.
- Initial post-weaning drench and subsequent drenches at correct intervals.
- Coccidiosis treatment.

YEARLINGS

- PG synchronising for AI-ing heifers.
- Keep mineral supplementation up (Cu, Se, I).

BULLS

- Enough bulls to cover cows and heifers?
- BVD status known?
- Check for lameness.

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.

A refresher on taking a sterile milk sample is below. Remember to take the sample before any antibiotics are given:

1. **Wear gloves.**
2. **Keep the lid on the pottle until teat is cleaned.** Never touch the inside of the pottle.
3. **Clean teats** to be sampled with teat wipes or alcohol swabs, paying particular attention to the teat end. No dirt should be visible on the last wipe used.
4. **Strip the first 3 squirts from the teat onto the platform.** This will remove any excess clots and contaminants from the teat canal.
5. **Open the pottle and hold at an angle to the teat** to prevent dust and dirt getting into it. Hold the pottle behind the cow, not underneath the udder.
6. **Collect milk into the pottle, 10 – 20ml is plenty.** Check there is no dirt in the sample (no floaties or grit when viewed from below).
7. **Immediately put lid on pottle.**
8. **Label the sample** with the cow number, quarter affected and date.
9. **Refrigerate** until the sample is brought in to us.
10. **Change gloves** between cows if you are sampling multiple.

Mastitis testing: Mastatest vs Jupiter

By Laurence Cohen

We now have two different machines in-clinic that we can use for milk sample testing – but what is the difference?

The Mastatest machine, which has been around a few years, can run up to four cartridges for clinical mastitis and eight samples of subclinical mastitis in a 22-hour turnaround period. It can also identify bacteria as well as antibiotic sensitivity.

The Jupiter machine, which has been available for around a year, uses more traditional agar plates and an incubator, however, uses AI to detect what species are present.

Here are the pros and cons with both:

Mastatest Pros

- 22-hour turn around;
- Will give antibiotic sensitivities as well as bacteria growth;
- Will pick up all the common causes of mastitis on NZ farms;
- Has an ability to do high cell count subclinical cows.

Mastatest Cons

- Cannot do blood-tinged milk, very clotted milk, or milk with dirt in the sample;
- 22-hour cut-off does not cover slow growing bacteria;
- Can only run four clinical tests per machine.

Jupiter Pros

- Can have a large number of tests running simultaneously;
- If there is no growth after 24 hours, the culture can still continue for 48 hours for slower growing colonies;
- Can identify a wider range of bacteria, and any the AI does not recognise gets sent to human experts;
- Can culture out if there is blood-tinge in the sample.

Jupiter Cons

- Does not do any antibiotic sensitivities;
- Does require manual picture catchment at 24 and 48 hours following culture.

Mastatest in-house test: $34+GST
Jupiter in-house test: $32+GST

Prices correct as at 12/11/24, subject to change.

Lepto vaccine update

There has been a lot of communication from Westland lately regarding supply of the lepto vaccine.

In the end, we were never approached for a 5-year tender for the vaccine and we turned down the option of the whole West Coast as a logistical impossibility for the timeframes Westland were after, and the legal aspect of treating animals that are legally not under our care.

Following last Friday's communications, we will be continuing to provide you with the lepto service you have always received. We will also be striving to protect you, your team and animals from additional strains of lepto by upgrading from Lepto 3-Way to Lepto 4-Way. This includes protection against the *Pacifica* strain, which 75% of NZ dairy herds have shown exposure to in their bulk milk.

Workers in agriculture are most at risk of contracting lepto. To guarantee effective protection for your herd and yourselves, all animals will require a booster shot in their first year of transition (following this, just a single booster will be sufficient).

We are currently working on the best options to supply you with this service and we will be in touch in the near future to confirm the logistics of this roll out.

Benefit from quick in-clinic FEC testing

We are pleased to announce that we have invested in a Parasight faecal egg count (FEC) machine, which will enable us to quickly test samples in-clinic.

The new machine

Created and developed in Australia, the Parasight machine can give a FEC for a calf sample in less than 6 minutes. Previously, we've had to send samples away to the laboratories in Christchurch, or spend over 20 minutes preparing and manually counting the samples.

The machine, which **works for cattle, sheep, horse and poultry samples, can also identify the type of eggs present.**

In recent years, triple resistance to drenches has been identified in cattle. So, it is **more vital than ever that we use good management practices and animal husbandry to deal with parasite burdens on-farm to ensure your properties continue to have effective drenches**, giving profitable results for years to come.

Testing options

For individual samples, we need around 10g (2 tablespoons/a small yoghurt pot amount) taken from individual animals, either yarded or fresh from the paddock. Alternatively, we can run composite samples, where at least 1 tablespoon amount is needed from 10 different animals.

We would like to test samples prior to drenching and, if counts are low enough, recommend you hold off on drenching for an additional week. Pushing out 4-weekly drenching to 5-weekly will save a whole drench by the end of the season and reduce your time spent dosing stock.

