anexa FVC animal health & vet services

DAIRY TALK

JUNE 2018

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Mycoplasma bovis – latest advice

As you are all aware, the Government along with dairy and beef industries have agreed that an attempt will be made to eradicate Mycoplasma bovis. Most of the eradication work is expected to be undertaken in one to two years. We recognise that you as our farmer members are concerned about this disease, and we would like to assure you that we are with you every step of the way – we are here to help.

In terms of the disease, Anexa FVC is well informed on the ongoing developments and your local Anexa Vet is well placed to support you with any of your concerns. We will be communicating any new information through our Dairy emailing list via Mycoplasma and biosecurity updates. We encourage you to sign up to our emailing list at www.anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters .

The Anexa FVC website has been updated with an additional "Mycoplasma" button on the top right-hand side of the home page. Clicking this link will take you directly through to a new "Mycoplasma and biosecurity" page. Here you will find a general overview of the condition in addition to Dairy NZ resources on disinfecting and cleaning, a summary of farm biosecurity and a poster on what to look out for with the disease. Also contained on this page is a short, three-minute video, covering important aspects of Mycoplasma featuring Scott McDougall.

Maintaining good surveillance for the signs of Mycoplasma is all about keeping a diligent watch on unusual combinations of sick animals; pneumonia, swollen joints or ear infections in calves potentially in combination with unresponsive mastitis or pneumonia or swollen joints in cows. Detecting an increase in these types of conditions in a timely manner is really important. One tool that can assist with this is Farmacy (the free to member electronic animal health treatment recording system). It is well worth talking with your Vet about enrolling in Farmacy, if you have not already done so.

Finally, it is worthwhile taking stock on how your farm and farming system is currently set up for biosecurity risk. Now is the time to ask your Vet about a Biosecurity Risk Assessment and ensure you have good practices on your farm.

If you have any questions or concerns about biosecurity or Mycoplasma, please contact your local Anexa Vet.

Our own biosecurity measures

As your local Vet, we are acutely aware of our role in preventing the spread of Mycoplasma bovis by ensuring our own biosecurity practices on your farm and between farms are to the highest standard. We will take all practical steps to ensure our vehicles and equipment are clean, we change our overalls between jobs, and our boots are scrubbed and disinfected at the end of each call thoroughly.

AN INVITATION

Member Event

Members join us

Topics **Antibiotic resistance**
Mycoplasma and biosecurity
Question and answer session

Venues **Monday 25th June** Morrinsville RSA, 27 Studholme Street

Tuesday 26th June Taupiri Rugby Club, Murphy Lane, Taupiri

Wednesday 27th June Hauraki Golf Club, Cnr SH2 & SH27, Ngatea

Time **2.00pm - 4.00pm followed drinks and platters**

RSVP email anexa.events@anexafvc.co.nz or contact your local Anexa clinic

Note: Numbers will be limited due to venue size, please RSVP promptly

farmacy – a tool for the times

Accurate and complete recording of animal health events on farm has become a crucial management tool. The Farmacy.co.nz digital diary makes accurate recording of your animal health events on your farm easy, and it meets all the data points required for the shed inspection. It is designed to use cow side, with most of the information you need pre-populated, and it is a quick and accurate solution designed to make life easier. It allows you to assess trends on your farm and can help with better decision making on farm during the reproduction season. You can set up individual logins for all your staff enabling you to monitor if treatments are being given correctly if you are away from the farm. Other great functions of Farmacy.co.nz include the ability to:

- ✔ Calculate your monthly incidence rates of lameness and mastitis
- ✔ Monitor the incidence of metabolic disease over calving
- ✔ Look at your endometritis rates after metri-checking

Farmacy has two management tables that sit on your digital diary home page, listing cows requiring treatments and cows still in withholding periods. It also has an export function that creates a customisable report of your treatments allowing you to select the date range, diseases, and treatments you are interested in. This has proven very useful recently in preparation for Milk Quality Consults, where filtering for mastitis has enabled farmers to quickly draw on their clinical mastitis information for discussion with their Vet.

"It is so good to be able to input the data cow side and it calculates the with-holding times for you so there is no confusion."
Bert (Gruythuysen)

If you would like to know more about Farmacy.co.nz, and how to get set up to use this great tool, contact your Anexa Vet today.

Getting the best from the liquid gold

Good colostrum management is the single biggest contributor to calf health and survival. Benefits include:

- ✔ Decrease in disease and treatments, particularly scours but also navel and joint ill
- ✔ Decrease death rates in calves
- ✔ Increased growth rates and feed efficiency
- ✔ Decrease time to get in calf
- ✔ Increased milk production for the 1st and 2nd lactation
- ✔ Decreased likelihood of being culled in 1st season

Colostrum management can be summed up by the three Qs – Quickly, Quality, Quantity.

