anexa FVC animal health & vet services

DAIRY TALK

JUNE 2017 | NEWSLETTER

IT PAYS TO BELONG anexa FVC

Anexa FVC is working for you

The vet club was established 94 years ago for farmers, by farmers. While we continue to offer a wide range of core dairy specialist services including:

- ✔ InCalf and Healthy Hoof Advisors
- ✔ Body Condition Scoring Assessors
- ✔ Intelact / Headlands Consultants
- ✔ Accredited Fonterra Mastitis Advisors

We recognise that the Dairying industry is evolving and our members need us to be innovative and deliver practical solutions to the constant changes we both face. These solutions are designed to not only make your life easier but also aim to improve your bottom line.

Recent examples of how we are working for our farmers:

- ✔ **Onsite lab testing** - to keep up with the ever-changing needs of the farming sector and ever-growing sample testing requirements, we offer laboratory testing that enables faster and more cost effective testing for our clients.
- ✔ **2% prompt payment discount for members** - When you pay on time, plus other member only offers on products and services throughout the year.
- ✔ **Hoof trimming partnership** - we recognise the effect lameness can have on your herd's production and reproduction. As part of a prevention strategy we have entered into a partnership with Hoof-it, to give our members a cost effective hoof management option. Hoof-it is owned and operated by Waikato based Stuart Rogers.

Want to know more? Talk to your lead Vet for specifics, then keep an eye out in upcoming newsletters for further initatives (this month we have farmacy.co.nz) - We are focused on practical solutions, and we're here to help.

Want to receive Anexa's Dairy Talk newsletter via email? It's easy. Simply visit **anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters** select "Dairy" and enter your details. We will then send you a confirmation email - once this comes through, click to confirm subscription.

To view previous newsletters click the "Dairy Farmers" button.

Anexa FVC Reproductive and Milk Quality Performance Awards

The 2016/17 results are in and we have announced our winners - Congratulations and good work on a job well done.

SHORT, SHARP & SWEET
2016-17 Season Round up
WINNERS

Top Milk Quality Award
Milliken Benns Group

Top Herd Reproduction Award
Kelvin & Nicola Robinson

RUNNERS UP

Top Milk Quality Award Runner Up
Heritage Valley Farms No. 1

Top Herd Reproduction Award Runner Up
Colin & Karen Bird with Craig Pepper

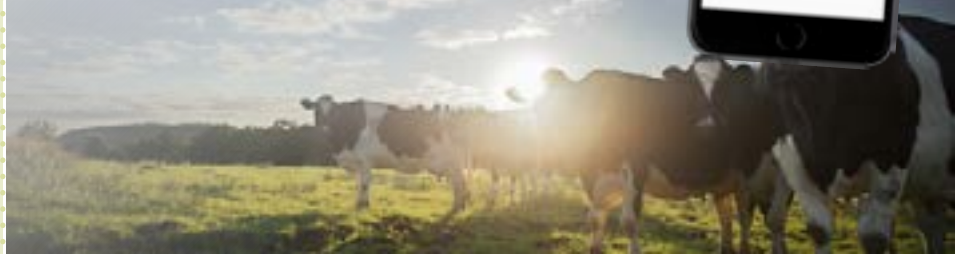
Farmacy.co.nz - an online store and electronic dairy diary for our members.

With increasing compliance requirements, and busy lifestyles, Anexa FVC recognises that real time electronic recording of the RVM treatments as you use them in your cows is where you really needed an easy solution.

Farmacy.co.nz is exactly that. It is a fully phone compatible website where you cannot only order any product we stock, wherever you are, but also record all cow RVM treatments, when they were administered and by who. This information is then used to automatically create a cow withhold list for easy reference.

Your Farmacy.co.nz account is linked to your herd EID, year born and management tag data for accuracy. When you sign up to Farmacy, we upload your herd data from LIC. This ensures treatment data records accurately against the right cow number. Tag double ups, and heifers coming in using culled cow management tag numbers will no longer create confusion.

Want to know more? Give us a call, we're here to help and look out for further information coming soon.

