



What's Up Doc?

- Beth Scott

Summer has been kind and there is still plenty of good quality grass around, so cows are looking in better condition than last year going into autumn.

After last year's absence, facial eczema has reared its ugly head again. While spore counts haven't got sky high, the season has dragged on and we have seen severe outbreaks in cases where zinc supplementation was sub-optimal.

We are still spore counting, but it would also be wise to get suspect pasture samples tested for nitrates. We have on-farm test kits available.

We have also been seeing quite a few lame cows out on-farm. The best way to manage lame cows is to get them seen to as soon as possible, ideally within 12-24hrs, so they can get the treatment they need and accelerate their recovery.

R2 heifers will be coming back home to the farm in preparation for teat sealing

and calving. Oscar discusses the benefits of teat sealing heifers.

Now is also a great time to look at trace element supplementation. Going into winter, copper levels in pasture are at their lowest. Meanwhile, animal requirements increase during winter and spring, so it is the most common time we see deficiency.

If liver copper stores are adequate, most animals will be able to keep up a good level of minerals. However, if they are depleted, deficiency will occur. Liver biopsies give a much better idea of liver stores than blood samples and we always recommend them over blood tests.

Copper and trace mineral capsules such as Copasure (copper) and Tracesure (selenium, iodine and cobalt/B12) are great options for youngstock at grazing - giving up to 6 months supplementation.

What's happening on-farm?

- ✓ Dry-off
- ✓ Heifer teat sealing
- ✓ RVM and milk quality consults
- ✓ Herd vaccinations

Trace minerals are also beneficial for newborn calves. Multimin contains trace minerals that boost immunity and help to prevent disease and death in the sheds. Jackie goes into more depth on this, but if you are interested in using it this coming season, have a discussion with your KeyVet.

Broken legs in heifers

- Beth Scott

Over the past few seasons, we have still seen cases of well grown heifers with broken legs. These usually occur with no source of trauma, and heifers are often just found in the paddock severely lame.

Broken legs are often seen early in their first lactation, where calcium is mobilised from bone for lactation demand straight after calving, causing a transient osteoporosis. Most animals can cope with this, but if there has been underlying weakness from nutritional inadequacy when they were growing (mainly copper), normal forces can result in fractures.

By the time the fractures occur it is too late to do much about the bone's structure. The copper deficiency that occurred while they were growing affected the collagen formation and lifelong bone strength.

The best way to prevent fractures is to keep on top of copper supplementation from weaning through to mating.

Talk to your Key Vet if you would like to optimise your young stock's trace mineral programme.

Now is a great time to check trace minerals (ideally liver biopsy for copper) and give supplemental copper (copper boluses or injection). Winter is a time of low copper availability and as we are finishing facial eczema season, there will be no interaction with zinc.



Seal the deal!

- Oscar Porras

Maximising heifer health with teat sealing.

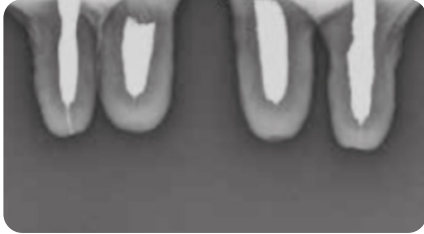


Image by: Zoetis NZ.

With the winter period fast approaching for our spring herds, drying off the cows becomes a big part of every farmer's calendar. Dry-off involves placing either antibiotics, teat sealant, or both, into each of the cow's teats in a sterile manner.

Teat sealing heifers, often considered a preventive measure, involves the application of a protective barrier to the teats of our first-time calvers. Teatseal is typically a flexible sealant which forms a physical barrier against pathogens, preventing infections such as mastitis during the crucial pre-calving period.

Here are some key benefits of teat sealing heifers:

- 1. Reduced risk of mastitis:** Mastitis not only affects milk production, but also poses a significant health risk to the heifer. Teat sealing acts as a shield, guarding against the entry of bacteria and reducing the likelihood of mastitis development.
- 2. Enhanced udder health:** By creating a protective barrier, teat sealing helps maintain the integrity of the udder tissue. This promotes healthier udders, ensuring the heifers are in optimal condition for lactation once they calve.
- 3. Improved milk quality:** Mastitis not only impacts milk quantity, but also compromises its quality. Teat sealing contributes to better milk quality by preventing

bacterial contamination, resulting in higher yields of premium-grade milk.

4. Early investment, long-term gains:

Incorporating teat sealing into your heifer management practices represents an investment in their future health and productivity. By preventing mastitis early on, you're laying the foundation for a productive and profitable herd.

5. Ease of application:

Teat sealing is a straightforward procedure that can be easily integrated into existing herd

management routines. With minimal time and effort required, it offers a high return on investment in terms of heifer health and performance.

6. Environmental friendliness:

Teat sealing reduces the need for antibiotic treatments, aligning with sustainable farming practices and promoting animal welfare.

