

DAIRY TALK



MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

PROVIDING
VET CARE
24/7

When you think **Animal Health** think **Anexa**

Copper Supplementation During The Zinc Season

Copper and Zinc compete for absorption at the gut level. If you supplement with zinc to prevent facial eczema from January to May there is a good chance that copper levels will be low as the cows come into calving. This is problematic as copper is required for skeletal muscle and bone function as well as fertility, general health and well being.

Copper is stored in the liver. The best way to discover the status of your herd is to collect liver samples by biopsy. It is also possible to collect blood samples to measure copper levels, but this will give a far less accurate prediction of future deficiencies.

Inorganic copper sources such as copper sulphate are not absorbed well when zinc is also being supplemented. The best way to continue to supplement your cows with copper during the zinc season is to use an organic copper source. Bear in mind that not all organic copper sources are created equal. Organic copper is bound to protein molecules and is absorbed via different receptors to inorganic copper, which means it is less likely to compete with zinc for absorption. The ideal organic copper source is bound to a short chain protein molecule which is easy for the cow to metabolise. Some organic copper sources have very long protein molecules and are of questionable efficacy.

In all cases, it is best to monitor the trace element status of your herd and your young stock. This is best done twice yearly in May (after the zinc season) and in September (prior to mating) Every season is different and trace element supplementation protocols should be an evolving plan depending on the property, season, soil type, feeding and stock type.

TOP TIP:

Getting trace element supplementation right could make a huge difference to production and productivity.

Articles:

Copper supplementation during the zinc season

Repro results are in. So...how did it go?

Lepto vaccination reminder

Disease alert - ryegrass staggers

White line disease causing lameness

Milk Quality Consultation

Study on facial eczema in dairy cows



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Repro results are in. So...how did it go?

With pregnancy scanning results in, now is a good time to look back on your herd's reproductive performance. It is one of the most important drivers of efficiency, profitability and easy management of your farming business. **Are you happy, or disappointed?**

Across the practice we are seeing higher empty rates, sometimes in spite of steady (or even improved) AI performance. Many of you took bulls out earlier, to avoid late calvers that can no longer be induced. This will explain some of the rise in empty rates, but it would be a mistake to just write it off as an adjustment year that will sort itself out next season. **A shorter mating period is the new normal.**

Getting 'the bull bit' right becomes even more important. To some extent, it comes down to simple maths: **if the same number of cows are to get in calf over a shorter period of time, you will need more bull power.** This means both quantity and quality.

Our bull fertility testing service has continued to grow, and can give you greater confidence in the quality of your animals. Almost **10% of the bulls we tested this year had low fertility scores,** and several farms had higher failure rates than this. Just one dominant 'dud' bull amongst many can hold back conception rates, and more than one in a smaller team can be disastrous.

We can also help you structure your bull teams according to individual test results, and **give tailored advice on bull:cow ratios and bull management according to your farm and farm system.** Look out for our information sheet later in the year.

If your empty rate has left you short on culling options, or even cows to calve next spring, **now is the time to look at what changes you need to make for a better result in 2016.** Anexa Animal Health has InCalf-trained reproduction consultants who can pick through this year's results and work out where to focus your time, effort and investment to get a better return next year.

Talk to your vet or call your local clinic to arrange a free introductory meeting. Next season's repro management starts now!

DISEASE ALERT

-Ryegrass Staggers-

Ryegrass staggers usually occurs during summer and autumn where animals are grazed on perennial ryegrass (dominant in New Zealand pasture). The disease is caused by the fungus *Acremonium loliae* which produces a toxic substance known as Lolitrem. The fungus concentrates in the stem of the ryegrass plant and is eaten by animals if they are grazing low to the ground or feeding on stalky pasture.

What are the signs of disease?

When animals ingest the Lolitrem toxin they exhibit signs of incoordination, tremor and may have depressed growth rates. The early stage of this nervous disease is easily missed until you 'stress' the animals – then they become uncoordinated and hyperactive, sometimes crashing to the ground or into fences. Left alone and quiet they recover stability again. Until they recover, animals need to be protected from potentially fatal accidents such as falling into troughs, drains and electric fences.