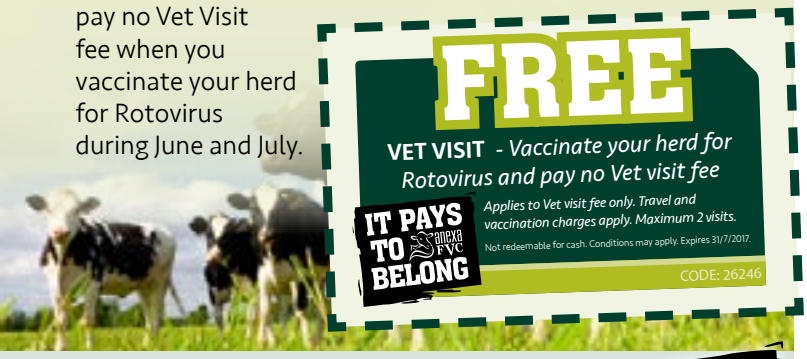


Rotavirus Vaccination

Prevention is better than cure when it comes to calf scours

Rotavirus colostrum vaccines are due NOW. Anyone who has had an outbreak of Rotavirus calf scours will tell you about the heartbreak they endured as this awful disease spread through their calf shed like wildfire. We now have a vaccine which can help prevent these kind of outbreaks from happening. Rotavirus vaccines are what we call colostrum vaccines; we vaccinate the pregnant cow while her body is making colostrum. In response to the vaccine, she makes antibodies (immune defence proteins) specific to Rotavirus, which goes directly into her colostrum. When the calf drinks the colostrum containing these antibodies, the calf's immune system is primed ready to recognise and fight off Rotavirus from day one. Vaccinations must be given three weeks before the planned start of calving. Once you have vaccinated, your colostrum management needs to be excellent- there is no point putting the antibodies into the colostrum if you aren't getting colostrum into the calves in a timely fashion! Calves must have 2 to 3 litres of first milking colostrum within the first 6-12 hours of life to absorb the antibodies. It's important to remember, Rotavirus vaccination is an insurance policy; prevention is better than cure.

Members take advantage of our member only offer and pay no Vet Visit fee when you vaccinate your herd for Rotovirus during June and July.



Not a member yet?

Cost of membership is currently $5.80 p.a.
The benefits are far more valuable:

- ✔ 2% prompt payment discount*
- ✔ Mileage charged from your nearest clinic, rather than where the vet is based
- ✔ You can call into any of our 14 clinics to purchase products
- ✔ We have 30 vets working during the day and 10 vets available after hours
- ✔ Free InCalf introductory consultation
- ✔ 50% off farm staff training events*
- ✔ Free informative and social events
- ✔ Access to the latest research findings and potentially the opportunity to take part in research trials
- ✔ Members elect farmers to be Directors on our Board who represent you at monthly Board Meetings. This ensures we continue to focus on what's important to you
- ✔ Member only offers on products and services throughout the year

** Conditions apply*

Feeding calves- what to feed, when to feed it and when to wean

Colostrum for the best start

Feed enough high quality colostrum quickly to newborn calves

Calves need 10% of their bodyweight in high quality, first milking colostrum within the first 6 to 12 hours of life. This is because a calf is born without a fully functioning immune system, and needs to absorb antibodies from its mother's colostrum across their guts, into the bloodstream.

Colostrum needs to be high in antibodies (greater than 50g/L of antibody) and low in bacteria (less than 100 000CFU/ml total bacteria count). Colostrum that is low in antibody and/or high in bacteria can result in calves that have low blood antibody levels. And, research has proven that these animals are more susceptible to disease and death, don't grow as well or conceive as well, and they don't produce as much milk in their first lactation. A 40kg newborn calf needs 4 litres of colostrum within the first 12 hours of life, but their abomasum (stomach) capacity is only about 2 litres, so you can't physically feed this all in one feed. Ideally, a 40kg calf should be fed 2 litres of first milking colostrum within 6 hours of birth and another 2 litres of first milking colostrum within the first 12 hours of life. Calves should also be fed second, third and fourth milking colostrum for 4 days if possible.

