



The Economics of Treating Non Cycling Cows

The short story is that nothing has changed from last season. It is still economically worth while treating non cycling cows providing that you do it early. In fact the milk payout has to fall to below \$2 a Kg milk solids before it is not worth treating. At \$4 a kg the return on investment is still 2.7 to 1.

The value of treating non cycling cows is mainly the extra days in milk gained next season. Work has consistently shown that treating cows the week before the start of mating, so that they cycle on the first day, will give an average of 19 extra days in milk next season. This return alone will pay for the CIDR treatment, let alone the extra AB calves and less culls for empties that will also result. Another consideration is taking no action will result in either a more spread out calving or a lot more empty cows. With no recourse to inductions tightening the calving pattern back up will take time or cost cows. The longer into the mating period you wait before treating non cyclers the less value there is in it.

We strongly recommend that you put tail paint on the herd 4 weeks before the start of mating and you record the heats. (Both these actions cost very little). You will then have the information to make an informed decision. If you do nothing then you have no choices at all, you just have to deal with what comes along.

Other actions you can take is to "treat" non cyclers include; once a day milking, feeding supplements, drenching poor doers, B12 treatment.

Breeding Bulls

All breeding bulls used on either dairy or beef cattle should be tested BVD carrier free (one test covers them for life) and vaccinated against BVD virus (2 shots a month apart and a yearly booster). In addition beef bulls used on dairy cows need to be tested EBL free.

A BVD carrier bull used to mate cows will result in a very poor in calf rate and the birth of multiple BVD carrier calves.



Calf Vaccinations

All dairy calves need to have had their first leptospirosis vaccination by the end of this month.

Leptospirosis vaccination does not cure infections and once a cow is infected she may continue to shed lepto in her urine for years. Therefore it is important for your safety that vaccination is given early before the calves get infected.

We can give 7 in 1 vaccine at calf dehorning or at weaning to cover both Blackleg and leptospirosis.

BVD vaccination can start at 4 months of age. This can be combined with Catarrh.



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Theileria

The biggest risk group for Theileria at this stage is calves less than 6 months of age. The calves do not have to be poor doers to be impacted. We have seen good beef calves on their cows dying of Theileria and last year I dealt with a very well grown pet calf on a pet cow that died over 48 hours.

Tick challenge does seem to be a risk factor as the worst Theileria cases are on farms with a lot of ticks. Affected calves become weak, sit down, are pale or yellow and die quite rapidly.



Any cattle moving into the area from non tick parts of the country, (Taupo South) are at risk. (Consider breeding bulls brought in for mating). This is particularly is they are under stress (calving or feed). Clinical cases peak at about 8-10 weeks after initial infection and the highest risk times for infection will be August / September or November / December.

If you run into a problem get in touch quickly so we can put an action plan into place to both sav cows and to support you.

Copper Status

Is your herd's copper status the same as it was last year?

The big reason why it might not be will be the amount of PKE that you have fed over the Spring compared to last Spring. PKE is very high in copper and has been a copper supplement for many farms. If your level of PKE supplementation has reduced then get some liver biopsy's done soon to check the herd's status.

Copper injections given at the start of mating can stop cows cycling for several days and low copper levels will have a negative impact in herd fertility. Don't let a double impact of thin cows and low copper in effect your mating performance.

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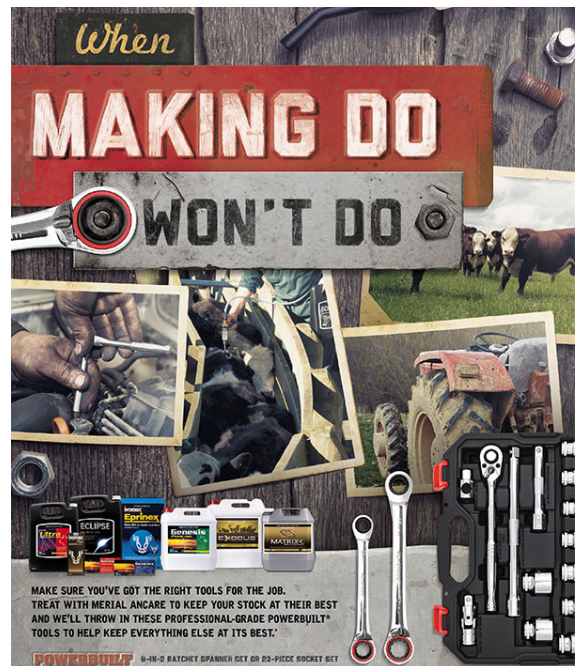
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68 Access Road, Kumeu - P: 09 412 9016 - Kumeu@vetsnorth.co.nz
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