anexa FVC animal health & vet services

DAIRY TALK

MAY 2017 | NEWSLETTER

IT PAYS TO BELONG anexa FVC

Extensive waterlogging and flooding on farm - animal health focus

It's been a very wet April for everyone as the tail end of cyclones Debbie and Cook hit the area with most farms waterlogged, and some affected by flooding.

Support has been and is available from many groups including the Rural Support Trust, DairyNZ, Dairy Companies, Federated Farmers, Councils and MPI. At the bottom of this article is a link to Dairy NZ's decision tree for flood damaged farms and phone numbers that may be of help.

Taking an Animal Health Focus

- ✔ **Safety** – for yourselves and stock takes first priority.
- ✔ **Clean water** – make sure stock have a clean water source, and fence off waterlogged areas in paddocks to prevent stock drinking contaminated water. Water troughs can be contaminated so may need cleaning.

  Large ingestions of silt from contaminated water or off pastures can irritate the rumen and clog up in the stomachs, causing issues with the digestive system. Look out for loss of appetite or scouring.
- ✔ **Disease spread** – the risk of bacterial disease, such as caused by salmonella or E.coli, is far greater during wet periods. Keep an eye out for sudden onset sickness or scouring. Other diseases like black leg can also flare up due to excessive soil pugging allowing access to spores. Changes may need to be made to your vaccination program if the risk is high.
- ✔ **Dry cow management** – with flooding and waterlogged soils, environmental challenge to cows during the autumn/winter will be far greater. If you are taking cows off farm they will face different challenges. This may change the recommendations discussed at your milk quality consult and you may need to consider including internal teat sealant at dry off to prevent new infections and high mastitis rates during the winter and spring.
- ✔ **Feed supply** – feed budgets are being re-calculated on many farms, adjusting for reduced areas available and reduced growth rates through the autumn/winter. This has necessitated changes varying from round length extension to earlier drying off and culling and taking stock off farm. Talk to one of our trained consultants to go through a feed budget if you need assistance
- ✔ **Body Condition Score (BCS) targets** – feed value is likely to be reduced and/or intakes reduced due to palatability of feed. Be realistic with dry off times required to achieve BCS targets at calving. Assessing your herd BSC now is important and will give you a benchmark to what is needed from now on. Talk to one of our Vets to BCS your herd and create a plan going forward.
- ✔ **Replacements** – consider delaying, if possible, R2 heifers returning from grazing for a few weeks to reduce pressure on farm.
- ✔ **Abrupt changes of feed should be avoided** – for example some farms stopped feeding fodder beat during the wet. If the crop is salvageable, be aware that cows will need to be re-transitioned back on to the crop in order to prevent acidosis.

Helpful information

For the DairyNZ Decision Tree for Flood damaged Farms visit www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5787035/flood-damaged-farm-decision-tree.pdf

0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP) www.rural-support.org.nz/

Call Federated Farmers' helpline on 0800 327 646 option 3 for feed offers or requests, or option 4 for other on-farm help, including stock movements

Farmer Workshops 2017

Are your staff prepared for this Spring?

Anexa FVC invites you and your staff to take part in our annual Spring Farm Staff Training.

Ngatea
Wednesday 7th June
Anexa FVC Ngatea,
49 Orchard Road

Gordonton
Thursday 8th June
Gordonton Hall, Gordonton

Morrinsville
Monday 12th June
Anexa FVC Morrinsville,
25 Moorhouse street

For further information visit **anexafvc.co.nz/events**

Trace Element Testing – the Time is now!

We test Copper in Autumn, ahead of the period of greatest demand. Liver biopsies let us predict how long current reserves will last before heading into this period of challenge. However, excessive Copper supplementation is also relatively common, leading to dangerously high Copper levels. Liver biopsies identify if this is an issue and prevent you wasting money on over-supplementation.

Why do cows become deficient during winter?

1) **Late pregnancy**
   The growing foetus has a huge demand for Copper. During late pregnancy, the cow's requirement for Copper is at its highest
2) **Winter pastures**
   Copper levels in pasture are at their lowest during winter
3) **Following Zinc supplementation**
   Zinc supplementation can interfere with the uptake of Copper, which means that your cows may not have been able to put much Copper into storage over summer

Are your cows prepared for this challenge?