New Zealand data suggests that pooled colostrum for feeding to newborn calves is highly contaminated and very low in antibody. In fact, only 2% of colostrum samples collected from over 100 dairy farms met antibody and bacteria targets. This is bad news for our highest genetic merit stock-out calves.

What can we do to improve colostrum quality?

- ✔ You can check your colostrum antibody level easily on farm, by using a device called a Brix refractometer; you can get one from your local Vet clinic. You can also measure bacterial contamination in your colostrum through your Vet.
- ✔ All colostrum collection and storage equipment needs to be scrubbed thoroughly with hot soapy water after each use. Test buckets, colostrum storage vats and calf feeders are often very dirty and aren't cleaned properly allowing bacteria to build up.
- ✔ First milking colostrum is the only colostrum suitable for feeding to newborn calves; don't mix first milking colostrum with later milking colostrum as this lowers the antibody level of the pool.
- ✔ Collect colostrum from cows as soon as possible after calving to ensure antibody levels are maximised.
- ✔ Feed your calves with fresh, first milking colostrum as soon as possible after birth.
- ✔ Select the cows in your herd that are likely to be giving you the best quality colostrum- if you don't know who they are; test colostrum from individual cows with the Brix refractometer.

Stored colostrum for older calves should be kept in a clean storage vat with a stirrer and a loose fitting lid to prevent contamination and bacterial proliferation. You may also like to use a colostrum preservative like Potassium sorbate to control bacterial growth if it is to be stored for more than 12 to 24 hours. You can get this from your local Anexa FVC Vet clinic.

Milk feeding calves

Feed calves enough milk
Calves need to be fed 10% of their bodyweight in milk, preferably split into two feeds, until they are consuming enough grass, meal and roughage to meet their energy demands.

New Zealand based work has shown that calves that are fed twice daily for the first three weeks of life are less likely to get sick and less likely to die than calves fed once a day before they are they weeks old.

Offer meal and hay to calves from birth

Calves are born to ruminate! When young calves are being milk fed, they use only one (the abomasum) of their four stomachs; but the aim of successful calf rearing is to develop the calf rumen quickly and to produce a well grown, healthy, ruminating animal. It's much cheaper to feed a calf meal and grass than it is to feed milk.

In order to develop the calf's rumen quickly, calves need to be offered meal from birth. Calf meal aids in the development of the lining of the rumen.

Calf starter meal should contain:

- ✔ Ideally 23 – 25% crude protein (CP) (definitely at least 18 – 20% CP)
- ✔ Minimum 11.5 – 12.5 MJ/kg DM ME
- ✔ Rumensin or Bovatec to protect against coccidiosis
- ✔ Vitamins and minerals

As well as meal, calves should be offered roughage such as hay

As well as meal, calves also need to be offered fibre or roughage in the form of hay. Research has found that 6-7 week old calves fed concentrate ruminated for fewer minutes (6 minutes per hour) compared to calves fed forage such as hay (18 minutes per hour).

The hay should ideally be short chopped and offered to calves in small amounts (10-15% of their diet). Hay should be fed ideally in hay nets or feeders to prevent calves from soiling it or using it as bedding. Fibre makes the rumen bigger and promotes the development of the rumen muscles by stimulating the receptors that trigger muscle contractions. Fibre also helps to develop the rumen epithelium and maintains the health of the rumen lining by "un-clumping" rumen papillae thereby improving energy absorption.

Since calf meal is responsible for developing the lining of the rumen, and hay is responsible for developing rumen size and strength and for stimulating rumination; calves need BOTH roughage and grain to prepare them for weaning.

