



## Season's greetings

### 2019 is nearly upon us; what sort of Facial Eczema season will it bring?

By Julia Baynes, Veterinarian, Anexa Vets Morrinsville

As this gorgeous Spring rolls into Summer, we're all hoping for the right blend of warmth and wet to allow this kind season to continue. However, it's exactly those warm and wet conditions that can make for a challenging facial eczema season.

The fungal spores that cause facial eczema can produce another generation of spores within 48 hours in the right conditions: warm nights and moderate levels of moisture in the pasture. These toxic spores build up quickly at the base of the sward where they are readily consumed by grazing livestock.

Every season has different patterns of warmth and wet; however, spores are always present on pasture, and given how quickly conditions can change, no season is free from facial eczema. Last season was a good example: spore counts remained low to moderate for most of the risk period, however we saw several farms with facial eczema cases late in the season, due to chronic exposure to spores combined with stopping protective zinc supplementation too early.

None of us can accurately predict what 2019 will bring, but we know that without an effective zinc supplementation plan organised, your herd will be at risk of facial eczema.

Most of our farmers have zinc supplementation in place, but often, blood tests show that zinc levels in supplemented animals are not high enough to be protective against facial eczema. A 2014 study found that the majority (two-thirds) of farms were in this position. 'Almost' protective is not protective. It's that simple.

So, the Anexa team want to set our farmers a zinc supplementation challenge for the new year:

- ✓ **Be ready to start supplementing zinc in early January – make sure your zinc products are ordered before the Christmas break**
- ✓ **Speak to your vet about the different zinc products that are available, their pros and cons, and correct dosing levels**
- ✓ **Organise with your vet to take blood samples two weeks after you start zinc supplementation. It's the only way we can tell whether your animals are protected.**

Together, let's put effective zinc supplementation plans in place, so we are ready for whatever 2019 brings.



## Animal welfare CHANGES

Did you know that transporting an animal with cancer eye could lead to a fine if you don't follow the rules outlined in the Animal Welfare Regulations number 43. This includes cancers where there is discharge, not confined to eye/eyelid or is of significant size. For any animals you have concerns with please contact your local Anexa FVC Vet.

**A summary of the latest changes can be found at:**  
<https://bit.ly/2v8OpnM>

**The complete codes of welfare can be found at:**  
<https://bit.ly/1X87jFT>

If you have further questions, ask your Vet, we are here to help.



## Is the herd on track?

With this spring's mating almost over now, it is a good time to start planning how you are going to maximise cow production and maintain or gain cow body condition score (BCS) through the rest of lactation.

The use of supplements and summer crops to complement summer pasture is vital to ensure the herd remains in good shape in the post-Christmas period.

In situations where cow BCS is below target, or feed is short, once a day (OAD) milking can be an excellent option.

Dairy NZ trial work found that OAD post-Christmas is generally worth 0.25BCS gain over the rest of lactation with a 10% loss of production over this period. On farms with long walking distances, OAD may actually improve production. If considering putting the entire herd on OAD, then your BTSCC needs to be below 200,000 on twice a day beforehand to avoid potential grading issues.

Early scanning is another option that can be used to identify culls.

This is best done 12 to 14 weeks after the start of mating (i.e. December through to early January). This information can also be very useful in determining appropriate dry off dates later in the season.

Maintaining body condition is a lot more efficient than losing it and having to play catch up. Anexa FVC has Body Condition Scoring certified Vets who can provide an accurate independent assessment of your herd and advise on feed budgeting if required. It is ultimately not only good for your cows but also for your bank balance to be proactive in monitoring and addressing issues with herd body condition over the coming months.

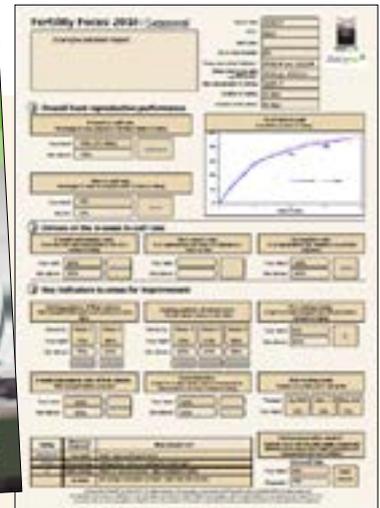
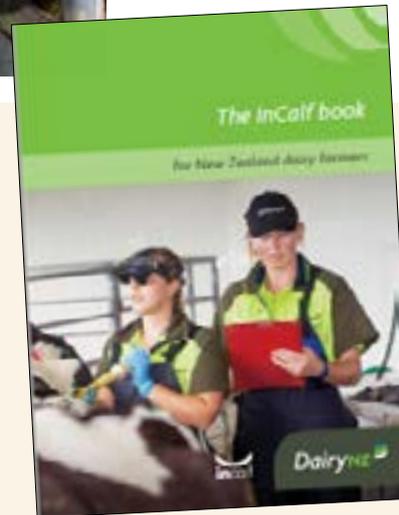
## Updates to the national InCalf targets

By Katrina Roberts, Herd Health Veterinarian, Anexa Vets

Mating will be over by the time most of you read this newsletter, and of course all focus now is on how did you go? Was it better than last year? Did you out perform your neighbour? Was your 6-week in-calf rate high enough to be a contender for the Anexa Vet Services Reproduction Award? Did all that effort over the last 12 months lead to a reduction in the number of empty cows?