Treating ryegrass staggers

There is no specific treatment for ryegrass staggers. The primary objective of treatment is to take them off the toxic pasture – either yarded and on alternative feed or onto less toxic leafy pasture. Traditionally hay feeding is recommended. Clinical signs of disease normally develop 1 to 2 weeks after exposure to toxic pasture.

Most animals seem to recover within days of removal from toxic pasture. Try not to stress affected animals.

Mycosorb

There is a Nutritech product called Mycosorb on the market, which has been reported to alleviate signs of disease in some cases. It is likely to be most effective as a preventative product, but has been used successfully in treatment of existing disease.

Mycosorb is made from the cell wall extract of brewer's yeast. It is a dry powder that can be mixed with a supplement or drenched daily and acts by absorbing the toxin that causes ryegrass staggers onto its surface. It alleviates symptoms of ryegrass staggers and heat stress and in turn alleviates your stress!

Dose rates: Cattle require a loading dose of 15-20g per cow per day (if staggers are clinical) then drop to a maintenance dose of 5-10g per cow per day; twice daily drenching is most effective.

Mix product with water; put in water first then add powder as product may be difficult to mix.

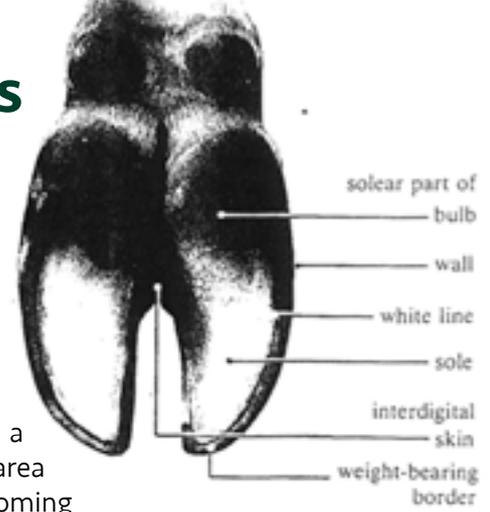
LEPTO VACCINATION REMINDER: The latest information from Massey University around Leptospirosis indicates that NZ dairy calves often contract the disease prior to vaccination. If this happens, the animals may become infected and be shedders of the disease becoming a risk to humans. If your calves were vaccinated in Nov/Dec this year to comply with the latest guidelines, then it may be necessary to vaccinate them with an extra booster shot now so that there is not too wide a gap between their calf vaccinations and their vaccinations as heifers when they align with the herd. Talk to your vet about the plan for your young stock.

White Line Disease Causing Lameness

White line disease has been prevalent this season in the lame cows examined by Anexa vets. Among the usual assortment of lame cow ailments such as bruising and footrot, white line disease has been most prolific in the last few weeks.

The 'white line' is the weakest point of the hoof where the solar horn meets the claw horn (see diagram). The main cause of white line disease is putting too much pressure on your cows as they walk to the shed for milking or in the yard at milking time. Most cows, given enough time will keep their heads down and watch where they are placing their feet carefully. Problems arise when cows' heads go up in the yard and where twisting motion opens up the white line. Once the white line is opened up it can become impacted with stones and grit and become infected. Infection tends to track upwards towards the joint space.

Prompt treatment of white line disease is necessary to stop the infection settling in the joint as joint infections are difficult to treat and often lead to arthritis. Cows with joint infections are often culled out of the herd.



Paring out white line disease lesions is a skilled job. It is best to leave only a shallow dish out area to stop more grit becoming impacted. It is also best to avoid paring the area too far to prevent bleeding.

Lame cows are costly and time consuming. Sorting the problem out reduces the stress on you and your animals. If you feel you need to tackle your lameness problem thoroughly and at the root cause, contact your local Anexa Animal Health branch. If necessary you will be referred to a Healthy Hoof consultant within our team.



John McCarthy
Veterinarian Morrinsville

Milk Quality Consultations

“As the time to dry off your cows approaches, so does the time to have your annual Milk Quality Consult with your local vet. We will shortly be sending out some forms for you to fill out - please take time to fill these out accurately before you have your consult, as the information in them helps form the basis of your upcoming discussion.

