

NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal reminders:

- Early removal of eye cancers is much easier and more likely to be successful. If you are not sure if an eye problem is cancer or not get the eye checked promptly.
- Check “at risk” autumn calving cows for uterine infections 2 to 4 weeks after calving. These include assisted calvings, twins and cows with retained afterbirth. If infected treat them with **metricure**.



Managing calves after difficult calvings

Traditionally after we had pulled a calf, we would hang the calf up by its back legs as it was thought this would help remove fluid from the calf’s lungs. We now know that most of the fluid that comes out of the mouth shortly after birth comes from the stomach and does not need to be removed.

If a calf is hung up by its back legs the contents of the abdomen are pressing on the calf’s diaphragm making it more difficult to breathe.

So, save your back and do not lift calves up and over the fence railings. Simply sit the calf up on its chest and rub the ribs with a towel or a handful of hay. Sometimes it is useful to clear fluid from the mouth and nose with a towel. A stalk of hay or a small stick up the nostril can also help to stimulate breathing.

Lamé cow crush

Treating lamé cows can be very rewarding. If we use a cowslip or wooden block, the cow walks away in a lot less pain than before treatment and makes a full productive recovery.

Treating lamé cows can also be difficult, dirty back-breaking work. In our ideal world we would like to see: -

- The dog tied up
- At least one person to help
- The leg that is lamé clearly identified preferably with a splash of paint
- An area to watch the cow walking around before she is restrained
- A crush designed to reduce the risk of injury to the cow, the farmer, and the vet

- A non-slip surface in the crush (a rubber mat)
- Running water
- Good lighting and a power source
- Split gates that open all the way on both sides of the crush (to help with front feet)
- Somewhere to hook up lame cow pulleys
- Somewhere to hook up a belly strap

Several farms have made simple modifications to their crush to make it easier to treat lame cows. This has usually involved welding some rings to the side of the crush so that a steel pole can be pushed through just behind the cow. The feet can then be tied away from the side of the crush and worked on more safely and effectively.

Please speak to one of the vets when they are on your farm to work out the best way to modify your crush.

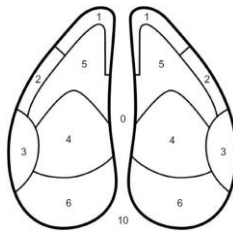


Vets running late

We know how annoying it is when we are running late for calls. It makes it very difficult to plan your day.

Sometimes emergencies crop up and sometimes routine jobs take longer than expected. If we are running late, we will always try to contact you to let you know what is going on.

One important cause of us running late is “while you’re here” as in “while you’re here could you have a look at this lame cow or sick calf”, If you know that you might have extra animals, please ring the office to let us know so that we can adjust our plan of attack.



Lame cow facts

- A cow takes 60% of her weight on her front feet
- In front foot lameness the inside claw is more likely affected
- Hind legs are involved in propulsion
- Propulsion causes more foot stress than weight-bearing
- The outside claws of the hind feet bear the burden of continuously changing weight load
- Hind feet have a smaller weight bearing surface than front feet
- 85-90% of all lameness in dairy cows occurs in the feet
- 85% of foot lameness occurs in the hind feet

- Two-thirds of hind foot lameness occurs in the outside claw

Heifers are much more likely to have front feet lameness than older cows. We think that this is due to heifers having to go backwards more often because older cows boss them around. When cows go backwards the front feet are the main source of propulsion.

Salmonella Research

Last October, our practice assisted a Melbourne University researcher by sampling faeces from the milking yard of 23 dairy farms to culture for Salmonella. This was part of a greater research project looking at validating the technique we use to collect the samples from the milking yard and estimating the prevalence of farms culturing positive.

Of the 23 farms, 9 farms have cultured Salmonella. The process of typing the Salmonella (to determine which strain) will be carried out in the coming months.

An important question is what does a positive culture result mean for the farm? This is still a bit of an unknown. The strain of salmonella MAY give us an idea of the importance of a positive culture. For example, if it was Salmonella Typhimurium, we know that it is commonly spread by birds and rodents. Or if it was Salmonella Dublin, we know that the herd is likely to have a carrier cow and sheds the bacteria and will do so for life. However, there are hundreds of strains of Salmonella out there.

We will provide a follow-up in a future newsletter once we have the final typing results later this year.