

# Dairy News

July 2024

- Spring about to arrive
- RUMENOX
- Shopping list
- Metric checking

We hope everyone has had a good dry period. There are always winter projects to be completed on the farm, so between jobs we hope you have managed to get a few quieter days to put your feet up before the farming silly season starts.

We don't want to be the jinx, but the weather has been relatively mild; warm rain and good sunshine, allowing good pasture growth. As you move south of Opunake farmers are saying soil moisture levels are still recovering after their dry spell.

It wouldn't be a proper Taranaki Spring without some nasty patches of weather and a few muddy days, but we hope you all have a good calving season and know that we are here to help.

Our shop is currently being stocked with all things animal health and spring related. We will be **opening Saturday mornings** again so anyone can pick up supplies in the weekend during spring.

Another important note is that **1080 drops** are beginning on the mountain so please keep this in mind with regard to your animals, especially dogs which are very sensitive to toxicity.

On the subject of toxicity, we have had several clients have trouble with **high nitrates**, resulting in a combination of cow deaths and or cows aborting. Please take a very cautionary approach on new grasses as good grass growing conditions at the moment are resulting in higher nitrate levels accumulating in the grass. We also have on farm test kits available at the clinic. More on this below.

Our two new vets Georgia and Sophie will be experiencing their first spring which they are excited about. They are both doing an excellent job and have been a fantastic addition to the coastal vets team.

As we ramp up, please know we are here to help and are always more than happy to chat on the phone and talk things over. If you are unsure about an animal, please get us out, getting there to examine an animal early can make a huge difference to the outcome during calving which is critical period for cows.

We would also like to make a shout out to the technician team that has been doing the hard work over the last few months drying off cows and teat sealing heifers. Once again, they did an excellent job.

Thanks for the continued support.

The team at coastal vets.



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## When to call a vet...

### **Intervention is needed if any of the following occur:**

- *If the water sac has been visible for 2 hours and you have not seen any progression (the cow is not trying).*
- *If the cow has been trying for over 30 minutes and making no progress.*
- *If the cow has quit trying for more than a 15-20 minute period of time after a period of progress. Rest periods normally should not last longer than 5-10 minutes.*
- *If the cow or calf is showing signs of stress or fatigue - like a swollen tongue in the calf, yellow staining (meconium) of the foetus.*
- *With some problems (e.g. breech, twins, twisted wombs) the cow may be seen to start calving and then stop - don't leave till the next day!*

### **CHECKING THE CALVING COW (yourself)**

- *Bring into the shed, either the vet race or the herring bone. If the cow is likely to go down, make sure she can get up easily from where you are examining her.*
- *Wash off any muck around the vulva before putting your hand in - cleanliness is very important. Use warm water with antiseptic. Use plenty of lubricant.*

**Rule 1:** *If you put your hand in and don't know what is going on straight away – call the vet.*

**Rule 2:** *If you know the problem and the solution, but know you are unable to handle the problem – call the vet.*

**Rule 3:** *If you know the problem and the solution, but you haven't got it out in 30 mins - call the vet.*

*Delays may adversely affect the cow and/or calf.*

- *Once you have calved the cow, always put your hand back in to check for any damage to the cow and check to make sure there aren't twins. Inject oxytocin to help expel the membranes. Dose the cow with **starter drench** or put a bag under the skin and inject B12 to stimulate appetite.*

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## Rotavirus

*Rotavirus is a common cause of diarrhoea in calves and can cause death in youngstock, long term damage to the gut lining of replacement heifers and a lot of extra stress and work for you!*

*Vaccinating your cows with Rotavirus vaccine will stimulate them to produce antibodies to rotavirus, coronavirus and E. Coli, which are then shed into the colostrum. When the calf drinks the colostrum, these antibodies directly bind to the bugs in the calf's gut, and support the calf's natural defences. Drinking colostrum containing rotavirus antibodies (proteins that fight bugs) is a calf's best defence against developing rotavirus scours.*

*Cows should be vaccinated 3 weeks before the start of calving and will continue to shed increased antibody levels for 12 weeks (long calving spread farms may prefer to also vaccinate their late calving cows after the herd start of calving).*

Ensure calves get freshly calved cow colostrum then continue to feed this every day as part of their diet for at least 3 weeks. Maintaining hygiene and cleaning out of sheds between seasons is also very important as rotavirus bugs can last many months in the environment.

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## Colostrum management & Brix refractometers

Colostrum is key when it comes to disease prevention in calves as it contains maternal antibodies that protect them against various diseases such as scours and pneumonia.

Ensuring animals get enough quality colostrum when they are young enough to absorb it will assure the best possible protection. The “three Qs of colostrum management” outline how to do this.