Your Milk Quality Consult is the ideal opportunity to sit down with your vet and, among other things, discuss how the season has gone for mastitis in your herd, to discuss possible culling decisions and to make informed decisions on drying off your herd.

Prevention is always better than cure, and your vet will be able to advise you on how to reduce mastitis incidence, and either maintain low bulk cell count levels, or reduce these levels in your herd during the coming season. They will be able to advise you on the best treatment regimes for the clinical mastitis cases that occur in your herd.

Anexa Animal Health have a number of vets specially trained in mastitis investigations and control - if you require more in-depth assistance with mastitis or related issues, your vet can refer you to one of these specialists within the Practice and they can work together on your behalf.

We advise you to have your other staff members present at the consult as well so they can appreciate the costs of mastitis, and understand the importance and methods of prevention.”

A detailed image of the 'Milk Quality Consult' form. The form is divided into several sections with various questions and checkboxes. Key sections include: 'MANAGEMENT TO MINIMISE MASTITIS', 'Test spers', 'Hygiene and Environment', 'Management of clinical mastitis cases', 'Culling', 'Drying off assessment', 'Other risk factors', 'MINIMISING INHERITORY SUBSTANCES IN MILK', and 'CAN WE HELP?'. The form also includes fields for 'Client name', 'Farm name', 'Dairy No.', 'Date', and 'Veterinarian signature'.



Weirburn Farm Case Study



We have done the pregnancy test for Weirburn and the results were a couple of % behind last year (still in the top 25% but not where we were hoping to be). We haven't had the InCalf mating review meeting to analyse which groups have dropped in performance, so until we do that we can't speculate the causes.

Currently cows are back producing 1.37kgMS/cow/day and have been on the up as Manawaru has had some rain recently. Cows are being pretty well fed with PKE going in at 3.2 kg/cow, 4.5 kg maize and 3 kg grass silage. Kylie is not sure how much grass but more grass now with the rain.

Culls and empty cows left the farm at end of January and the young herd went OAD at this time also.

The herd's average BCS was 4.4 and OAD young cows 4.2.

On pregnancy test yearlings had great results with only 3 empty out of 90, which is the best we've had for years, this is testament to a conscious effort around young stock management and hitting target weights.

Kylie is concerned that a handful of cows have slipped in the last month, which we will investigate.

Calves and heifers at the run off are getting supplemented now to keep them on track.



cognosco™

Study On Facial Eczema In Dairy Cows

Cognosco, the research division of Anexa Animal Health, on behalf of LIC is running a project for the second year in herds with clinical facial eczema cases. **The aim of this project is to identify a biomarker in milk that could be used for early detection of facial eczema.** We need to enrol herds with recent new cases of facial eczema (within last 3 days) as diagnosed by the owner or their vet. **Suitable herds will have blood and milk samples taken from cases and 30 selected cows from the herd.**

The herd owners will promptly receive the results of tests for liver damage, and additionally blood zinc levels. The financial value of this testing would amount to at least two hundred dollars and will help owners understand the extent of herd facial eczema liver damage and whether the herd's zinc dosing programme is effective.

Have you had a recent case of facial eczema? Record the cow tag number, and **contact Cathy from Anexa on 07 889 5159** to see if you are eligible to be part of this study. Or if you want to **contact LIC regarding this study, contact Karyn Depree on 027 707 9613.** Only a limited number of farms are required, so don't delay contacting us.

TECHNICIAN SERVICES

On-farm Support

- ✓ Herd dry cow and teatsealing treatment
- ✓ Heifer teatsealing
- ✓ Weighing
- ✓ Bolus insertion
- ✓ Drenching
- ✓ Hoof trimming

Book at your local Anexa clinic

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SPECIAL

Cat Spey

Avoid unwanted kittens,
take advantage of this special offer

Offer limited to the first 10 bookings per clinic.
Surgery must be completed in March 2015.

Call your local Anexa clinic



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Matamata
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Gordonton
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