Liver biopsies allow us to look at Copper storage in the liver. Is there enough Copper in storage to meet these demands or is there a risk of dropping into deficiency as pregnancy advances? Do I need extra Copper supplement or will that be a waste of money? Only liver biopsies can give us this information.

Selenium levels can be tested on liver or blood samples. Selenium deficiency can result in problems with retained afterbirth, as well as having an impact on production.

The time is right for trace element testing. Are your cows equipped for winter?

Don't forget your heifers

Heifers must be considered in a separate light to cows when it comes to trace elements. Whether your heifers have been grazing outside the district, at a local run-off or on the home farm, the R2s have been on a different ration to the cows and have different nutritional requirements. Trace element testing should be conducted on a representative sample of R2s returning home from grazing, to identify and rectify any problems ASAP.

Copper and Selenium deficiencies can be common in youngstock. This can affect their growth rate. New Zealand soils can be high in molybdenum and Sulphur, which interferes with Copper uptake. They can also be low in Copper, and/or low in Selenium. Compare heifers grazing on these soils to cows on a home farm where selenised fertiliser has been applied and a Copper supplement has been provided; clearly, the trace element profile of the herd cannot be applied to the R2s.

Never had experience with liver biopsies?

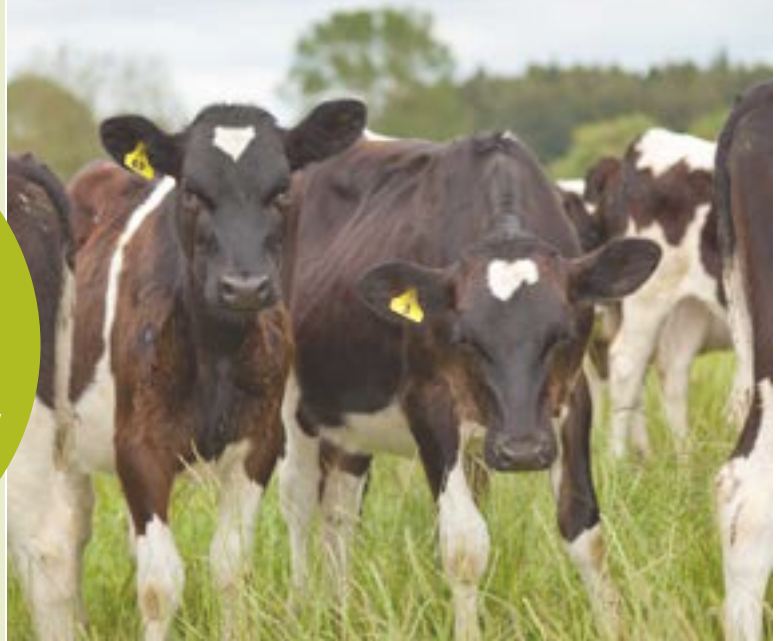
Give your local vet a call to ask what is involved in the sampling process. Most farmers are amazed at how well tolerated and minor the procedure is.

Do you know what's happening with your calves?

By Michael Shallcrass, Anexa FVC Gordonton Veterinarian

When calves are off at grazing it's easy to think of them as somebody else's problem. Keep in mind though that once they come back to the farm they are your problem, hopefully for many years to come. Even if you aren't monitoring your calves closely, there are a few things that you should keep in mind for this season:

