



## Milk Quality Consults

It will soon be that time again for you to fill in your milk quality questionnaires; this will be posted out in February. For most of our FVC members, this will be the first time that you have received one. You will need to refer back to your treatment records and somatic cell count records if herd testing so that you can provide accurate information and get the most value from your milk quality consult. 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 to ascertain whether or not you are achieving your goals. Our database stores all milk quality information from our clients to allow you to bench mark your performance against others in the district as well as comparing against previous seasons. Last season the average BTSCC was 134,000 for the farms we service versus Fonterra's Waikato average of 173,000. This demonstrates that these in depth, farm specific discussions are making a difference. The information you provide to your Vet is very valuable so it is worth taking some time to fill your questionnaire out carefully. With more pressure coming on the use of antibiotics for disease prevention, it is important that we have the required information, and to ensure it is accurate. Your Vet can also help by providing a mastitis treatment protocol for your farm as well as a recommended culling list.

**Reminder:** Our milk culture promotion is still running if you have some problem cows or are having mastitis issues.



### FREE

**MILK SAMPLING KIT**

Present this voucher at your local Anexa FVC clinic to receive a FREE milk sampling kit and information pack.

IT PAYS TO BELONG

*It pays to belong*  
**MEMBER OFFER:**

Want to know more?  
**TALK TO YOUR VET, WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

### 10% OFF

**MILK CULTURE TESTING**

Receive 10% off milk culture testing when you submit 5 or more samples. Conditions may apply. Expires 15/4/2016.

IT PAYS TO BELONG

CODE: 20910



## Scanning update

**Scanning is well underway now.** Of the 58 herds scanned early, the average 6-week in-calf rate has dropped 4.5% from last year. This will have a massive effect on next seasons calving and farm profitability. This year's average 6-week in-calf rate so far is only 66.5%. This is well below the 78% industry target. In addition, 2 farms have had an 86% rate.

As the 6-week in-calf rate drops, the empty rate increases. It is too early to give an average empty rate yet but we expect it to be higher from what we see with early scanning.

The results vary from farm to farm with a few farms improving this year. One farm improved 10% whereas one farm dropped 20%. The reasons for the decrease are many and will be different on every farm. Good herd reproductive performance is no accident. It requires focus and hard work. With lower pay-out and other stresses on the system over the last couple of years, there has been a loss of focus on reproduction. Getting back to a higher in-calf rate will require extra focus. It is unlikely that just doing the same as you've always done will improve the situation.

If you are not reaching your herd reproductive targets, consider talking with one of our trained In-Calf advisors.

## Zinc levels are often low despite Zinc supplementation plans

Dosing cows with Zinc during the facial eczema (FE) season will reduce the clinical effects of disease. However it will not eradicate FE especially in high challenge seasons.

Recent research has indicated that blood Zinc levels in New Zealand dairy cows are often not high enough to prevent FE. In a recent study, 74% of supplementing herds had cows with a blood Zinc levels that were too low to be protective.

Officially Zinc season runs from January to May and farmers often get 'caught out' at the beginning or the end of the season when Zinc dosages are not being given at high enough rates because they are 'building up' Zinc dosing or 'tailing off' Zinc dosing.

Most farmers are supplementing cows with Zinc in the water; this method can produce highly variable levels of Zinc among cows in a herd. Often Zinc levels in cows supplemented by water are not high enough to be protective. In short, cows don't receive enough Zinc to minimise the effects of FE. If blood Zinc levels fall below the threshold for protection, Zinc supplementation programs become an expensive waste of time.

### How can I ensure my programme is working?

By working with your Vet, you can make sure that your method of Zinc supplementation is effective- for your cows, on your farm, with your equipment.

2 weeks after starting Zinc (full rates), get your Vet to take a blood sample from a random selection of 10 cows to test for Zinc serum levels. If all of the samples are in the protective range (18-35umol/L) then your Zinc programme is effective.

If the test shows that your cows are not reaching protective levels, your Vet will work with you to identify where the breakdown in the system is occurring, and help you with strategies to rectify this.

It is important to do this at the start of the Zinc season, so that any breakdowns can be corrected as early as possible.

