

# NEWSLETTER

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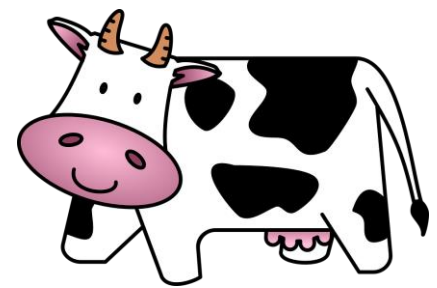
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## New vet – Frankie

We are pleased to welcome Frankie Collett to our team of vets. Frankie is a 2017 graduate from the University of Adelaide and has previously worked at Mt Gambier and Kyabram.

She is very enthusiastic to work with dairy cows and also has a special interest in all things sheep.

Outside of work Frankie’s interests include gardening and cooking.



## Seasonal reminders:

- Cows joined to calve in the autumn should be preg tested soon. We are better able to age pregnancies early on



- 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.
- Time to disbud the spring born calves. The ideal age for disbudding is 2 to 8 weeks
- If you have used a bull at the end of the autumn joining watch out for the possibility of early spring calving cows and heifers getting pregnant when they have only been calved as little as 3 weeks.
- Spray paint the leg that is lame if we are coming out to treat lame cows. Sometimes the cow that is very obviously lame walking along the track can mask that lameness once she is stirred up and on concrete.

## Uterine pessaries

It seems logical to treat cows with retained afterbirth with pessaries in the uterus to try and reduce the chance of infection. However, 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<sup>0</sup> 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.

## Lungworm in calves

Lungworm disease is due to invasion of the respiratory tract by the worm *Dictyocaulus viviparus*, which may lead to bronchitis and pneumonia. Infection with *D. viviparus* occurs primarily in calves younger than 10 months of age but sometimes older cattle are affected.

Dairy calves are most vulnerable to lungworm disease, as they are often placed on paddocks grazed each year by successive groups of calves.

Affected calves are usually bright and alert and continue to eat but lose condition rapidly. The calves may

breathe more rapidly and often have sudden attacks of coughing.

Severely affected calves may breathe with their mouth open, extend their head and neck and stick out their tongue each time they try to cough. Secondary bacterial infections are common.

Treatment of affected calves generally involves drenching them as well as giving them anti-inflammatory drug (Metacam or ketoprofen) and an antibiotic to prevent secondary bacterial infections.

Lungworm is best prevented by ensuring all calves are drenched appropriately.