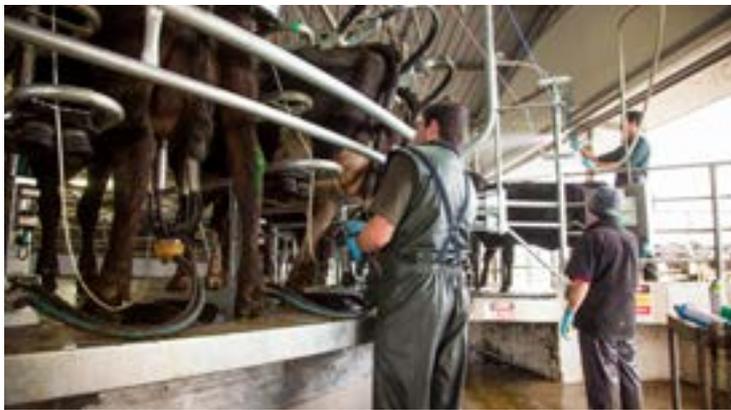
The key message is that sitting down with your vet or InCalf advisor and looking at the numbers in detail is the only way you'll really know. There have been some updates in the national InCalf targets for calving pattern and not-in-calf rate, which you will see in the new green (2nd edition) InCalf book. These new targets will also be reflected in the new version of the Fertility Focus Report. The new targets have been generated from the 4000+ herds nationally that have detailed reproductive data in MINDA, and are based on the performance of the herds that are in the top 25% for 6-week in-calf rate. In the table to the right, the tick is the what the average of the top 25% are achieving and the alarm clock is to alert you to the middle performers i.e. seek help if you are in the bottom 50%.

So, if in the past you haven't sat down with your vet post-scanning to understand the numbers, this is the season to do it!



Not-in-calf rates for mating periods of different lengths.

Length of mating	Performance:	
	Seek help	Top farmers achieve about
6 weeks	32%	22%
9 weeks	20%	13%
10 weeks	17%	12%
11 weeks	15%	11%
12 weeks	14%	10%
15 weeks	11%	8%



## Mastitis and new infection risk – staying aware of fundamental principals

By John Penry, Veterinarian and Researcher, Anexa Vets

Mid-lactation presents an opportunity for all herds to assess their new mastitis infection status. For farms enrolled in herd testing, the second herd test has generally been done and with this comes the ability to compare groups between test #1 and #2 for the season. The percentage of animals with an elevated individual cow cell count (ICCC), above the subclinical mastitis threshold, in HT#2 that were below the threshold in HT#1 is an indicator of new infection rate, or new infections per month. Here the heifer group are of particular interest as it is assumed that, where clinical mastitis has not been observed, this is a true new subclinical infection. In a similar vein, measuring the number of new clinical mastitis infections, in mid-lactation cows over the past two months also allows us to assess new infection rate, and hence risk. Here, we do not wish to see any rate over 1-2 new clinical mastitis cases per 100 cows per month.

So, assessing new infection rate, and hence new infection risk is straight forward, useful and of benefit. It is also worth recalling that the main drivers of new infection risk are simple ones – in fact, there are only two principles to remember.

**Principle #1: Maintain and optimise teat tissue health:** teat tissue health sounds vague but it can be described in specific terms. The teat – any teat – does not like milking conditions that either increase hyperkeratosis (callous formation at the teat end) or congestion in the teat-end/teat-barrel. While adverse Winter weather conditions can increase the risk of teat tissue health being compromised, in reality it is actions associated with milking that pose the main risk factors for reduced tissue health. There is ample evidence from the past 30 years that associates an increased risk of new infection with either an increase in teat-end hyperkeratosis, or increased teat congestion post milking, or both.

**Principle #2: Reduce the number of bacteria around the teat:** This principle is really simple in concept – the teat-canal has a magnificent defence mechanism, but it can only cope with so many bacterial numbers between milking. If this threshold is crossed the defences progressively become less able to cope with bacterial numbers and new infection risk increases accordingly. It is not just a matter of the bacterial numbers on the teat-end but also on teat skin as the presence of increased organic material makes it more difficult for teat skin to remain healthy. The most obvious example of this is teats that spend a high proportion of time covered, or partially in mud. Here there is excellent evidence showing the association between increased bacterial load around teat skin and a incremental increase in new infection risk.

