

# DAIRY BULLETIN #184

Waikiwi Vet Services Ltd.

FEATURING:

MASTATEST

FETAL LOSS

JOHNES

THIAMINE DEFICIENCY

SCANNING

CHRISTMAS BBQ

## Summer 2018/2019

### New In-clinic Mastitis Culture & Sensitivity Testing

We now have a Mastatest machine for in-clinic milk culture and sensitivity testing, giving results within 24 hours. This machine can identify the common bacteria that cause mastitis, and provides sensitivities for three antibiotic groups, so that you can choose the most effective treatment.

Testing milk samples at the clinic costs \$25 each, which is much cheaper (and faster) than sending them to the lab.

Mastatest machines are also available to purchase for on-farm culturing. You will need a clean area, power/wifi, and refrigeration for the test cartridges. Mastatest machines cost \$1000 + GST and test cartridges are \$15 + GST each.



# Infectious Causes of Fetal Loss

We are often asked about causes of fetal loss – in NZ common culprits are Neospora and BVD.

**Neospora** is estimated to cause 40% of all abortions in dairy cows. Dogs infected with Neospora have eggs (oocysts) in their faeces - if these are eaten by cattle then they can become infected. The cow may abort or if a live calf is born it may carry the infection and subsequently abort its calf. Dogs become infected by eating the placentas of affected cows.

Because of the involvement of dogs in the lifecycle of Neospora we recommend:

- Do not allow dogs to eat aborted fetuses, placenta or dead calves
- Protect feed and water supplies from contamination with dog faeces
- Don't allow dogs to roam

**BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea virus)** is estimated to cause 5 to 15% of abortions. The source of infection is from temporarily infected cattle or persistently infected (PI) cattle. If a heifer or cow is exposed to BVD for the first time while she is pregnant, depending on her stage of pregnancy she may abort or give birth to a PI calf.

A PI is created when the dam is exposed to the virus for the first time when she is 90-125 days pregnant. The resulting PI calf, if not aborted, is born with the virus and will shed it intermittently, infecting other herd mates. These herd mates are temporarily infected animals that become another source of infection for a few weeks until they develop immunity. Temporarily infected animals may have a fever and be unwell during this period, but many animals won't show any clinical signs.

There is a vaccine available to protect against BVD - two doses are recommended prior to heifer mating and then annual boosters thereafter.

If not vaccinating, we recommend testing calves at the time of disbudding to find any PIs and cull them before they enter the herd and become a source of infection.

Ensure that any bought in stock (including bulls) have been tested +/- vaccinated for BVD before introducing them to your herd.

## Johnes Testing:

If you are finding cows with Johnes in your herd, it is seriously worth testing cows at herd testing time. This is a way of decreasing the number of subclinical cows and significantly reduces cow wastage. Farms in the district that have started testing have seen marked reductions in the number of Johnes cows. If you have any questions don't hesitate to give us a call at the clinic to discuss.

## Thiamine Deficiency (Polioencephalomalacia):

Polioencephalomalacia (P.E.) is a nervous disease seen primarily in calves and younger stock. P.E. is caused by a lack of vitamin B1 (not to be confused with a cobalt deficiency, which is associated with a vitamin B12 deficiency). P.E. is thought to be nutritionally induced, when there is a sudden change in diet from starchy, higher dry matter diet, to a lush, low fibre diet. A high dietary sulphur intake, especially with brassica's, has also been incriminated as a cause of P.E.

Calves with P.E. appear blind, may walk aimlessly, appear wobbly, have muscle tremors and head press. If calves are treated early in the disease process with a series of vitamin B1 injections survival rates are good.

In an outbreak situation we have had good success by prophylactically treating the remaining unaffected calves in the group with an oral vitamin B1 drench. This has proven to be a very cost effective preventative measure.

## Coming up...

### December –

- **CHRISTMAS BBQ - Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

### January -

- **DRENCH** calves with injectable

### February –

- **Scan cows any time from now**

### March –

- **Lepto & Salmonella vaccine for calves**
- **DRENCH** calves with pour on or injectable
- **BLOOD TEST & liver biopsy** stock for trace elements before drying off

### April –

- **Booster Lepto & Salmonella vaccine for calves**
- **DRENCH** calves with pour on or injectable
- **20g Copper capsule for calves**

## Scanning:

### Are those non-returning cows pregnant?

On average 10-15% of non-returning cows are later found not to be pregnant. If you have had issues with excessive weight loss, ketosis or metritis after calving, or low BCS at mating, your risk may be higher. Early identification and treatment of these cows will reduce your empty rate, so consider identifying cows from the first 2 weeks of AI and scanning these in early December.

### Other Scanning options:

- **Two pregnancy tests.** Scanning the herd 6 weeks after finishing AI will give you information about which cows have conceived to AI and their approximate age. Then pregnancy test the whole herd again in the autumn (or just those not in calf at the first test – this may miss some fetal losses).
- **One pregnancy test.** The whole herd is scanned around March – this will be less accurate (in terms of aging) as pregnancies more than 90 days can be difficult to age reliably by scanning or manual palpation.

## Christmas BBQ:

*Wednesday 12 December 2018*

Its that time of year again!

Join us at the clinic between 11am-2pm for a BBQ + drinks and a catch up with our team.

For catering please RSVP on (03) 215 9237  
by Friday 7 December 2018.



# Waikiwi Vet Services Ltd

299 North Road, PO Box 5009, Invercargill 9843.

TELEPHONE 03 215 9237  
FAX 03 215 7440  
email: [vsi@vetservices.co.nz](mailto:vsi@vetservices.co.nz)  
[www.vetservices.co.nz](http://www.vetservices.co.nz)

**OFFICE HOURS**  
MONDAY - FRIDAY 8am - 6pm

CONSULTATION BY  
APPOINTMENT ONLY