QUICKLY

- Calves require antibodies from colostrum to provide immunity in their first part of life. They absorb antibodies from colostrum best within the first 4-6 hours, ideally within 2 hours. The rate of absorption then declines and the calfs gut no longer absorbs antibodies after 24 hours.
- Cow's colostrum has the greatest antibody level at birth (22% BRIX). Levels decline rapidly, 33% over the next 14 hours reaching as low as 50% at the second milking (12% BRIX). The sooner after birth colostrum is collected the higher the antibody level.
- Levels of antibody can decline in the udder and in the bucket after collection so its important to feed it soon after it is harvested.
- A high rate of calves left in the paddock to suckle fail to get enough antibody. Factors include time to rise and feed, cold temperatures, health of the dam and mothering ability. Calves should be on their feet quickly and those sitting down longer than 2 hours stay colder, have poorer antibody absorption and greater risk of illness. Best results are seen when calves are collected regularly (twice daily minimum) and bottle or tube fed colostrum as soon as possible.

✓ QUALITY

- ✓ It is recommended to feed >22% BRIX colostrum. BRIX refractometers are a quick, easy to use hand held tool that can be used on farm to estimate the antibody level. Simply apply a drop of milk to the screen and measure the level via the eye piece. BRIX levels of 22% or greater indicate adequate quality colostrum. In a recent NZ study only 10% of samples were above 22% BRIX.

- ✓ Colostrum antibody levels can vary greatly between cows and not all cows make suitable colostrum. Factors such as genetics, age and length of dry period play a role.
  - Jerseys produce the highest antibody levels followed by Aryshires then Fresians.
  - Excessively short dry periods result in lower antibody levels.
  - Cows dry for 40 days versus 60 days produce 2.2 kg less colostrum
- ✓ High bacterial levels in colostrum can inhibit antibody absorption in the calf's gut. Colostrum is often a soup of bacteria. A recent NZ study showed a vast majority of farms fed colostrum to newborns that had excessive bacterial levels.

Need help with your colostrum testing? Call into an Anexa FVC Vet clinic near you. We have BRIX refractometers for sale and can show you how to use one, or test your colostrum for you.

Strategies to reduce bacterial contamination include

- ✔ Ensuring buckets, calf feeders and colostrum storage containers are clean and sanitised. A cover is recommended to keep out flies and rodents.
- ✔ Use of a preservative to inhibit bacterial growth. Potassium sorbate has been shown to significantly reduce bacterial growth and outperform other colostrum keepers.
- ✔ Refrigeration of colostrum. At certain times in the season it can be hard to come by enough adequate colostrum. Colostrum can be frozen for up to a year and used when decent colostrum supply is low.
- ✔ Pasteurisation of colostrum. This has been used more so overseas to lower levels of bacteria.
- ✗ Avoid feeding colostrum from known or suspected Johnes positive cows.
- ✗ Pooling colostrum from the cows first milking with second, third and subsequent milkings dilutes antibody level. This is insufficient for new born calves.
- ✔ Ensuring cows are vaccinated 3-6 weeks prior to calving boosts antibody levels in colostrum. This protects against diseases such as rotavirus, salmonella, coronavirus and E coli.

QUANTITY

- Quantity depends on quality. Calves need to be fed larger volumes of lower quality colostrum in order to achieve adequate antibody absorption.
- The recommended volume within their first 12 hours of life is 10% of their bodyweight. This is 3-4L depending on the size of the calf. Note: If tube feeding a maximum of 2L per feed.

Antibodies are not the only positive component of colostrum. Colostrum also contributes to gastrointestinal development and temperature management in the calf plus has antimicrobial effects. Feeding colostrum after the gut closes at 24 hours still has positive effects such as less treatment for illness, respiratory disease and scouring.

If you are wondering how you are doing on the scale of things we can assess how well your calves are doing using serum samples. Give us a call if you'd like some help.

Calf feed order early and save! For further information please contact your local TSR

Calf rearing facilities – a few small changes can make a huge difference

The majority of New Zealand dairy farms do not have dedicated calf rearing facilities. Instead, sheds are "retrofitted" for the three or so months that calf rearing activities are taking place. As a result, structures are temporary and designed as such. However, just because the set-up is temporary, does not mean that sensible, simple design features for biosecurity cannot be put in place.