Brix refractometer

1. **Quality:** gold (first milking) colostrum contains the most maternal antibodies and should be fed to newborns. A **brix refractometer** is a small and simple tool that can be used to measure colostrum quality. Brix measure of >22% is considered high quality and should be fed to newborns.
2. **Quickly:** Ensure newborns are fed within the first 6-12 hours. Antibodies are no longer absorbed once a calf is 24 hours old.
3. **Quantity:** newborn calves need 10% of their bodyweight (e.g. 4 litres for a 40kg calf) of **gold** colostrum within the first 6-12h of life. This should be split into two feeds within the first 12 hours due to the size of their abomasum (stomach).

Find more information on the DairyNZ website <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/calves/colostrum/>

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## Down Cows

Cows go down in spring for many reasons such as metabolic imbalances, hip dislocations, calving paralysis and mastitis. Appropriate **nursing care** for a downer cow will include:

- A comfortable, clean surface (grass, straw, sawdust) that provides a good footing when trying to stand
- Maintain the cow in a sitting (sternal) position, you may need to place a bale of hay behind her
- Minimise muscle damage by changing the side the cow lies on every 3-6 hours
- Free access (while sitting) to high quality feed and fresh water
- Lift the cow 2-3 times a day (no more than 5 minutes if using hip lifters)
- Provide a loose-fitting cover for warmth and to protect from the weather
- Regular stripping out of udder

Cows with **metabolic imbalances** respond to metabolic solution bags. Learn more about these conditions below.

## Milk Fever – Use Calpro375 with B12

Cows with milk fever are often trembly, weak and unable to stand.

Milk fever occurs when there is an increased demand for calcium in the blood that exceeds what the cow is getting through her diet. This usually happens around calving due to the increased calcium demand for milk production.

**Calpro375 is our product of choice as it had 1.5x the calcium than a normal bag plus B12.**



## Spring supplies:

### COW REQUIREMENTS

- Calpromag, Glucalpos
- Calform, Calol, Starter Plus
- Ketol, Ketol Xtra
- Milk Let Down (Oxytocin)
- Mastitis Antibiotics (Injectable and Intramammary)
- Teat Care Products (Udder cream, Pink Ointment, Imflamol Gel)

### CALVING REQUIREMENTS

- Lube
- Calving Ropes/Chains
- Disinfectant (Virkon, Vetsan, Sterigene)
- Gloves

### CALF REQUIREMENTS

- Scour Remedies (Scourban, Pink Tablets)
- Oral Rehydration (Revive, Diarrest, Enerlect)
- Naval Spray (Iodine Tincture Spray)
- Calf Shed (Virkon, Vetsan)  Optiguard

- Tube Feeders

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Tail Spray
- Gloves
- Syringes and Needles
- Antiseptic Soap
- Cow/Calf cover

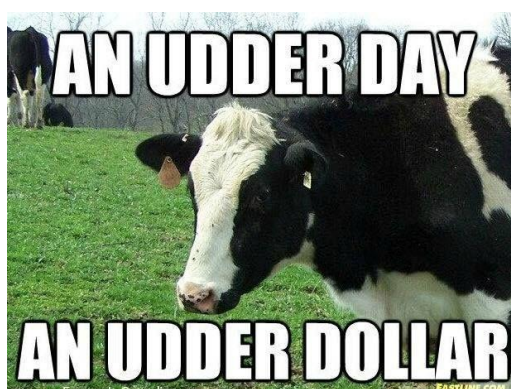


## Casualty cow collection update

We are really pleased to report that Taranaki Bulk Ltd (a fully owned subsidiary of AgTrans) is going to reestablish a Casualty Cow Collection in the Taranaki region. They are based in Hawera and are very familiar with Agricultural transport around the region.

<https://www.agtrans.nz/>

The intention is to have an online ordering system with GPS location pickup so that everything is streamlined and ready for collection by mid July.



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## Nitrates

**Nitrate poisoning** in cows happens when they eat feed with high nitrate levels, often in late autumn or winter. This page details how nitrate transforms to nitrite in the cow's rumen and binds to haemoglobin in the blood, stopping it from carrying oxygen, which can lead to rapid death. The page outlines critical nitrate levels in feed, risk factors, how to reduce risk, and symptoms of nitrate poisoning. Additionally, it provides guidance on what to do if you see symptoms in your herd. The page also explains what causes high nitrate levels in plants, including environmental and plant stress factors.

Nitrate poisoning is caused by high nitrate levels in feed and it usually occurs in late autumn or winter, particularly during a flush of growth after a dry period.