## Preventing Facial Eczema - The Big 5

### 1. Spore counts

Monitoring regional spore counts is a great way to predict when the danger period is approaching. Sign up to our email/text alert spore count service to receive weekly updates on spore counts in your area Fill out the Email sign up form at your local clinic or online at [www.anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters](http://www.anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters). Even better, bring us a grass sample from your own farm to get a farm specific result. This is easy, cheap and provides useful information. See over page for instructions.



### 2. Zinc preventative treatment

The mainstay of FE prevention is Zinc treatment. Zinc binds with the sporodesmin toxin, helping to reduce the impact that it has on the body. Zinc needs to be at full rates two to three weeks before the major spore challenge to be effective. There are many options when it comes to Zinc supplementation- Ask us for more information; we are happy to help.



### 3. Pasture management

The fungus *P.Chartarum* grows on dead matter. Therefore, avoid the production of excess leaf litter (avoid topping). Also, do not graze down too low as most of the dead matter (and therefore spores) sit at the bottom of the sward.

Chicory and plantain have been shown to be resistant to *P.Chartarum* and therefore, in pure swards, are a lower FE risk.

If it is feasible on your farm, increasing the amount of supplement in the feed ration will also decrease the amount of grass ingested by the cows, which in turn will reduce the number of spores eaten.



### 4. Pasture Spraying

Pasture spraying with a fungicide to kill *P.chartarum* may be a useful management strategy, in conjunction with the above three strategies. Pasture spraying is only effective when it is applied before the spore counts rise (spore counts must be less than 20,000). It also must be applied to green and growing grass, as the fungicide must be absorbed into the plant to be effective. Make sure that all areas accessible to stock are sprayed, including around fences, under hedges etc. The spray does not kill existing spores, but can help reduce the production of new spores. It needs to be reapplied in four to six weeks.



### 5. Blood test for Zinc

For a zinc programme to be effective, zinc levels in the cows must be elevated into a "protective range". If they are falling short of this, then the zinc programme is a waste of time and money, and the cows will be left unprotected. On the other hand, over supplementing with zinc can be toxic. Therefore, blood sampling 10 cows for zinc levels is recommended to ensure your zinc levels are hitting the target "protective range".



Ensure your herds Zinc is at protective levels

# 10 reasons to weigh your young stock

1. If you don't know what your heifers (R1s and R2s) at grazing weigh, then you may be unaware of what this is costing you- you can't 'eyeball' heifers at grazing, you need to weigh them to know if they are hitting liveweight targets.
2. Underweight heifers will produce less milk when they join the herd as 2 year olds
3. Underweight heifers do not get in calf as well as on target heifers at grazing
4. Underweight heifers will have ongoing problems with reproduction and production even as mature cows in the herd
5. If you know which of your heifers are underweight you can separate them out and feed them preferentially
6. If you know that an entire mob of heifers at grazing are not doing well you can buy in supplemental feed or bring them home earlier than planned
7. You can cull out or sell underperforming animals and keep only the on track, best stock for your replacements
8. Accurate heifer weights will allow you to drench them with the correct dose of worming product- not just 'guesstimate'
9. You can choose the correct Zinc capsule size if you know what your heifers weigh
10. You can plot trends for heifer weights over a number of seasons and track their performance to make sure they are performing as they should



It pays to belong  
MEMBER OFFER:

**\$20 OFF**

**YOUNG STOCK WEIGHING**

**IT PAYS  
TO  
BELONG**

One voucher per farm, members only, for weighing animals up to 24 months of age.

Not redeemable for cash. Conditions may apply. Expires 1/6/2017.

## Plan around cow body condition this Autumn

Variable rainfall across the Waikato has resulted in a large variation in pasture covers and cow condition this summer. Both cow condition and feed planning need to be closely monitored over autumn to set the cows and farm up for next season.

Assessment of herd body condition score (BCS) and formation of a feed budget can be a useful tool to determine strategies you can use to achieve target BCS at calving. Achieving the industry target BCS at calving of 5.0 for mixed age cows and 5.5 for first and second calvers has been shown to maximise milk production and reproduction; the key drivers of farm profitability.