- Graziers may not be using fertiliser regularly, and even if they are they don't usually include any additional Selenium or Copper. Trace element deficiencies are all too common in youngstock, because they have to get all their minerals via direct supplementation. Copper and Selenium injections only last in the body for a month or two, so it may be more reliable to consider using boluses or a long acting injection.
- The recent wet weather provides good growing conditions for parasites, so this year it's extra important to make sure animals are being drenched regularly. Calves that are now 9 or 10 months old are probably being drenched less frequently, and with a pour on rather than oral drench. If you're using oral drench or pour on, please make sure that it has at least two different types of active ingredient in it.
- Spring born calves from last year should now be just under 50% of their target mature weight. The national average crossbred cow weighs 467kg, so crossbred calves should be at least 200kg. Friesian calves should be over 220kg.
- Animals that are reaching targets usually have everything else under control, but animals failing to meet targets usually have at least a couple of aspects of their management that can be improved. This is why regular weighing of young stock is so important, because it can alert you that there are issues that need correcting.
- ✔ Individual weights are also a good way of identifying animals that might need a bit of extra help. Make a list of the animals that are falling behind in the group, and ask your grazier to run them as a separate mob. Sometimes reduced grazing pressure is all that is needed for poor doers to catch up.
- ✔ Giving your grazier a month by month plan is a great way of ensuring everyone understands what is expected and when. Ask your Vet to make you up a personalised calendar for your youngstock so that you can be sure your calves are getting the best start you can give them.



Vaccination - a convenient (and often cheap!) insurance policy

Using vaccines to prevent disease is the most easily recognisable example of the old adage that "prevention is better than cure". Outbreaks of disease can be time consuming and costly. Most diseases cause production deficits and reduced stock performance; in some deaths are common where outbreaks are severe. There are many vaccinations available for dairy cattle to prevent a range of different diseases. The following outlines the most common vaccinations administered to our dairy cows and how they could work to prevent disease in your herd:

Leptospirosis Vaccination

In New Zealand, we typically vaccinate all our dairy cattle against leptospirosis for the protection of stock and of humans. We now rarely see abortion in cows and vaccination has made a huge difference to the number of human cases we are seeing of this disease, but there is still a risk to farm staff, hunters, vets and meat workers who can contract the disease from unvaccinated stock. Leptospirosis is shed in the urine so urine splashing onto exposed cuts or into eyes or mouths spreads the disease. Protective clothing such as gloves, and precautionary measures such as prohibiting smoking, eating and drinking in the shed are good ways to avoid contracting leptospirosis. Since leptospirosis is also harboured in wild animals such as in rats, rodent control on dairy farms is important. A robust vaccination plan is the other piece of the puzzle. Young stock need to be vaccinated twice pre-Christmas and an annual booster vaccination is required for all classes of stock, so make sure you have a complete program in place.

Salmonella Vaccination

Bacterial infection with salmonella can be problematic in dairy herds, particularly where feed pads are used or stock come together in wet conditions. The disease causes scouring and milk production drops, and occasionally abortion. Salmonella vaccination is very effective at protecting against the strains that are included in the vaccine. Unfortunately, some of the newer salmonella strains isolated from New Zealand dairy cows are not protected for by the strains included in our vaccines. Nevertheless, the vaccine is usually extremely protective where the more traditional salmonella strains are implicated. Any farmer who has ever suffered from an outbreak uses this cheap vaccination as an 'insurance policy', usually together with leptospirosis vaccination.

Rotavirus Vaccination

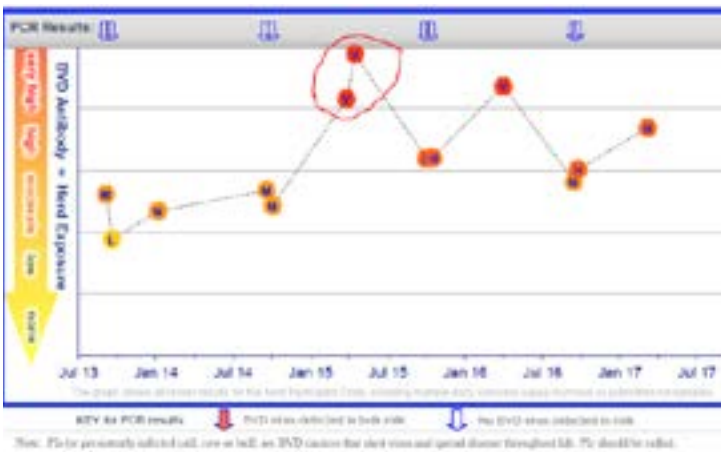
Rotavirus vaccination of cows prior to calving, boosts the specific rotavirus antibodies in the cow's colostrum after she calves. Providing high quality colostrum is given in sufficient quantities within 6 to 12 hours of life and continued, the calf will be protected against Rotaviral scours if it is challenged with rotavirus in its environment. This vaccine is highly effective where colostrum management is good. Rotaviral scours is highly contagious so often all calves are affected at once making treatment and management very difficult. Where Rotavirus outbreaks have occurred the previous season, vaccination is recommended of the whole herd. It is not a silver bullet, but can be a very useful tool to prevent further devastating outbreaks.

