

FEBRUARY 2016 | NEWSLETTER



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Timely use of an effective facial eczema preventative strategy is key

By Lucy LeCocq, Anexa FVC Gordonton Veterinarian

The use of zinc as a preventative measure against facial eczema (FE) was discussed briefly in our December newsletter. Timely use of an effective FE preventative strategy is key to minimise liver damage, which can impact milk production even if clinical signs are unseen. Practical options include:

1. Drinking water treatment: Zinc sulphate usually known as Mono or Heptahydrate can be added to drinking water via a dispensing system. Recommended of dose rates depend on the product used and the live weight of target animals. Building up the zinc over 10 days is recommended in order to optimise the palatability to cattle ensuring optimal intakes coincide with high spore counts. Slowly increasing the dose is not required to allow zinc to build up its protective effect, as previously believed.

2. Oral drenching with Zinc oxide: Again the dose rate is based on the animal live weight, and this system is used in the milking shed. Although this is not so practical if the herd (or part of it) is dried off before FE season ends. Zinc oxide can also be added to mixer wagons and used on the feed pad.

3. Bolus/capsule: These carry the advantage of giving a slow release of the required amount of zinc over several weeks. The correct size capsule must be selected depending on animal size, and administered with a bolus applicator. Available boluses include Face Guard and Time Capsule.

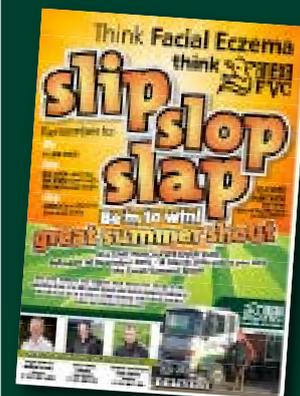
Different classes of stock may require different treatments. Youngstock are often best protected with bolus or capsule treatments due to the difficulty in accurate dosing with in-water treatments.

When should I protect my stock?

This depends on the weather, location, and even different paddocks within a grazing block. Depending on these factors the season usually extends from January through to May. Anexa FVC runs a spore counting service to give guidance. In addition a spore counting forecast is generated to help us advise you with as much accuracy as possible of the risk period in a given year.

What about supplementing copper at the same time as zinc?

Zinc can interfere with the uptake of some forms of copper. Check with your vet to make sure you have an effective programme in place, with the correct formulations.



Concerned about facial eczema?



Wanting to know local spore count numbers?



Register at www.anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters to join our emailing list



Dealing with mid-late lactation mastitis or high bulk somatic cell counts.

High BMSCCs in mid-late lactation typically result from clinical or subclinical mastitis caused by cow-associated bacteria; most often the *Staph. Aureus* infection. This is more commonly seen in older cows and in those with chronic infections i.e. that have had a high somatic cell count at multiple herd tests.

Staph. Aureus is spread during the milking process via liners and hands. Hence, the most important control measures are to minimise cow to cow spread by ensuring that infected cows are identified and milked last and by ensuring that teat spraying continues and occurs at every milking using an effective teat spray applied properly.

Staph. Aureus is difficult to cure. Research studies in New Zealand and overseas find that the cure rate for staph cases is somewhere between 10% and 30% where "conventional" duration of therapy is used. Cure rates are lower in older cows, chronically infected animals and cows with multiple glands infected with *Staph. Aureus*, where teat end damage is present, and where the isolate is resistant to penicillin. Studies here in New Zealand have found that about a third of the *Staph. Aureus* isolates are resistant to penicillin and require the use of different antibiotics.

Increased bacteriological cure can be achieved by using longer duration of therapy with the appropriate antibiotic. However, the cost-benefit of doing so may become marginal due to milk discard costs.

Our bulk milk culture promotion offered in December (10+ samples) will continue to run through until mid March so if you have recently had a herd test or have some problem cows you wish to check for infection (particularly to identify those cows with a *Staph. Aureus* infection), collect a pack from your local clinic. Milk cultures will help in deciding the best treatment option for these cows.

If you are having problems or want to discuss your options please contact your vet or ask to speak to one of our vets with further mastitis training.

Member Tip: Ask about our milk sampling & mastitis report offer



OFFER EXTENDED
now available until mid-March



Feeling the heat?? So are your cows.

By Arnica van der Wiele, Anexa FVC Ngatea Veterinarian

If you think it is starting to get hot, then remember your cows are already very hot (and probably have been for a month). Where we prefer temperatures over 15 degrees Celsius, cows prefer temperatures under 15 degrees Celsius so their threshold of what is a comfortable temperature is a lot lower than ours. Humidity plays a big role as cows offload their heat mainly by evaporation that is by breathing out the moisture. This is why one of the first signs of heat stress is rapid breathing. Another sign of heat stress that you can see a lot at the moment is cows mobbing, standing close together in a big group.

In early summer cows can still offload some of that heat overnight but once the night temperatures are over 15 degrees for most of the hours of the night that opportunity is lost too.

You can reduce the heat load by shade, fans and WATER.

Remember that cows cool mainly by evaporation of water, which is why being able to drink as much water as needed is a crucial part of the cows cooling down process. Providing cows with ad lib water means enough volume and enough pressure but more importantly enough water access. Dominant cows can control troughs so make sure to have 2 troughs for mobs bigger than 80 cows. Ideally the races should have troughs every 150 to 250 metres to make sure all cows get the opportunity to have a decent drink. Feed pads should have water troughs and also make sure you have a water trough within 50 metres of the dairy exit.