Virtually all mastitis control measures can be traced back to these two principles. They are simple to remember, clear to understand and the foundation of any control advice.

## Dairy Replacements - Weights

By Ashley O'Driscoll, Veterinarian Anexa Vets Ngaruawahia

**Almost 50% of NZ dairy heifers are more than 5% below target calving weight.**

Using the InCalf Gap Tool calculation, heifers that are 10% below target weight will lose \$88/heifer and those 20% below lose \$218/Heifer. The losses are caused by lower milk production, lower R3 6 week in calf rate, and more empty R3 cows.

The biggest risk of failure to achieve target weight gain is between 6-9 months old. This is due to poor quality summer pasture with lots of fibre that takes a few days to digest.

The next biggest challenge is around 18 – 22 months. These R2 heifers cope with summer pasture fine because they are big enough, but they are also pregnant. If the increased feed demand associated with pregnancy is not met this results in slower or no growth.

Ensure that individual weaning weights are done and recorded, and that calves going to the graziers are at least 100kg. Good, convenient times to weigh your calves at grazing are:

1. **Jan / Feb. zinc bolusing.** Calves have been at grazing for several weeks - this is a good opportunity to check performance at the highest risk time, as pasture quality may not be that great.
2. **March – May.** This is the end of the high risk time, grass is growing again unless there is a drought. A good time to do the six month booster leptovaccination and trace element tests too.
3. **September – October.** Pre mating is the first major target. If they are too light at this time, it may be a challenge to catch up, so an earlier weigh/intervention should have been done already. This is a good time to assess any nutritional interventions made during the summer.
4. **April – June the following year.** These are R2 heifers returning to the farm. There should be a written agreement with the grazer that heifers will meet their targets at this point. This presents another opportunity to leptovaccinate.
5. **Pre calving.** The second and most important major target. This is the reality check: is the replacement program working or not? We would love to assist you with assessing your heifer weights and targets.

If you can't weigh your stock - we can! Electronic scales, a transportable crush and race are available. We can drench, tag, blood and liver sample, teatseal, vaccinate etc. as well, as required. It would be great to work with you to set up a scheduled weight assessment program so we can help your heifers perform to their potential!



## Twas the night before Cowmas

'Twas the night before Cowmas and all through the grass  
Not a Jersey was stirring, except to pass gas.  
They had fed themselves while the farmer had napped-  
Some cows ate the silage while others ate wrap.

Laying under the stars, they started to snore,  
Not having a clue what the night had in store.  
When in the next paddock there was such a noise-  
It must be the bulls! Those silly little boys!

Then what to their big, soft, round eyes should appear  
But a flying ute and eight tiny reindeer  
(Of course they weren't reindeer, but cute Jersey calves)  
Flying random circles above the feed pad.

Directing the chaos, barely in control,  
Was St Nick himself, straight from the North Pole!  
"On Sparkles! On Ginger, Tupac and Snow White!  
Now Panda! Now Spotty, descend from our flight!"

Like herding wild cats or trying to catch jelly  
They veered through the air and landed on bellies.  
They crashed into cows where they peacefully lie  
As the "calf-deer" cartwheeled down out of the sky.

A short time later, as the cows settled down,  
St Nick called to them all to gather around.  
He wasted no time but went straight to his work  
And gave out each present, according to quirks.

Two-oh-four got a good long scratch on the head,  
While Ten got a pass to the front of the shed.  
A few got Molasses, a few PKE.  
But one cow got a gift that the rest envied.

Number Eighteen made milk so creamy and thick  
That she got a present of bright pink lipstick!  
She wore it with pride, on her lips and her nose  
But managed to eat it while painting her toes.

So next Cowmas eve, when you tuck them in bed  
Remember what jolly St Nick always said:  
"Merry Cowmas, cows! Enjoy this special night-  
I've knocked over the fence, so go where you like!"

By Ashley O'Driscoll, Veterinarian Anexa Vets Ngaruawahia



## Christmas Clinic Hours

Anexa Vet Clinics will be closed December 25th and 26th 2018, January 1st and 2nd 2019.

An after hours service will be available during this time,  
phone 0800 284 3838



## How will you serve your Christmas ham?



0800 2 THE VET | [anexafvc.co.nz](http://anexafvc.co.nz)

Coromandel  
P: 07 866 8556  
Cordonton  
P: 07 824 2103

Huntly  
P: 07 828 7660  
Maramarua  
P: 09 232 5891

Matamata  
P: 07 888 8068  
Morrinsville  
P: 07 889 5159

Ngaruawahia  
P: 07 824 8630  
Ngatea  
P: 07 867 7256

Paeroa  
P: 07 862 8815  
Raglan  
P: 07 825 8390

Rototuna  
P: 07 853 0027  
Te Aroha  
P: 07 884 8014

Te Kauwhata  
P: 07 826 3581  
Thames  
P: 07 868 7005