



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.
- A long dry period will help cure existing infections in the udder. Consider drying off high cell count cows a few weeks earlier to maximise their chance of a cure.



- 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.
- Plan for autumn calves to be veterinary disbudded. Ideally calves should be disbudded between 2 to 6 weeks of age.

Cepravin vs Juraclox Dry Cow

We are convinced that Cepralock together with antibiotic dry cow is the best treatment to prevent mastitis at calving.

When cows are treated with a combination of Cepralock and antibiotic dry cow the reduction in cases of clinical mastitis is so significant that most farmers have continued using a combination treatment.

Cepravin DC is more expensive than Juraclox and has a 49-day milk withholding period compared with 35 days for Juraclox. It is essential that you have accurate calving dates before you use Cepravin DC.

Otherwise, there is the risk of cows calving within the withholding period. The best way to get accurate calving dates is by pregnancy testing early. It is too late now to get accurate calving dates for most spring calving cows.

We have good evidence that Cepravin DC alone is better at preventing mastitis at calving than Juraclox alone. We do not have good evidence either way to say whether Juraclox combined with Cepralock is better than Cepravin DC alone.

We do know that Juraclox combined with Cepralock is less likely to give you residue problems than Cepravin DC alone.

We do not have any evidence to say that Cepravin DC is better than Juraclox at curing existing infections and there is no reason to treat high cell count cows with Cepravin DC and expect to get better cure rates.

The Pfizer mastitis survey that recorded the cause of clinical mastitis on five of our herds in the 2011 calendar year found that E coli mastitis was much more prevalent than we thought. The antibiotic in Cepravin DC is effective against E coli but the antibiotic in Juraclox is not.

If you suspect that you have an E coli mastitis problem at calving, then the

most rational dry cow treatment is Cepravin DC plus Cephalock. The best way to determine if you have an E coli problem is to culture cases of clinical mastitis in fresh cows.

Grass Tetany (Hypomagnesaemia)

Grass tetany is not a common condition that we see on the farms in northern Victoria. However, it does occur on occasions.

This potentially fatal condition occurs when cows grazing rapidly growing, low-fibre pastures don't get enough magnesium—especially after rain or sudden drops in temperature.

Risk Factors:

- Cold, wet weather after a dry period.
- Cows in early lactation (within 6 weeks of calving).
- High nitrogen or potassium in pasture (can block magnesium uptake).
- Low magnesium supplementation.

Signs of Grass Tetany:

- Nervousness, twitching, or unsteady gait.
- Cows lying down and not getting up.
- Rapid progression to convulsions or death if untreated.

Prevention strategies are based around magnesium Supplementation - Commonly included in the milking ration.

Other supplementation options include:

- Use magnesium oxide (Causmag) dusted on feed or pasture.
- Offer magnesium licks or water-soluble products in troughs.
- Provide hay or silage alongside pasture to slow digestion and improve magnesium absorption.
- Avoid overuse of potassium-rich fertilizers in autumn.

Monitor At-Risk Stock:

Focus on early lactation cows, older cows, and those with previous history of metabolic disease.

Treatment:

- Usually, veterinary treatment is required.
- Some animals need to be sedated to control convulsions.
- IV magnesium (magnesium sulphate or '4 – 1' IV – the latter does not have enough magnesium to effectively treat a cow with grass tetany).
- Magnesium sulphate or '4 – 1' under the skin to act as magnesium reserve.
- Oral drenching with magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts) may also be used to treat affected cows.
- Offer hay

Prognosis: Unfortunately, clinical cases survival rate is only 40%.

Subacute Ruminal Acidosis (SARA) in cattle on Pastures

As pastures flush with fresh autumn growth, the risk of Sub-Acute Ruminal Acidosis (SARA) quietly increases. This condition, often called the "silent production thief," can impact herd health and milk production before obvious signs appear.

SARA occurs when the pH in a cow's rumen drops below normal levels (usually between 5.5 and 5.8) for several hours a day. Unlike acute acidosis, SARA doesn't usually cause sudden illness — instead, it leads to ongoing, low-grade issues that impact herd health, milk production, and reproductive performance.

It should be noted that SARA can occur in TMR herds as well and the condition presents in a similar manner.

Signs of SARA in the Herd:

- Inconsistent or loose manure (bubbles, undigested fibres).
- Reduced or fluctuating milk production.
- Lower milk fat percentages (fat:protein ratio falls below 1.2) – below 3.3-3.5 over a short period.
- Decreased cud chewing and rumination times.

- Cows showing mild dehydration (sunken eyes, reduced skin elasticity).
- Increased incidence of lameness and hoof problems.
- Poor feed conversion and body condition loss

Why is Autumn Pasture a Risk?

- High sugar and low fibre content in rapidly growing grass accelerates fermentation in the rumen.
- Cool, wet conditions can cause cows to gorge when pasture is lush after rain.

How to Manage SARA Risk This Autumn:

Increase effective fibre intake

- Provide access to good-quality hay or silage before and after grazing.
- Target hay that is dry and coarse, encouraging chewing and saliva production (saliva is a natural buffer for rumen pH).

Controlled Pasture Access:

- Limit time on lush pastures, particularly during high-risk periods (e.g., after a break of fine weather).
- Use strip grazing or back-fencing to control intake.

Supplement Strategically

- Introduce buffers such as sodium bicarbonate via feed or water.
- If grain is fed in the dairy, ensure its introduced gradually, and fibre is available alongside it.

Monitor the Herd

- Watch manure consistency daily — it's an easy early warning sign.
- Review milk fat-to-protein ratios; a ratio below 1.2 can indicate acidosis.
- Work with nutritionist.

If ongoing issues occur, a farm-specific review of feed, pasture management, and supplementation is critical.