Milk is 80-90% water too so making sure cows have access to enough water at all times will easily pay back for itself in the vat.

Milk Quality Consults

It will soon be time again to fill in your milk quality questionnaire. This is an opportunity to sit down with your vet and assess all aspects of milk quality and mastitis on your farm. While the prescription for dry cow therapy is tied in with this consult, the primary objective of the milk quality discussion is to decide on areas for improvement and whether or not you are achieving your goals. Our database stores all the milk quality information from all our clients' farms to allow you to bench mark your performance against others in the district. The information you provide to your vet is very valuable and it is worth taking some time to fill your questionnaire out carefully. It is also important with more pressure coming on the use of antibiotics for disease prevention that we have the required information and that it is accurate. You will likely need to refer back to your treatment and somatic cell count records so that you can provide the best information possible and get the most value from your milk quality consult.

Don't let BVD get you!

By Angela McEwan, Anexa FVC Morrinsville Veterinarian

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) is a viral disease that affects both dairy and beef herds and costs the local industry at least \$150 million per year. BVD causes the most damage when it infects pregnant cows and heifers. If a cow contracts BVD while she is pregnant she can give birth to a Persistently Infected (PI) calf. A PI spreads the disease and is the main source of infection in the herd. BVD can also cause deformities in calves, abortions and early embryonic mortality leading to a higher than usual empty rate.

The impact of BVD infection can be enormous both emotionally and financially. In fact, studies show that the average cost of an infected dairy herd of 376 cows is \$67,252 per year. Some of this cost won't even be immediately obvious which is why BVD is sometimes referred to as the silent burglar.

Right now Anexa FVC veterinarians can blood test your rising two year olds for BVD exposure and the lab fees are on us. That's a saving of around \$200. This will help determine the exposure level of your stock to BVD and whether a risk management plan should be put in place. If you know the prevalence of BVD then you can put a plan in place to minimise the impact BVD has on your stock.

Speak to your vet today.

*Terms and conditions apply.

Get your
rising two year
olds tested for
FREE*



Scanning update

By Katrina Roberts, Herd+Plus Veterinarian

So have you scanned your herd yet? My estimate would be that by the time you read this more than two thirds of farmers will have scanned their herd. So the question is really what do you do with this information now?

If you are competitive sort all you really want to know is how your result compares to your neighbour.

If you are a perfectionist you want to know how it compares to your previous years and how you can improve.

If you are a numbers nerd you have probably already started pulling the data apart and trying to figure out which groups performed and which didn't.

If you are a practical person you are going through the September calvers and deciding which ones are good enough to stay next season and which ones aren't.

And if you didn't like the results you got you may have put it in the too hard pile to be dealt with once the kids are back at school!

The good news is that there is avenue for us to help you with all of the above if you want us to. You have already made considerable investment in collecting the data, now is the time to make the best use of the data. Understanding how the different groups of cows have performed and how things have changed during the mating period, gives you the confidence to make changes for the future; blaming 'the season' is not helpful.

We are too early in the scanning season at the time of writing this to really be confident about the trend in results. As usual there has been good results (more than 75% 6 week incalf rate) and bad results, some have improved and some have stayed the same. Remember that the biggest predictor of a herd's 6 week incalf rate this season is last season's 6 week incalf rate. Well what does this mean exactly? The classic quote "for things to change first I must change" comes to mind.

We offer a free 1 hour introductory consult with one of our InCalf consultants. At this meeting we will go through your Fertility Focus Report with you and help you begin to understand where to start on the journey to improving your herd performance. **If you are interested in this please get in touch with your vet.**



Rye Grass Staggers (RGS)

The following are the signs of RGS:

- Cows becoming more irritable in the shed during milking
- Cows being more alert when approached in the paddock - head held up higher and cows running or staggering off when surprised
- Stumbling or falling over when transitioning from the race onto the concrete yard
- Unable to stand
- Young stock staggering and having spasms when rounded up for routine procedures

Prevention/Treatment options

- If you have a known annual problem, prevent the problem from developing in the first place!
- Since the mycotoxins that cause Ryegrass Staggers are in the endophyte in grass, it makes sense to try to substitute the amount of grass ingested with other feedstuffs to dilute the toxin. Make sure these animals remain fully fed.
- Place affected stock in newer pastures as these should contain "new endophytes" (NEA2, AR1, AR37) that cause less Ryegrass Staggers than old pastures with high levels of feral endophyte
- Keep animals with Ryegrass staggers calm and handle them quietly, keeping them off concrete yards if possible to prevent injury.
- Use mycotoxin binders e.g. Mycofix or Novacil added to mixer wagon loads - as the powder dose per cow is small it needs to be well mixed throughout the supplement being fed. Mycotoxin binders will not completely fix the problem, but may help to alleviate symptoms.
- There is anecdotal evidence to support the use of some seaweed based products in reducing the effects of Ryegrass Staggers, but the trial work proving this is very limited at this time.

Where to get help?

- Discuss with your local veterinarian the various options you have available to attempt to prevent or control a Ryegrass Staggers problem with your stock
- Remember that it is **far better to prevent an outbreak** as, once full blown staggers is evident, it is far harder to treat and control. The ongoing problems with down and injured stock will steal a lot of your valuable time.



Do your herd's hooves need trimming?

Call your local clinic now to book your hoof trimming

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TECHNICIAN SERVICES On-farm Support

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Book at your local Anexa FVC clinic

Support is available



Free and confidential help is available through the trusts' coordinator.

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