### Ways to minimise risks

- **Test any feed** - this is the only way to quantify levels if you think feed is at risk;
- **Feed silage/hay before** moving animals to a new break to ensure they are not hungry when shifted;
- **Move breaks in the afternoon** to allow for maximum time for photosynthesis in plants (converts nitrate to protein). Take care on overcast/cold days;
- **Ensure grazing is not down to the stem**, or 'hard' grazing, as nitrate levels are often higher in the stem/bulb. This may require larger breaks or more supplementary feed first;
- **Check animals** one hour after moving on to the break. This should be done after each new break as nitrate levels can vary across paddocks

**We have on farm nitrate kits for \$75+GST and this will do 10 samples.**

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## Disbudding

Coastal Vets Premium Disbudding Service is very popular, many of our clients enjoy the benefits of happier calves and a much easier job at a busy time of the season.

- Calves are sedated and local anaesthetic is used to desensitise the horn bud.
- The best time to do this is between 2 and 4 weeks of age when the calves are still in the shed, as the handling process is easier and a more reliable disbud is achieved.
- For many people it will be best to disbud the calves in two batches.

While sedated the calves can be checked for extra teats which can be removed by the veterinarian, and they can easily be tagged, and/or DNA sampled. We will usually administer the first blackleg vaccination at disbudding with either Coglavax 8in1 or Covexin 10in1.

**Get your calves booked in now.**

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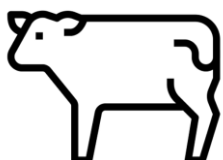
## Drench after calving

### *Eprisure and Eprinex Pour-on's/Injectable – Best Milk response*

- For farmers who would like to drench **late in the dry period** or **after the cows have calved** the best option is either Eprinex or Eprisure.
- Both are **pour-on's** and have **nil milk and meat witholds**.
- These can be given at or after calving and will the **best milk response**.
- 5L will **dose 100** (500kg live weight) or **110** (450kg weight) **adult cows**.
- 5L and 20L sizes available.



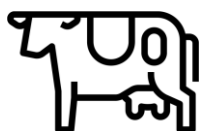
**Helps the rumen function better**



**Protects against ketosis, helping cows get in calf.**



**Increases milk protein production**



**Helps prevent bloat**

## Rumenox and Ketosis

*Ketosis is one of the metabolic diseases we routinely deal with in dairy cows in early lactation and can cause significant issues in the herd at a sub-clinical level. In early lactation all cows are in some degree of negative energy balance, as they are physiologically programmed to mobilise body fat to produce milk.*

*One of the most widespread diseases preventing cows getting in calf in New Zealand is subclinical ketosis.*

*Subclinical ketosis is a 'silent disease' that cannot be seen visually but quietly exists, robbing cows of energy and compromising their milk production, performance and health.*

*Recent NZ studies of subclinical ketosis revealed a staggering 7% reduction in 6-week in-calf rate.*

*Prevention strategies for subclinical ketosis*

- Getting cows to condition prior to calving.
- Good transition management including mineral supplementation.
- Maximising cow intake post calving.
- Reduced milking frequency in colostrum until cows are at full intake.
- Using Rumenox

*Rumenox® helps the rumen work the way it should. It does this by adjusting fermentation in the rumen to a level more beneficial for the cow's overall health. Cows are better able to maintain weight and condition, supporting milk protein production and in-calf rates while reducing the risk of ketosis and bloat.*

Go to <https://rumenox.co.nz>



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## Metrichecking

Endometritis is an infection in the uterus that occurs commonly after calving. Endometritis cows are not systemically sick, and many will self-resolve, however some may not clear this infection in time for mating. Endometritis leads to poorer reproduction in the mating period. Treating these cows means better reproductive performance versus cows that are left untreated. Endometritis is detected using a Metricheck™ device which is used in the vagina to examine the discharge from the uterus which is scored from a scale of one (clean) to five (dirty).

### Risk Factors for Endometritis

- Low body condition score at calving (<BCS 5)
- Younger cows & heifers
- Breed (Friesians more likely than Jerseys or Crossbreds)
- Retained foetal membranes (RFMs)
- Difficult calving/assisted calving
- Milk fever/metabolic disease
- Twins
- Birth to a dead calf
- Mastitis/Lameness in the early post calving period



Metricheck device

### Who do I metricheck?

- All of your cows! Most endometritis cows look 'healthy'

### When do I metricheck?

There are a couple of options for when you should metricheck

1. (gold standard) check all cows in batches between two and four weeks (maximum of six weeks) after calving & treat positive cows.
2. Check the "at risk" cow in batches between two and four weeks after calving. Check the whole herd five weeks out from mating. Treat all positives.

### How are positive cows treated?

- Treatment is irrigation of the uterus with an antibiotic (Metricure or Metriclean).
  - \*No milk withholding period and a short meat withholding (4 days).
- Farmers certified as AB technicians are able to apply the treatment themselves.

Identifying and treating endometritis has on average 4-5x return on investment, making it one of the best and easiest things that you can do on farm to improve reproduction.



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