



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.
- Watch out for red-rooted amaranthus. There is plenty of this weed around after the rain. Young stock can eat too much amaranthus. It contains a kidney toxin and can be fatal.



Oxytet is back

After a long absence oxytet in the form of alamycin short acting is back on the shelves. That is the good news.

The bad news is that the manufacturers have changed the formulation so that it is thicker and harder to inject.

The milk withholding time has increased to 96 hours (4 days) and the meat withholding time is now only 8 days after the last injection.

The other thing to note is that with the changed formulation the manufacturers advise that the drug should **not** be given by intra-venous injection. There have been reports to changes to the heart rhythm of cows that have had IV alamycin.



Special Formula is coming back

After an even longer absence we are anticipating that we will have Special Formula intramammary treatment back shortly.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to get any Noroclox LC at the moment. It is likely to be unavailable for another 4 to 8 weeks. We do have stocks of Orbenin LA which has the same active ingredient and the same treatment interval of every 48 hours. Orbenin LA does have a slightly longer milk withholding time of 120 hours (5 days). The meat withholding time of Orbenin LA is zero days.

We live in hope that as the effects of the pandemic recede that our drug supplies will get back to normal.



Farm Safety Rebate Scheme

From the Rural Finance website: -

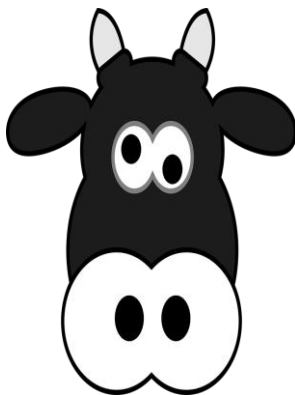
The Victorian Government (through Agriculture Victoria) has provided an opportunity to improve safety outcomes on farms with the establishment of the Farm Safety Rebate Scheme.

Rebates of up to \$5,000 excluding GST are available with at least 50% co-contribution to assist eligible farm businesses within Victoria to invest in infrastructure and equipment to improve safety for farming families, workers and visitors to Victorian farms.

It seems like this scheme is nearly fully committed but we would like to point out that a new crush fits the guidelines nicely.

Criteria for a good cattle crush include: -

- A split gate on both sides
- A split gate behind the cow
- A vet gate
- A sliding door behind the vet gate
- A head bail that opens so that the cow can walk through



Mycoplasma

Mycoplasma bovis is a disease of cattle that was first diagnosed in Australia in 1970. An outbreak in New Zealand in 2017 led to an attempt to eradicate the disease by slaughtering thousands of cattle. This eradication attempt in New Zealand is on-going and has already cost more than 350 million dollars.

Mycoplasma bovis causes a variety of clinical signs but the main ones in Australia are mastitis that does not respond to treatment and swollen joints in milkers. The main signs seen in calves are swollen joints, infected ears, and respiratory disease.

Mycoplasma bovis is a difficult disease to diagnose. It is a type of bacteria that is difficult to grow and will not grow on normal mastitis cultures. There is a PCR test that can be used on Bulk milk samples, but infected cows only shed the organism intermittently so false negative tests are common.

There is also an antibody test that measures the antibody levels in bulk milk samples. Recent surveys have suggested that the incidence of *Mycoplasma* in Victorian dairy herds may be quite high, but the results were a little confusing.

Mycoplasma in local herds

We recently collected samples from 35 bulk milk vats locally and measured *Mycoplasma* antibody levels. All 35 samples tested negative but of the 7 herds that also supplied a sample from the hospital herd, 5 were positive.

Furthermore, 2 of the 5 samples that had high antibody levels were positive on the PCR test.

So, we have a disease in our herds that New Zealand are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to eradicate and we are having trouble just diagnosing it. Why is there such a different approach?

The New Zealand dairy herd has undergone a massive expansion in recent years and cows are regularly moved from farm to farm within the corporate farming system. It was also a new disease there having been diagnosed for the first time in 2017. There is only one strain and the thinking is, that it got into New Zealand for the first time about 18 months earlier.

Mycoplasma in our herds mainly causes cases of mastitis that do not respond to treatment. A policy of culling cows that do not cure when treated for mastitis is a good first step in controlling mycoplasma.

As always, we think it is a good idea to get a diagnosis so that you know what you are dealing with. Please let us know if you think you might have mycoplasma.

