Rochester Veterinary Practice October 2023

NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal reminders:

- Vaccinate spring calves with 7-in-1 vaccine from 6 weeks of age followed by a booster 4 to 6 weeks later.

- Bulls should have their fertility assessed and vaccinated against vibrio and pestivirus (BVD) at least 2 weeks before you plan to use them.
- Autumn born calves may benefit from a fluke drench now. It is not usually necessary to treat spring calves until January.
- 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. It is possible for cows to get pregnant within a week of calving.

New vet Sam B

We are pleased to welcome Sam Byrnes to our team of vets. Sam is a 2023 graduate from Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.

Sam is very enthusiastic to work with dairy cows and will also do some small animal work. Outside of work, Sam's interests include footy, cricket and fishing.

Synchronisation programs

There is no '*one size fits all'* synchrony. We encourage you to talk to one of our vets about what program might best suit your needs.

Synchronisation programs can be confusing – there are many to choose from and lots of different terms used. We have been using Synch programs (and its variations) for many years with reasonable results.

Bull testing

When we test bulls, we find that about one in every five or six fails. The reasons vary but most often are related to poor semen quality. The bulls that we fail usually look otherwise normal.

Sometimes the bulls that we fail have problems that allow them to fertilise a cow but for the pregnancy to then fizzle out. These **non-compensable** bulls are worse than no bull at all as they stop other bulls from getting cows pregnant.

In order to test bulls, the main requirement we have is a good sturdy crush and yards and a power point for the microscope. The job is easier if there is some shade where we can set up the microscope to examine the semen.

It is also a good opportunity to vaccinate bulls against vibrio and pestivirus if they are in the crush.

Is BVDV widespread in the cattle herds in our area?

BVDV is known to negatively impact on the health, production, and reproductive performance of both dairy and beef herds. To answer the question of "Is BVDV widespread in the cattle herds in our area?", we looked at the at the bulk milk tank BVDV antibody test results and BVDV ear notch test results that have been carried out since January 2022.

Bulk Milk Tank (BMT) Antibody Testing

This test looks at the level of BVDV exposure in dairy herds (measured in a SP ratio). The table below groups the herds to the level of exposure and the interpretation for each level.

SP ratio	Number of herds	Interpretation of results
0 to 0.25	1 (2%)	This herd shows little sign of previous exposure to BVDV and has been essentially free of BVDV for some time. All or most of the cows are susceptible to BVDV. Serological screening of all replacement stock and/or the implementation of a vaccination program is strongly advised.
0.25 to 0.5	6 (15%)	Low Exposure: Historical exposure of up to a third of the cows in the herd to BVDV is likely. Typically, older cows or specific mobs, such as bought-in cows, may be immune. Serological screening of all replacement stock and/or the implementation of a vaccination program should be strongly considered.
0.5 to 0.75	11 (27%)	Up to approximately half of the herd has had contact with BVDV. The exposure may be historical or the herd may have occasional contact with the virus. The heifers may have had contact with PIs at grazing. Screening replacement heifers before allowing them to enter the milking herd is strongly recommended.
0.75 to 1	10 (24%)	Either a high proportion of the cows in the herd have been historically exposed to BVDV, or a reasonable proportion of the milking herd has been recently exposed to BVDV. PI presence within the milking herd is less likely however, PI's may exist within young stock. A bulk milk BVDV PCR test could be warranted.
> 1	13 (32%)	The herd is likely to have active BVDV infection, though antibody levels remain high for some time after PI removal. About 40% of herds with this antibody level have a milking PI cow and will be POSITIVE on the bulk milk BVDV PCR. Many high antibody herds may have non-milking PIs present such as bulls, calves, or dry stock. PI's are very likely to exist within young stock.
Total farms	41	**Summary:** The average level of exposure was 0.83! A total of 5 (12%) herds were PCR Positive which indicated a persistently infected (PI) cow was present in the milking herd. All herds that were PCR positive, had a SP ratio of > 0.8.

Ear Notch Testing

This test is used to determine if the animal is persistently infected with BVDV (ie. PI animal). This test can be carried out in the clinic or sent to Swans laboratory for testing.

Results for Dairy farms: Total of 8 different herds have PI animals detected out of 42 herds tested (19%).

Dairy farms	Negative animals tested	PI animals detected	Total animals sampled
Laboratory testing	2570	71	2641
In-clinic testing	193	4	197
Total:	2763	75	2838

Results for Beef farms: Total of 9 different herds have PI animals detected out of 53 herds tested (17%).

Beef farms	Negative animals tested	PI animals detected	Total animals sampled
Laboratory testing	418	14	432
In-clinic testing	197	12	209
Total:	615	26	641

The results above suggest that BVDV is widespread. As not all herds test for BVDV, it is likely to be more prevalent. Therefore, a couple questions to consider, 1) Do you know your herds BVDV status? and, 2) What is your BVDV herd plan to reduce the virus's impact on your herd?