

NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

- ◆ Seasonal reminders
- ◆ Pregnancy testing heifers
- ◆ When to pregnancy test
- ◆ Early pregnancy testing
- ◆ Heat Stress
- ◆ Jejunal haemorrhagic syndrome (JHS)

Seasonal reminders:

- Calves born this spring should be treated for liver fluke at about this time. We recommend drenching calves with Fasinex or Flukare C oral drench. The injectable treatments for fluke such as Ivomec Plus or Virbamec Plus are suitable for adult cattle. They should not be used on calves as a fluke treatment as they do not treat immature fluke.



- Do not let cattle graze country with significant amounts of heliotrope. Heliotrope damages the liver and cattle are affected months and even years later.

Pregnancy testing heifers

We like to pregnancy test heifers early because it is very difficult to age beyond 3½ months. The calf falls out of reach in heifers earlier than in older cows.

Compared with older cows a higher percentage of heifers are pregnant in the first 3 weeks. An early preg test will only leave a few heifers that will require a second preg test at a later date.

The advantage of identifying empty and late calving heifers is that they can be sold for export. Late calving heifers are less profitable because they are difficult to get back in calf quickly once they enter the milking herd and often end up empty or as carry-over cows.

If heifers have been artificially inseminated an early preg test will help identify those that are pregnant to AI. This is particularly important when you have used sexed semen.

When to pregnancy test

The best way to get accurate calving dates is to have two rounds of pregnancy testing.

1. The first round is done 7 or 8 weeks after the end of AI. Cows that are pregnant to AI are identified.
2. The second round is done 7 or 8 weeks after the bulls come out so it is possible to identify all empty cows and cows that are pregnant to the bull.

Two rounds of pregnancy testing are more accurate because it is easier to age pregnancies early on. It is easy to tell an 8-week pregnancy from a 12-week pregnancy but very difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate between a 5-month and 6-month pregnancy.

The advantages of accurate calving dates are: -

- Drying off dates can be more accurately judged. Late cows can be milked through June and July if conditions are favorable. There will be money to be made during these months.
- There is less chance of dry cow antibiotic residues in the milk.
- Cows can start getting their transition feed at the right time.

Last day of AI	Ideal time to preg test
Nov 17	Dec 29 – Jan 12
Nov 24	Jan 5 – 19
Nov 30	Jan 11-25
Dec 8	Jan 19 – Feb 2
Dec 15	Jan 27 – Feb 9
Dec 22	Feb 2 – 16
Dec 29	Feb 9 – 23
Jan 1	Feb 16 – Mar 2

Early pregnancy testing

With the ultrasound we have been pregnancy testing down to as low as day 31 after insemination. We have been doing this to identify non-pregnant cows that have not returned back on heat.

These non-pregnant cows that are not seen back on heat are the “phantom cows” that often do not start cycling again until February or March. These cows are very frustrating but when they are identified early enough there is a chance to join them again before it is too late.

Cows that are pregnancy tested this early will require another pregnancy test later as there is a small but significant amount of embryonic loss from day 31 onwards.

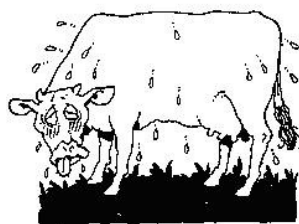
Heat Stress

Heat stress in cattle occurs when they are exposed to environmental temperatures greater than 25°C, in combination with high humidity or direct sunlight. If cows are experiencing heat stress, they will actively seek shade and wet areas. Some cows will be agitated and breathe with an open-mouth as their core temperature increases. Milk production and feed intake will drop. Animals experiencing heat stress need to be cooled down using fans and/or cold water over the body.

Sick cows and cows that experience milk fever are more vulnerable to heat stress.

Some tips that help prevent cows from experiencing heat stress:

- Provide plenty of water
- Provide plenty of shade (trees or sheds)
- Use water sprinklers and/or fans at milking
- Put cows on the yards under sprinklers during the hottest part of the day
- Adjust milking times to avoid the warmer period of the day- earlier morning and later evening milkings
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Jejunal haemorrhagic syndrome (JHS)

It is around this time of year our practice sees a few cases of jejunal haemorrhagic syndrome. It is a relatively rare condition of dairy cattle in Australia.

The exact cause of the condition is unknown. However, it is thought to be multifactorial and is associated with a bacterial overgrowth of *Clostridium perfringens* Type A within the small intestinal tract. This results in the cow haemorrhaging into the intestinal tract.

Most affected cows show no previous signs of being sick and are found dead. If the cow lives long enough to show signs of the illness, she may show mild signs of colic (treading and kicking at the abdomen, teeth grinding and grunting), have pale mucous membranes, appear depressed, have sunken eyes and have a rapid heart rate. Faeces may vary from little passes, to diarrhoea to having clots of blood.

It is difficult to diagnosis in the live animal and a presumptive diagnosis is made based on clinical signs. A definitive diagnosis is generally made at post mortem.

Treatment consists of supportive measures such as IV fluids, calcium and pain-relief. Under some circumstances, surgery has been attempted to remove the clotted blood from the intestinal tract.

The prognosis is very poor, and majority of the affected cows die.

Picture below is of a blood clot in the jejunum of a dairy cow at post mortem.