For the first 2 months of life, a calf's immunological system is underdeveloped and naïve, hence the reliance on adequate quality and quantity of colostrum in the first 12 hours of life. Minimising bacterial exposure in the first three weeks of life is especially important to assist the slowly developing immune system. Limiting bacterial exposure is all about the quantity of bacteria in the immediate environment of the calf so here are a few design tricks to assist you as the calf area is prepared for this calving season:

If gates or mesh are being used for the calf pen walls, take some additional time to cover the wire in something that is hard to penetrate through like shade cloth. This is a cheap way of ensuring that transfer of calf faeces between pens is less likely. Calves that can easily defecate between pens also increases the risk of cross contamination.

Know which area is going to be used for sick calves; identify this area at the start of the season and make extra sure that there are solid barriers between this pen and the "healthy" calf pens.

Make a biosecurity plan for feeding; consider having dedicated gumboots and overalls in the calf shed too. This will immediately cut down on cross contamination from the adult herd. Have a wash area where boots and feeding containers and stomach tubes can be cleaned and disinfected.

Prepare the bedding base so that drainage is as good as possible. Most farms rely on some sort of deep bedding system (e.g. straw or sawdust) but the required turnover of these materials can be decreased by having a drainage system in the foundation layer of the pens. It may be as simple as scoria or crushed rock allowing drainage away from the underside of the bedding material.

Simple steps in the initial setup of the calf rearing are will greatly assist with biosecurity and reducing the amount of bacterial exposure for the least robust, but very important members of the herd; your calves.

TOP TIP: To ensure you get your preferred calf disbudding date, book early

Are anionic salts an option for your transition cows?

Irrespective of what type of farm system you are using, cows go through a massive physiological change at the time of calving. One of the main changes their body has to navigate, is a huge increase in calcium mobilisation from the days just prior to calving to the days following calving. This large additional drain on blood calcium gets "re-routed" into the mammary gland to supply the calcium needs of, firstly colostrum, and then increasing milk production during the weeks after calving. This is how a cow avoids getting milk fever (low blood calcium).

A cow, or first calving heifer, is not able to supply these additional calcium needs simply from ingested feed – the significant calcium reserves in the bone need to be used via an increased rate of calcium "shift" from the bone into the blood and onto the udder. Unlike production systems where total mixed rations are used, pasture fed transition cows are at a disadvantage because the pasture they eat has a balance of sodium, potassium, chloride and sulphur which works against efficient calcium mobilisation around calving. This nutrient balance is commonly referred to as the DCAD of the daily ration. A high, positive, DCAD number works against calcium leaving the bone and heading to the blood – a low DCAB number is better for transition cows. However, this is hard on pasture as its DCAD number is often between 350 and 800. It is this fact that contributes to an increased milk fever risk in pasture fed animals.

The use of Mag Oxide or Mag Chloride in transition cow rations assists with lowering the DCAD and raising blood magnesium with both mechanisms being important levers to lower milk fever risk. In addition to using magnesium products, other "anionic salts" can be incorporated into the diet which have a greater ability to lower the DCAD of the overall diet. Remember, that the lower the DCAD number of the total diet pre-calving, the lower the milk fever risk and likely incidence of subclinical milk fever in a herd. These anionic salt products are generally included in the daily ration for around 2 to 3 weeks prior to calving at a rate of between 180 -300 grams per cow per day.

Herds that should consider this feed inclusion approach to reduce milk fever risk are ones that:

- ✔ Have the ability to differentially feed cows within 3 weeks of calving from those farther away from calving (hence, running a springer mob)
- ✔ Have the ability to blend a pre-mix mineral with the feed being used through a mixer wagon or silage wagon
- ✔ Have the ability to mix and deliver the feed (e.g. onto a feed pad) to minimise wastage and time spent with the feed on the ground prior to cow access

If this sounds like your herd, please take the opportunity to talk with your Vet or TSR about feeding options for your farm this coming calving.

Thanks for choosing Anexa Vets.

Belonging to a Vet Club offers benefits, for an extensive list visit:
www.anexafvc.co.nz/join

Farm Staff Training Day

Wednesday 20th June
Anexa Vets Morrinsville
25 Moorhouse Street, Morrinsville

Thursday 21st June
Anexa Vets Ngatea
49 Orchard Road, Ngatea

Visit www.anexafvc.co.nz/events for more details

AN INVITATION

Members join us

Come along and listen to the latest information about antibiotic resistance and how antibiogram testing is changing the way we treat your herd for mastitis.

Hear our thoughts on Mycoplasma and biosecurity, then take the opportunity to ask any burning questions to our panel including Scott McDougall and John Penry

We will also announce the 2017/18 Anexa Milk Quality and Repro awards

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Gordonton P: 07 824 2103	**Maramarua** P: 09 232 5891	**Morrinsville** P: 07 889 5159	**Ngatea** P: 07 867 7256	**Raglan** P: 07 825 8390	**Te Aroha** P: 07 884 8014	**Thames** P: 07 868 7005