As we gear up for the calving season, it's essential to prioritise proactive measures like teat sealing to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our heifers. By investing in preventive care today, we're ensuring a brighter, healthier future for our herd and our farm.





Remind me why Multimin is great for my farm?

- Jackie Davies

Multimin is an easily absorbed mineral injection of copper, selenium, zinc and manganese. It is used prior to periods of stress to boost your cows' immune system, with some impressive results from trials in New Zealand:

At a dose of 1ml/50kg at birth, the use of Multimin in calves was found to **reduce calf deaths by about 50%**. The trial looked at 900 calves and found a reduction in scours in calves between 3 - 35 days old, from 10.6% in control calves to 4.9% in injected calves. This, and other disease reduction, caused the mortality rate over this period to be 7.5%, down from 15.6%.

The rate of death and illnesses in the first 48 hours after birth were not changed by giving calves Multimin at birth. Their growth rate was also not affected, so it is just the improved immunity we are getting.

The trial also showed that the early weeks of life have the highest mortality rates, so a calf's response to a Multimin injection is at its highest during that time. One of the next big periods of stress for calves is at weaning, but there is a lower rate of illness at this time. As such, while giving a Multimin injection to calves at weaning does still help to reduce illness, it is not as dramatic a response.

In cows, giving Multimin pre-calving and pre-mating has been shown to increase in-calf rates by 3.3%, and on average it took cows 3 days less to get in calf.

Overall, giving Multimin at periods of stress has a good return on investment - the hardest thing is remembering to give it!



I don't see any cows!?

They must be ca-moo-flaged!



Cancer eye - it pays to check!

When you're working at the back-end of a cow every day, it's easy to miss what's going on at the front-end. However, it should be good stockmanship and practice to look, periodically, for signs of cancer eye.

As the name suggests, cancer eye (otherwise known as squamous cell carcinoma) is a cancer of the eye, which can affect the eyelids, eyeball or 'third eyelid' (the eyelid that slides across the eye) and it is as bad as it sounds!

Why do cows get it?

Environmental, viral and genetic factors are said to play a role in this tumour's development. It is most commonly seen in unpigmented tissue (commonly white-faced animals, but it is not just localised to these) and is related to ultraviolet radiation - not too dissimilar to skin cancer in humans.

What does it look like?

The initial stages of cancer eye are usually slow. It may just present as a tiny, knobbly growth on the third eyelid, which can be hard to detect. Cows may have a slight discharge from the eye, due to irritation.

Over time, the tumour will (usually) continue to grow in size, eventually becoming a large mass that becomes necrotic and foul smelling.

If the tumour spreads, it can also cause the lymph nodes around the cow's head to swell up.

What should you do about it?

Quite often, people initially confuse cancer eye with pink eye and treat it with a tube of eye ointment, which will offer no improvement. After this, a vet visit is highly recommended.

Like most types of cancer, **early detection leads to better outcomes.** Early surgical removal of the lesion provides the best outcome and the prognosis is a lot better when the lesion is small in size, as we are able to get good margins. A cell left behind is enough to seed another tumour!

Sometimes, just the third eyelid can be removed, while other times, the whole eye might need to come out. In some cases, nothing can be done and calling pet food is the only option left.

If the tumour has invaded local lymph nodes, or has migrated into tissues around the eye, then removal is not an option.

Be aware that transportation to the works is not permitted when she has reached this stage. Only a very small cancer eye is allowed, if certified by a vet.

It pays to check!

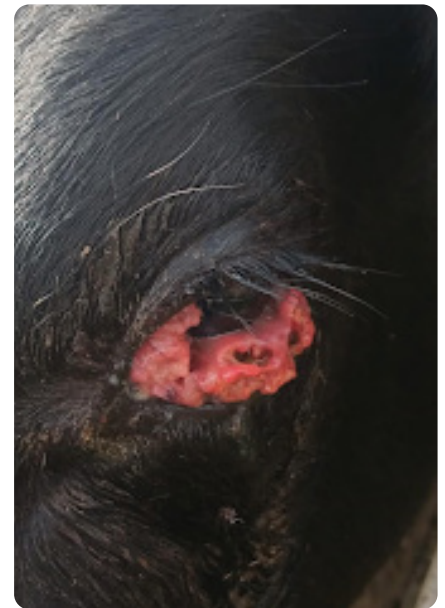
If you see a tumour in your herd, get it checked! Even if you just flick your KeyVet a photo, we can usually give you an indication as to whether it needs to be examined more closely, or removed, leading to a much better outcome for all!

If in doubt, get it checked out!

Stages of development:



Early stages of cancer eye, as above, can easily be removed and are less likely to recur.



This can be removed, however, the chance of recurrence is high.

Our clinic

62 Moorhouse Street,
Morrinsville
3300

Phone : 07 889 6738
Email: office@vetcm.co.nz
www.vetclinicmorrinsville.co.nz