Weaning calves off milk

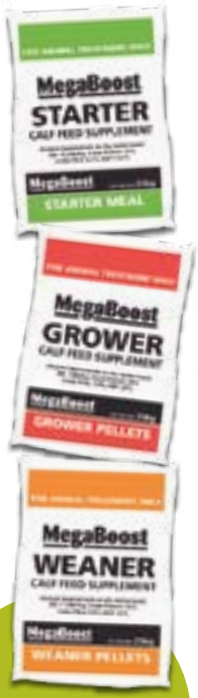
When to wean calves
Milk should not be withdrawn until the nutrients from ruminal digestion of calf starters can provide the protein and energy needs for both maintenance and growth. Traditionally calves have been weaned on age, but it is better practice to wean on weights and meal consumption. Calves should be eating an AVERAGE of the following for 3 consecutive days:

- Friesians: 1.5 – 2 kg grain per day
- Jerseys: 1 – 1.5 kg grain per day

It is best to wean calves at 30% of their mature liveweight. Each herd will have its own genetic liveweight potential targets, so work out how much your weaned calves should weigh based on your mature cow liveweights.

Anexa FVC stocks high quality, carefully formulated calf meal for all stages of calf rearing. See your local clinic to place an order and give your calves the best start.

If you are interested in a more detailed calf rearing plan, Talk to your Vet about a Calf Rearing Consult - we're here to help.



Ask your local Sales Rep about our Early Bird Calf feed / Milk replacer Offer

BVD Control is all about the PIs

By Matt Peters, Anexa FVC Rototuna Veterinarian

"I don't have BVD on my farm. It's under control. I'm monitoring my Bulk Milk and it's always OK. Isn't that enough?"

Actually, no. Monitoring your bulk milk for BVD is vitally important to tell you if BVD gets into your herd, but it won't actually prevent BVD from getting in. To control BVD you need to control the PIs.

PIs, or Persistently Infected cattle, are born with BVD. They do not become PIs when they go out to grazing. They are virus factories shedding huge amounts of virus infecting everyone around them causing massive damage in the time they are alive. Calves exposed to a PI will have depressed growth rates of around 20% and are more likely to get sick. Milking cows exposed to a PI will have a 5% drop in milk production and are more likely to get sick. If PIs are around at mating time they cause conception failure, abortions, birth defects, still births but most importantly they will create a new generation of PIs, amplifying the problem and perpetuating the disease.

To control BVD we need to control the PIs. We need to cut off the supply of PIs, prevent the creation of new PIs at mating time, and keep them out once gone. To cut off the supply we need to test all replacement calves as early as possible and cull any BVD positive animals. If you wait until they turn up in the herd to find the PIs, it's too late. Vaccinating cows and heifers pre-mating can help prevent the creation of new PIs, and to keep PIs out ALL incoming stock must be tested. When it comes to BVD all stock are guilty until proven innocent.

How does AnexaFVC plan to help in the war on BVD? Let us find those PIs by ear-notching all your replacement calves when we come out to disbud them. In this way PIs are removed right at the start. It's easy; just tick the box on the disbudding form. It's effective; it's a new test that allows PIs to be identified at birth. Previously they had to be over 35 days old. It's cheap; doing it at disbudding time saves cost and the new test is cheaper than the old one. By removing PIs at the start instead of waiting until they reach the herd just the savings in grazing and rearing costs of one PI is likely to cover the cost of testing your calves, and that's before you take in account all the other benefits of improved growth rates, production, reproduction, and less illness in your other stock.

Disbudding time not ideal for you? No problem. We can do it at Lepto vaccination time too, but BVD has already started costing you money by then. If there are PIs on your farm, the sooner we find them, the better.

Low calcium is often the beginning of a much bigger problem...

By Katrina Roberts, Anexa FVC Herd Health Veterinarian

Over the last couple of years, we have undertaken some exciting research into issues with transition cows, and we are pleased to share some of our findings with you.

1. *Low calcium is often the beginning of a much bigger issue, and we (or at least some of us) DO have a problem.*

Our research showed that the average clinical prevalence of farmer-reported milk fever across 77 herds was 4.6% of the cows in a season. When you compare this to a realistic target of 1 to 2%, you can see why we have an issue. In addition, the average prevalence of subclinical hypocalcaemia (low calcium) measured in the blood of over 1000 cows, within 2 days of calving, was 33%.

On the day of calving, there is a huge change in a cow's calcium requirement, and we can expect some cows to get it wrong. And, if this happens, they sit down within 48 hours of calving. However, we should not be getting down cows any other time; if you are, you need help!