If you have any questions regarding vaccinations, please talk to your lead Anexa FVC Vet, we're here to help.

BVD – How was your end of season result?

By Margaret Perry, Anexa FVC Te Aroha Veterinarian and Matt Peters Anexa FVC Rototuna Veterinarian

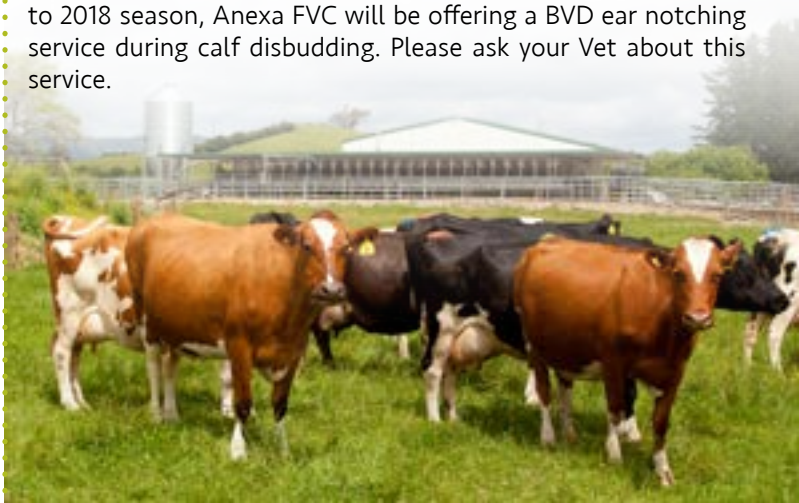
You may have recently received a phone call from your Anexa FVC Vet with your final results from the LIC BVD Bulk Milk Monitor Pack. Many farms experience a rise in antibody levels (or SP ratio) at the end of the season, and this pattern may have been consistent with previous seasons. This rise in SP ratio can be due to low milk volume at end of the season, but a rise in SP ratio of greater than 0.3 should trigger some further discussion with your Vet due to the possibility of a BVD breakdown.



The graph below is an example from a local farm that had just such a BVD breakdown. The sharp increase in late season antibody levels (circled in red) was so high, that their Vet during the 2014 to 2015 season repeated the antibody titre to make sure it was real. And it was!

The following spring, based on the information provided by the autumn antibody test, all the 2015 born keeper calves were ear notched and 8 high value replacement heifers were BVD Persistently Infected (PI) Positive. How many bobbied bull calves were BVD PI's? We will never know. The spike in autumn antibody was likely from BVD exposure from the bulls used for natural mating or over the fence from the neighbouring farm. This farmer now BVD blood tests all bulls on arrival to his property, he doesn't trust blood tests from outside suppliers/ agents. If this late season antibody test hadn't been done, then the PIs would have only been picked up two years later when they entered the herd causing massive reproductive and production losses.

Make sure you speak with your Vet about your end of season result and sign up for next season's Monitor Pack at the same time. To be certain that no BVD virus got into your herd during mating, the best practice is to ear notch the 2017 keeper calf crop to make sure you are not raising any PI BVD calves. This 2017 to 2018 season, Anexa FVC will be offering a BVD ear notching service during calf disbudding. Please ask your Vet about this service.



Hoof Trimming Benefits

What happens on a day-to-day basis with regards to cow claws? Frequent walking (twice a day covering on average 3-4 km) impacts on the hoof simply because of the weight the claws have to carry. This will cause natural wear and tear on the sole. Add to this uneven walking surfaces with the odd stone, pressure from herd mates, hard standing surfaces and sharp turning corners and the chance of injury grows significantly.

