

Farm Focus: Theileria & BVD Evening

A very successful client meeting was held at the Helensville clinic last week. Around 50 farmers attended and were given the latest information about Theileria in cattle (that tick disease) and the costs and control options for BVD.

Both of these diseases are rapidly evolving and complex. Both are endemic in Northland and can have significant impacts on the profitability of both dairy and beef farming operations. Good, accurate and current information is important so that you can make the right decisions for your farming system. Control plans need to be individualised for each property so you need to make time to sit down with us and work out what fits your situation best. All options have a cost to them, including doing nothing and this in fact may be the more expensive choice.

Theileria has largely stabilised in Northland cattle so we see little overt disease. However, beef calves are at risk each year and bought in cattle from other regions can be majorly impacted. Strategies can be put in place to minimise the risks to these groups.

BVD is as common as it always was but improvements in testing and vaccines mean that we have much better diagnosis, control and prevention options.



Farm Deliveries

We offer a delivery service for our farm customers.

If you are unable to get into the clinic, please give us a call & we can get your order on our next farm delivery run.

Horses & Stock in Trouble

Every year as the Winter wears on and grass gets short and the ground gets muddy we have horses and cattle stuck in bogs, swamps and drains. This causes a high risk situation for everybody, the stock, the owners and others that may become involved in the rescue. Cattle and horses are big animals and they don't have to try to end up hurting you. Getting hit by a cow's swinging head or a horse's flying hoof could brake bones, and if water is involved as well death is not impossible.

A little prevention with electric fencing to keep stock away from dangerous areas such a drain banks and swamps can save a lot of cost, heart break and risk of injury. If your horse especially ends up stuck be very careful, as they do not think and certainly don't realise you are trying to help. Horses will often go quiet when they realise they are stuck only to explode when they think they may be able to get out. Never get into a confined space or water with a horse that is stuck, you might never get out again.

Leptospirosis Risk Management

Nearly all dairy farms vaccinate their cows against Leptospirosis each year. This is primarily a Risk Management Practice to reduce the risk of themselves and their staff contracting Lepto, it is not largely an animal health issue. As part of your farm Health & Safety Plan you must have a plan to mitigate the risk of Lepto to your staff. Vaccination is not the complete end of the story. You still need to minimise the exposure to cattle urine. Care with dairy effluent and waterways that cows have access to is vital. Wearing boot, aprons and gloves at milking also reduces exposure.

As lepto vaccination is a human health issue, either we give the vaccination or you go through the national Leptosure accreditation programme annually. Cattle vaccination is based around two vaccinations for the calves starting at two months of age (We can give the first at dehorning), with an annual booster. Treatments must be recorded as evidence for Work Safe.

Copper

Copper intake of stock naturally drops over the Autumn & Winter. This is due to a number of factors including reduced grass intake, increased soil ingestion due to mud & close grazing & reduced copper uptake by grass. The treatment of stock in over late Sumer with zinc to protect against Fascial Eczema also has a side effect of reduce liver copper levels. On the positive side of the ledger feeding PKE is a copper source for cows.

Copper is essential for good cow health but excess is toxic causing collapse & death. So you need to know what the situation is on your farm this year before we can make sensible decisions on the need to copper supplement. Copper levels are best assessed by liver analysis. This can be from works culls or quite simply by liver biopsy.

If cows are deficient then supplementation needs to be given in the early Winter so you need to find out now where your herd is at so you can maximise their performance. Discuss your situation with Brian or myself so we can work out a plan for you.

Liver Fluke

The three problems with liver fluke control are:

1. Most of the normal drenches don't touch it;
2. Long milk and meat with hold times of effective products;
3. Fluke products don't kill gut worms.

Liver Fluke are mainly picked up over the Summer and develop over several months in the host animal before becoming adults. Fluke products are measured in their efficacy on the age of the juvenile flukes in the cattle that they are able to kill. Poor products kill adults only (Albendazole), average products kill adults and older juveniles (Clorsulon) and the best kill adults and young juveniles (Triclabendazole).

Generally fluke control is achieved by drenching all the cattle, calves and sheep on a property once a year over the Winter. If an average product is going to be used (eg IvomecPlus injection) then leaving the treatment as late as possible before calving will increase its effectiveness (the fluke will be older). An average product like IvomecPlus might be used as it has an acceptable milk with hold time and is easy to give to cows.



A new product has just been released by Merial that solves all of the three problems – Switch Fluke 10. This product is a dual combination drench (abermectin & levamisole) so it is a very effective cattle drench for both calves & cows. It also contains Triclabendazole, the best fluke killer available and it only has a reasonable with hold time of 35 days for milk and 49 days for meat. Switch Fluke 10 is an oral drench given at 1 ml per 10kg live weight and is in stock NOW.



0800 VTS NTH

AFTER HOURS: 0274 957 986

68 Access Road, Kumeu - P: 09 412 9016 - Kumeu@vetsnorth.co.nz

45 Commercial Road, Helensville - P: 09 420 8325 - Helensville@vetsnorth.co.nz