Do you know whether you have a problem? The only way you can know is if you measure (take some bloods on the day of calving) and, record ALL your down cows.

2. *But so what – a few down cows – they get up don't they?*

We know that an average cow is only low in calcium for about 24 hours after calving however, we also know older cows stay low for longer (6+ year olds), therefore increasing the risk of sitting down in the colostrum mob.

Young cows (second calvers) can have low calcium levels too. In our study, 10 to 15% of the 3 year olds had subclinical hypocalcaemia. The 3 year olds that were low in calcium had a 30% lower 3-week incalf rate compared to the 3 year olds that had normal calcium levels; this was driven by lower first service conception rates.

We know that low calcium reduces the performance of the cow's immune system. We also know that cows with clinical milk fever have poorer outcomes with regard to overall health, production, reproduction and survival. Overseas data repeatedly shows these cows have more other health issues and are less likely to get back in calf. At this point we don't have good New Zealand data on this because clinical milk fever is poorly recorded on farm. However, when we have analysed the reproductive performance of recorded milk fever cows in our incalf herds, we consistently see lower 6-week incalf rates in the milk fever cows compared to their same age herd mates. And, overseas research also indicates that cows with subclinical hypocalcaemia are more likely to have uterine infections.

So how much is your current milk fever problem affecting your herd? Are there any clues that low calcium could be contributing to your below target performance?

3. *So what can I do - do I have to buy all that fancy stuff?*

In most herds, the basics work (refer to last year's transition article here: www.anexafvc.co.nz/factsheets - Managing the cow over the calving period), but this is not always the case!

Springing cows need about 40 g of elemental Magnesium. They will get about 20 g from their diet and therefore need to be supplemented with a further 20 g. In our survey of 77 local herds, cows were getting on average two times that amount down the throat, and yet we saw 33% of cows with subclinical hypocalcaemia!

It is recommended to use more than one form of Magnesium for the springers if you can (such as Magnesium sulphate, Magnesium oxide or Magnesium chloride). Collect new calves from the springer mob twice a day, and take the freshly calved cows to their fresh feed with their Magnesium and calcium allocation as soon as possible after calving.

For those high risk cow (6+ year olds, cows with BCS of >5, Jerseys and cows that sit down every year), give a calcium supplement immediately after calving, however this will need to be repeated at least every 12 hours. IV calcium is not recommended as a preventative as it causes a rapid spike in blood calcium, which is followed by a rapid drop. If you do use IV calcium, it should be given with an oral calcium drench or a bag under the skin.

If you have a number of mature cows that have a BCS of >5, then this group may need to be managed separately pre-calving and offered 90% of maintenance requirements instead of 100%. Mineral supplementation of late calving cows is often haphazard as they become a smaller mob and more difficult to dust with Causmag. You may consider using an alternative strategy to supplement their diet with Magnesium such as a mag bullet.

Colostrum cows are the most important and most annoying mob on the farm. Feed them ad libitum high quality feed and do not skimp on calcium. How you choose to give them calcium is farm dependent (oral drenches, dusting their break or mixed in with the feed) but you need to be aware of the potential limitations of your method. For example, a one off starter drench isn't going to 'fix a wobbly cow', it may stop her sitting down but it won't necessarily prevent the subclinical effects of low calcium. Colostrum cows are more interested in looking for their calf than eating, so if the PK trailer with lime flour mixed in it is at the back of the paddock you can understand why the colostrum cows aren't eating it. Milking the colostrum cows once-a-day may be a possibility, however this management change will need some discussion with your Vet to factor in mastitis management and withholding periods of dry cow antibiotics.

So there are some extra things you can do to minimise the number of cows with low calcium at calving, you just need to work out what is practical for your farm.

4. *Can I tell if all this extra effort is working?*

Yes, recording clinical cases will enable to track your progress, but an earlier measure than that is by blood testing. A sample (10) of freshly-calved cows can be blood tested for calcium, and energy status.

If you would like further information, please talk to your lead Anexa Vet or contact one of our Herd Health Advisors.