Rain will soften the tracks which in turn will cause softening on the sole, which leaves it even more vulnerable to injury; this then tips the scale towards lameness. So rain, often blamed for a spike in lame cows, merely exacerbates underlying issues.

Most often, lameness is a result from altered weight distribution caused by aforementioned risk factors. Soles will thicken unevenly, some parts will get excessively worn and the whole claw structure will be compromised; high risk of lameness.

How do you know this happens on your dairy farm? It does.

Even on farms with perfect tracks, no pressure and all the time in the world to walk to and from milking, gravity still wins. Cows carry a lot of weight, even more so in the later stages of gestation, and will therefore pressure their claws continuously.

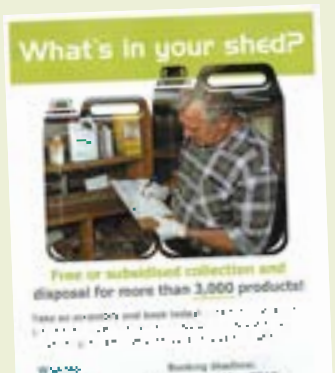
Ask any Vet; whenever we treat lame cows, there are always some 'tidying up' trims to do on the patient's foot. Whether it is dusting off the white line or lowering the sole it is part of the process to full recovery to restore a proper weight bearing platform.

In many countries, hoof trimming is scheduled once or twice a year with the aim to maintain claw health, reduce the incidence of infectious claw diseases and lower lameness prevalence.

In New Zealand, awareness is growing that hoof trimming should be integrated into dairy farming for several reasons:

- Though our cows lead a predominantly outdoors existence, this brings with it a whole different range of claw challenges (as mentioned)
- Annual or biannual trimming maintains claw health and increases resilience resulting in reduced lameness prevalence
- Hoof trimming records help identify farm-specific risk factors by highlighting predominant lesions
- With proper equipment, sharp knives and the experience to deal with cow claws, a hoof trimmer can save time and money while doing a better job than most as he's dealt with a lot more feet

Prevention is better than cure. Anexa FVC recognises the effect lameness can have on your herd's production and have been working to find cost effective solutions for our members, this is why we have entered into a partnership with Hoof-It, a hoof trimming business owned and operated by Waikato-based Stuart Rogers. Stuart is experienced, efficient and dedicated to providing a quality trim and good service while entertaining you with his Irish accent. If you would like to find out more, or book your herd in for a trim in preparation for the next season, please ring your nearest Anexa FVC clinic.



AgRecovery

Booking deadline:

Waikato - 26 May 2017

0800 247 326

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We focus on solutions that will improve your bottom line. Employing a number of Dairy Vets, Mixed Practice Vets as well as dedicated Companion Animal Vets Anexa FVC is able to offer a broad range of services to our clients. In addition utilising resources such as Large Animal Technicians and Herd Health Advisor Veterinarians, members will benefit from having a veterinary service tailored to their needs. We also draw on the expertise of

- InCalf Consultants
- Certified Body Condition Score Assessors
- Fonterra Accredited Mastitis Advisors
- Healthy Hoof Consultant
- Intelact / Headlands Consultants
- Cognosco, Animal Health and Production Research

2017 Member Booklet available now

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What's happened to Theileria?

By Ashley O'Driscoll, Anexa FVC Ngaruawahia Veterinarian

Depending on where your farm is located in the Waikato, you may or may not still be seeing cows affected with Theileria. The northern parts of the Waikato seem to be reasonably "immune" now, with few new cases popping up in established herds. Most northern Waikato cases of Theileria appear to be associated with buying in cattle from further south. However, some parts of southern Waikato are still seeing a steady stream of Theileria cows. Over times, farmers in these areas have become astute and watch carefully for these cases, so most are diagnosed early and cure with supportive care.

If you have questions about purchasing cattle from a different area, or on how to diagnose and treat Theileria in your herd, contact your local Anexa FVC Vet for more information.

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Coromandel P: 07 866 8556	**Huntly** P: 07 828 7660	**Matamata** P: 07 888 8068	**Ngaruawahia** P: 07 824 8630	**Paeroa** P: 07 862 8815	**Rototuna** P: 07 853 0027	**Te Kauwhata** P: 07 826 3581
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