

NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal reminders:

- Put a halter on down cows with a prolapsed uterus as soon as you find them. When cows get up and walk the prolapsed uterus stretches and bangs into the cow's hocks.
- Treat dirty cows with metricure early. Dirty cows treated with metricure two weeks after calving are twice as likely to get in calf as those not treated.



- Use Vetrelyte-ZB calf electrolyte for scouring calves. Feedback from calf rearers who use Vetrelyte-ZB is that it is a superior product for treating dehydrated calves.

Corona virus

Our goal is to reduce transmission of virus between: -

- our staff and clients
- clients and our staff
- between staff

Vets have been deemed an essential service and at this stage we are attempting to provide service to all our cattle clients while winding back our small animal operation to urgent matters only.

Drug supply

We would appreciate it if you ring up first with drug orders. This will reduce the waiting time around the front counter.

If anybody would like their drugs delivered ring us up and, in most instances, we will be going past in the next day or two and can drop it off.

On farm

It is difficult to keep humans 2 meters apart during many of our jobs but usually with a bit of planning we can reduce the risk.

Wearing a mask is not so bad on a frosty morning in winter but might become more of a problem as it warms up.

We are encouraging our vets to speak up if they think there is a safer way of performing a procedure. Please do not be offended if they ask you to move back or to not touch something.

All our staff have been told to stay at home if they are feeling sick no matter how minor. We would appreciate it if anybody on farm that is not feeling right stays well away.

Normally we appreciate help cleaning up our gear afterwards but right now it is probably better to let us clean and cart our own gear back to the car.

Vaccines at Lockington shop

Please ring ahead if you would like to get vaccines from our Lockington shop. We do carry a limited range at Lockington and sometimes are found short in larger orders.

Uterine pessaries

It seems logical to treat cows with retained afterbirth with pessaries in the uterus to try and reduce the chance of infection. Studies have shown that in many cases pessaries do not help cows with retained afterbirth and maybe even make things worse.

It may be that pessaries can slow the “rotting” process of the afterbirth and increase the time that the afterbirth is retained. It is thought that the presence of antibiotics in the uterus decreases the production of white cells in the uterus as well as reducing the effectiveness of white cells in the uterus.

There is more and more evidence that the best treatment for cows with retained afterbirth is to do nothing unless the cow is sick (has a temperature above 39^o C). If the cow is unwell then she should be treated with an injectable antibiotic such as Oxytet. If she is very sick, then she will benefit from veterinary help with anti-inflammatory drugs or fluids.

If you want to use pessaries, we recommend that you: -

- Administer them within the first week of calving while the cervix is open, and they are easily introduced.
- Do **not** use them when the afterbirth is still present.
- Give cows that are not well injectable antibiotics.

In general, we recommend the following treatment protocol for dirty cows: -

- Retained membranes should be left to rot out and not removed with force.
- Pessaries should not be used until the afterbirth has come away.
- Metricures are the best treatment for cows that have an infection in the uterus and should be used between 1 and 6 weeks after calving.



Humane killing of calves

The welfare of animals is becoming increasingly important to the general public. It is vital to the dairy industry that we do the right thing and that we are seen to do the right thing. One area that we can improve is the humane killing of induced, sick and dying calves.

The best way to kill calves quickly and humanely is with a captive bolt device. The effect is the same as shooting with a gun but there is not a projectile. For this reason, they are much safer. You do not need any registration or licence to own or operate a captive bolt.

The captive bolt device is available for **\$559** (inc GST). Please contact us if you are interested in owning a captive bolt device. They are simple to use and are very effective. We recommend a short training session of 15 -30 minutes if you have not used one previously.

It is our opinion that it is not good enough to “knock a calf on the head” to humanely kill it. When it comes to animal welfare, it is better to be ahead of public opinion.

Metacam, mastitis and fertility

Recent studies into the effect of using the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) Metacam in cases of mastitis have yielded some interesting results for cow fertility.

A 2009 study in New Zealand found that cows with mastitis that received a dose of Metacam (along with standard antibiotic therapy) were **42%** less likely to be culled. The most likely reason was that fewer of these cows were empty at the end of the season.

Subsequent studies have confirmed that this reduced culling rate is due to improved fertility - with a **10% improvement in first service conception rate**, a reduction in the number of required inseminations and **increased probability of cows being in calf at 120 days** post calving.



Most of the mastitis cases were at or around calving so we are not sure of the exact mechanism, but it may have something to do with the effect on the oocyte (or egg) when the cow has mastitis.

It is important to note that in these studies the mastitis was mild clinical mastitis where the cow was not off its food or sick.

There is also evidence to suggest that Metacam has positive effects on the outcome of mastitis treatment – Metacam used with an antibiotic was found to result in a 16% improvement in bacteriological cure rates when compared to antibiotic alone. This means more cows can eliminate the causative bacteria from their udders.

It has always made sense to give cows that are sick a dose of Metacam but now we have good evidence that all cows with clinical mastitis will benefit from treatment.