The Parasight machine will also enable us to do post-drench checks, to ensure you are spending money on a product that is working for you.

For a more in-depth check that your parasites are responding to the drenches, we can do a Faecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT). For this, samples are taken before drenching, and again 10-14 days post-drenching (depending on the active ingredients). We can then see how much the egg burden has reduced (hopefully down to zero)!

The machine currently cannot detect lungworm, or liver fluke.

Bring in your FEC samples for testing!

This season's passive transfer results

By Laurence Cohen

This season, we had a few farms do passive transfer (PT) testing on their calves to check for absorption of immunoglobulin from colostrum.

Below is a quick comparison of the results:

From these results, we can see that all farms had some calves that did not receive full PT, as well as some that did receive adequate antibodies. Averages ranged from partial to good coverage.

It is important in a calf's development that we give it the best start possible, and a functioning immune system is vital for that.

Perhaps give your calf rearers a chance to recap on this season and then let's have a think about how we could improve these results next year.

Farm	Minimum value	Maximum value	Average value
A	4.2	7.0	5.4
B	5.0	10.0	6.8
C	3.0	7.5	5.1
D	4.0	8.0	6.0
E	3.6	7.6	5.6
F	4.0	6.8	5.6
G	5.0	8.8	6.4

<5.0 = Failure of passive transfer

5.0–5.5 = Partial passive transfer

>5.5 = Successful passage of immunity

The best way to improve PT is improving how you deliver the 5 Q's of colostrum:

Quality
>22 on a refractometer.

Quickly
Antibody absorption decreases with time after calving.

Quantity
Aim for 10% of the calf's body weight in that first 4 hours.

SQueaky clean
Good hygiene lowers the number of pathogens the newborn calf must face.

Quantify
Routinely evaluating farm data is essential to keep colostrum management in-check.

If you would like to compare your farm's PT values to other local farms, then please book us in for some testing next spring. We often do this at the same time as the first lot of disbudding.

Keep an eye out for Coccidiosis

By Nadine Savage

Coccidiosis is a parasitic disease that can occur in calves from as young as 4 weeks of age, but is normally seen in calves between 3-8 months once they are weaned.

Infection is caused by ingestion of *coccidia* oocysts, from contaminated pasture, feed, water or grooming each other. Paddocks that are used by calves each year are at a higher risk for contamination.

The oocysts survive well in moist environmental conditions. The incubation period is about 2-4 weeks for clinical disease, depending on environmental conditions. It is a parasite that is often around in low numbers, and clinical disease occurs if animals are exposed to high numbers or have a decreased immune system.

Symptoms

Symptoms can vary a lot between infected groups, with infection ranging from mild subclinical disease to severe clinical disease, and sometimes death. Growth rates are often affected.

Clinical disease:

- Diarrhoea with mucus and blood;
- Straining to poo;
- Off feed;
- Dehydrated;
- Rapid weight loss.

Subclinical disease:

- Mild or no diarrhoea;
- Reduced feed intake;
- Decreased growth rates;
- Rough coats (calves that just don't look as 'good' as they should).

Risk periods

Clinical coccidiosis occurs about 4 weeks after calves go onto grass, or after calf meal has stopped being fed. Most commercial calf meals contain coccidiostats, which only stop development of oocysts. So, when feeding stops, these parasites sometimes continue development, resulting in cases 3-4 weeks later. Other risk periods include any times of stress, such as: moving, regrouping, transport, weaning etc.

Diagnosis

We can test for *coccidia* oocysts in Faecal Egg Counts. The number of oocysts doesn't always correlate with the level of disease, due to the way the test works, but, if there are oocysts found and the clinical signs are consistent, then we can be confident it is a *coccidia* infection.

Treatment

Due to the wet spring, *coccidia* could be more of an issue than usual this year. FEC tests are a great way to check not only the *coccidia* levels in your calves, but also the general parasite challenge, which can help you use the right drench.

The best way to prevent/treat the disease is with a drench containing a *toltrazuril*-based product. *Toltrazuril* products only treat *coccidia*, not normal gut worms, and timing is important.

If you have had issues in the past, treatment should be 7-10 days before the risk period. If you are unsure of your risk period, treatment can be carried out at the time of meal withdrawal. Due to the high level of subclinical disease, all calves within the group should be treated even if only a couple of them are showing signs.

There is another product on the market: *Turbo Initial*. This is a dual-combination drench combined with an anticoccidial, designed to be used in the transition phase when calves are weaned off meal containing coccidiostats and moving to pasture as their main source of nutrition. Talk to us if you'd like to incorporate this new drench into your calf rearing regime.

Giving 90% this mating

By Molly Kells

Did your calving period seem to drag on this season? One way to try and compact your calving for next year is to have a good 3-week submission rate.

To be on track for a successful mating, **the industry target is to have 90% of cows submitted for mating over the first three weeks**. Herds that hit this target will have more early calving cows, lower empty rates, less late calving cows, and ultimately more days in milk in the following season.

