



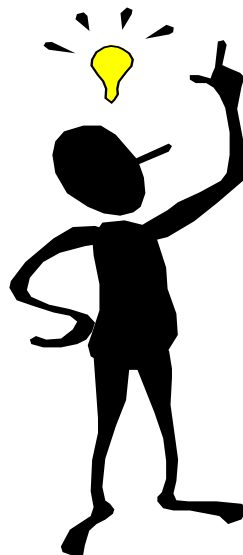
# NEWSLETTER

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**Seasonal reminders:**

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



**Ash Phipps – a very fine fellow**

Those of you that are observant might have noticed that Ash has had an extra spring in his step lately. This is because he recently passed a gruelling set of exams to become a fellow of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (ANZCVS) in Dairy cattle medicine and management.

This means that Ash is legally able to call himself a specialist. Fellowship of the ANZCVS is recognised within the profession within Australia/ New Zealand and internationally as a qualification associated with scholarly and technical excellence.

Ash has studied incredibly hard all his adult life but particularly so over the last three years. He completed a double master’s degree in 2015 as well as passing the exams to become a member of the ANZCVS.

There are only two other vets in Australia with this qualification. We are extraordinarily proud of Ash and his achievements.



**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 later.

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 come 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.

## Water deprivation in heifers

We often see cases of water deprivation in heifers during the summer months and the consequences are devastating. This can be for a variety of reasons such as a broken pump or pipe. If possible, heifers should be checked daily or at least every second day especially when it is hot.

If you ever are in a situation where you discover stock without water, it is recommended that you only slowly introduce water. The recommended rate is 0.5% of bodyweight each hour. For a 400kg heifer this means only 2 litres each hour for the first 24 hours.

The practicalities of this are challenging if there is a group of very thirsty animals.

Heifers suffer brain damage when they drink too much water too quickly. The brain cells have a high concentration of sodium in them and when the animal drinks, water is drawn into the brain cells causing them to swell. These animals have a stumbly gait and some appear blind.

The treatment of these brain affected animals is intravenous hypertonic (extra salty) solution to try and draw out fluid from the brain.