### Strategies that may be considered this autumn include:

- ✓ Pregnancy testing and early removal of culls
- ✓ Once a day milking (all or part of herd)
- ✓ Supplements – brought in or home grown
- ✓ Nitrogen usage
- ✓ Dry-off strategies – staggered versus whole herd; different mobs based on BCS and calving dates

Planning for autumn should start with body condition scoring the herd. This information along with farm set up is the basis for determining which strategies will be most profitable and ensure you reach cow condition and pasture cover targets at calving.

**If you would like your herd independently condition scored or have questions regarding autumn management, please contact your local Anexa FVC clinic.**



## To assess the facial eczema spore count risk:

- ✓ Select a paddock that you wish to monitor.
- ✓ Cut a handful of grass with scissors or a knife, at 1cm above the ground level.
- ✓ Repeat procedure at least 10 times, from random areas at least 10 metres apart in the paddock. Avoid parts of the paddock sheltered by trees and hedges and contaminating sample with soil and roots.
- ✓ Collect sample in a clean plastic or paper bag, need 100g of grass (one bread bag full).
- ✓ Store in fridge until taken to clinic.
- ✓ Repeat sampling weekly in the same paddock, take samples on the same path across the paddock.

For further information please contact your local Anexa clinic



**Wondering how local spore counts are tracking?**

Join our weekly emailing list

Weekly emails start in 2017 (weather dependent)

**SPORE COUNTS**

Facial Eczema Watch | Spore counts for the week ending 22/04/2016

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Whangarei | 100,000 |
| Whararua  | 10,000  |
| Manawatu  | 10,000  |
| Tairāne   | 10,000  |
| Wairarapa | 100,000 |

**IT PAYS TO BELONG**

It pays to belong  
BECOME A MEMBER  
AND GET:  
**2% OFF**  
when you pay  
on time

## Getting facial eczema prevention right is critical this summer.

Cows that suffered liver damage last year may be less well equipped to deal with facial eczema challenge this year.

A 2014 study found cows from two thirds of the farms tested were not getting enough Zinc to reach protective levels, and 50% of farms had cows with evidence of significant liver damage. If you are not reaching protective levels, then your Zinc program is a waste of time and money, and most importantly, it is completely ineffective. Your cows will still be at risk of liver damage. Make sure you have the right advice for your farm this season, and talk to your Vet about blood sampling for Zinc levels.

It pays to belong  
MEMBER OFFER:

**FREE**

15 MIN FACIAL ECZEMA PHONE CONSULT WITH A VET

**IT PAYS TO BELONG**

Not redeemable for cash. Conditions may apply. Expires 1/4/2017.

Think Facial Eczema think 

**slip slop slap**

Remember to:

- slip in a ZINC BOLUS
- slop ZINC OXIDE -drenching  
ZINC MONO-water troughs  
ZINC HEPTA-water troughs
- slap SUNBLOCK on affected or prone areas of skin

Be in to win!  
**great summer shout**

TO ENTER PURCHASE ZINC MONO ZINC HEPTA, ZINC OXIDE or ZINC BOLUSES

ALL ZINC PURCHASES OVER \$500 between 1st December 2016 - 31st March 2017 enters you into the Great Summer Shout

Buy your Summer zinc supplies from Anexa FVC and go in the monthly draw to WIN a great Summer Shout valued at \$150 during January/February/March PLUS be in to win a \$500 Hunting and Fishing Voucher when purchasing Faceguard.

Ask about **DELIVERY**

0800 284 3838 | anexafvc.co.nz

**WANT TO KNOW MORE? READY TO ORDER?**

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|---|--|--|
| <br>Fergus Dobson<br>Gordonton, Morrinsville, Matamata and Te Aroha<br>P: 027 498 5400 | <br>Aimee Sewell<br>Gardenton, Ngaitere, Paeroa and Manurewa<br>P: 021 802 207 | <br>Graham Comerford<br>Raglan, Huntly, Te Kauwhata and Ngaruawahia<br>P: 021 851 189 |
|---|--|--|

 