If your 3-week submission rate was low last mating season, here are a few tips to boost your percentage:

- ✓ **Get bloods and livers done** (preferably before mating starts) to see if your herd is low in copper, selenium or magnesium. All three are important to helping the cycling of your cows.
- ✓ **Aim to have 85% of the herd cycling** before planned start of mating. This can be done by tracking pre-mating heats with detection aids such as collars or with tail paint.
- ✓ **Use intervention to get your non-cyclers cycling again.** Speak with one of our vets to arrange a suitable CIDR programme.

If you would like support to ensure your herd has a great repro performance, please get in touch.

Caring for cows' hooves

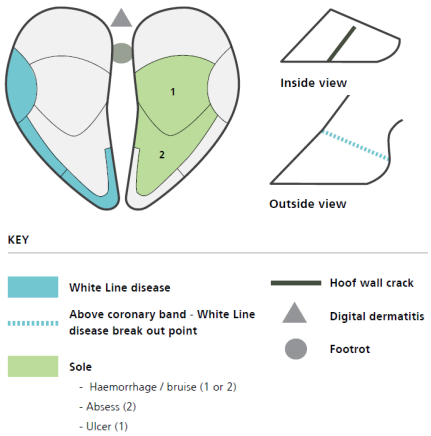
By Marvin Wiens

Hoof care in dairy cattle is a critical aspect of herd management, particularly in regions with challenging environmental conditions. The high rainfall and rugged terrain in our area presents unique challenges for maintaining cattle hoof health.

Proper hoof care is essential for animal welfare, production efficiency, and reducing costs related to lameness.

Lameness is a painful condition, mainly caused by hoof lesions, that affects the locomotor system of cattle and has a detrimental effect on health, welfare, and productivity.

The main types of lameness and where they are typically located are shown in this diagram:



Some key factors that can lead to lameness include:

- Calving;
- Body condition score;
- Genetics and breeding;
- Previous lameness;
- Wet weather;
- Hygiene;
- Farm infrastructure;
- Management (such as stock handling, time yarded, walking distances etc).

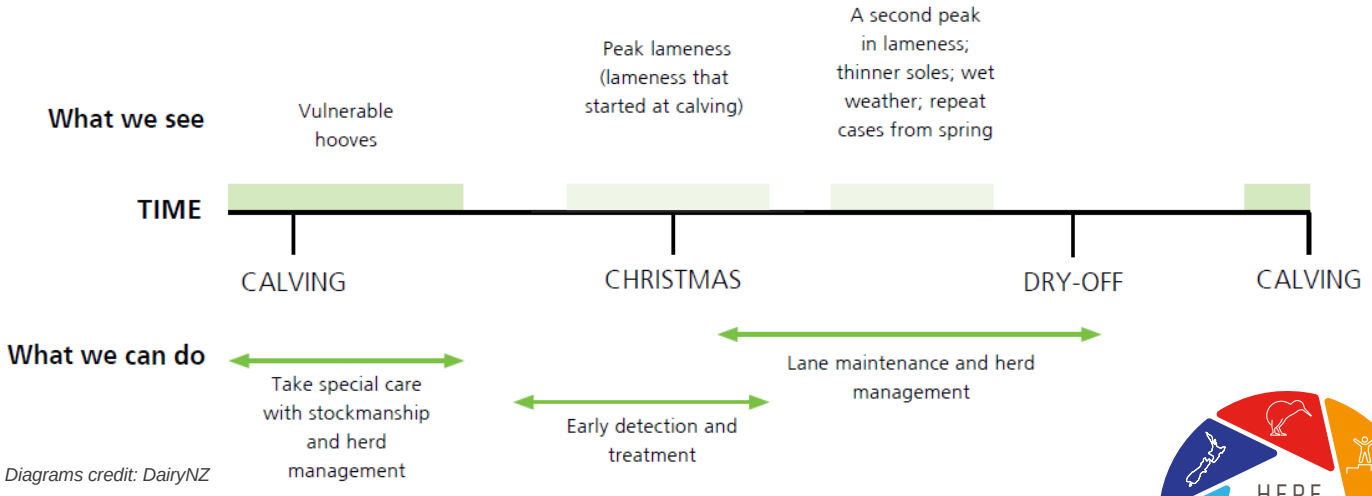
Unfortunately, we can't influence the weather, but there is a lot we can change regarding the conditions we provide for the herd to reduce instances of lameness.

This includes reducing:

- Long periods of time on concrete;
- Walking long distances;
- Underfeeding;
- Pushing cows on races or in the yards;
- Poorly maintained races and yards;
- Poor quality facilities.

Below is a seasonal overview of lameness in a spring calving herd.

Maintaining our cows on their feet requires a proactive approach due to the challenging environmental conditions. Vigilant monitoring and appropriate management are essential strategies to minimise lameness and ensure optimal production.



Diagrams credit: DairyNZ

Our clinic

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HERE for GOOD