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Ensure you get the best information from your pregnancy testing

By Katrina Roberts, Anexa FVC Herd Health Veterinarian

Did you know that most of our spring-calving clients scan their herd in January? If you don't scan at that time, then you are probably asking yourself why would anyone go to all that effort of coming home from the beach for a couple of days to row the cows up on a hot summer's day just to pregnancy test their cows? Surely it can wait until the kids are back at school... can't it?

What extra information are those farmers getting by scanning that little bit earlier, and what does this extra information mean? By scanning 11-14 weeks after your PSM, all your cows will have an accurate expected calving date. This means:

1. More milk in the vat

Why dry off a cow in March that is in adequate BCS and isn't calving until August? The difference between feeding a milking and a dry cow in the autumn is about 6kg DM. At 30 cents/kg DM this is \$1.80/day; a cost far out-weighed by milk in the vat.

2. Manage BCS better in the autumn

Set your cows up better for next season. We know that mature cows that calve at target BCS 5 and second calvers that calve at 5.5 produce more next season. It is crucial that the young cows are dried off earlier to reach these targets as they take a long time to start gaining BCS once dry. Cows that are closer to calving (in the last trimester particularly) have higher energy requirements as the foetus is starting to require more energy; that is the July calvers need more food than the September calvers in April.

3. Better transition management

Having a calving date for each cow means that a springer mob can be made on expected calving dates. Better transition management means less animal health issues and more production.

4. You know your 6-week in calf rate

Your 6 week in-calf rate is the most powerful and useful indicator of reproductive performance. Early scanning helps you to identify areas where you are performing well, and sheds light on aspects where there is room for improvement. You can also assess the impact of any management changes you might have made.

5. Getting rid of culls at the right time to get the best results.

Knowing your late calvers and empty cows early means you can make better decisions, this may be before the cull cow price drops and summer dry arrives.

6. Value for money

There is little extra cost in scanning earlier, in fact if you mate for only nine weeks, there is no extra cost at all, as one scan will give you all the information! However, if you mate for longer than nine weeks, then some cows will need to be rechecked at a later date five to six weeks after mating ends. In an average herd, you would expect to have about 20% of the herd needing to be rescanned.

Talk to your Anexa FVC Vet to ensure you are scanning at the right time to get the information you need.



Restricted Veterinary Medicines

Anexa FVC has undertaken a lot of work this year to future-proof our management of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVMs). Some of you might have already seen and participated in the new electronic RVM consult that we have started to introduce this year, including the indication-based drug ledger that doubles as an on-farm script. We aim to have all our farms in this electronic system in the next 12 months; it is a quick and simple system that ticks all the boxes, required by law, on RVM management (under the current rules).

As a heads-up, the world is changing fast when it comes to antibiotic management and this means that New Zealand as a country needs to follow. Anexa FVC's objective is to introduce the necessary changes in an easy and simple way, with plenty of communication to you. Please keep an eye out for any news from us, Dairy NZ or your supply company, and feel free to contact your Vet clinic for any clarification if something seems unclear. We are here to help.

Record
treatments
cow side



farmacy⁺

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with your Vet

Teats do not lie

By John Penry, Anexa FVC Veterinarian and Researcher Morrinsville

Every cow has four milking machine testing units; they are her teats.

The milking machine liner is the only part of the machine in contact with the cow with that contact occurring at the teat end and along the teat barrel. It is a unique "marriage" between a biological system and a machine that is very important despite it only occurring for between 10 and 15 minutes per day. We all know that teats in an individual herd differ in length and width yet all teats have to change shape during milking to conform to the installed liner shape. The teat changes to fit the liner and not the other way around.

There is a myriad of liner choices on the New Zealand market and they differ according to liner shape, dimensions and material. While the general aims of milking are speed and gentleness, this is a balancing act, and different liners achieve this mix to various degrees. Liner performance is also affected by working vacuum and pulsation settings beyond their design.



An example of teat end hyperkeratosis.

Assessing your herds teats immediately after cups off, but just prior to teat disinfection, provides an accurate picture of teat health and in, the success of the liner-teat marriage. Teats "always tell the truth", if they are experiencing physical forces that stress teat tissue there will be visible changes that can be seen and measured across a herd. The sorts of changes that can be seen are, for example, teat end hyperkeratosis and congestion in either the teat end or teat barrel. Teat end hyperkeratosis that is increased beyond accepted trigger levels will result in elevated new mastitis infection risk. This is due to the teat end being a better place for mastitis causing bacteria to harbour compared to a smooth teat end. The same can be said for congested teats at the end of milking (red, blue or "garter marked" teat barrels). These changes can increase new mastitis risk as well as decreasing milking speed.

A milking time assessment can quantify teat health in your herd and indicate if actions are recommended to the milking plant or milking process to enhance the health status. Recall that teat health, and the integrity of the teat end, is the first and major line of defence against new mastitis infections.



5 Ways to maximise in-calf rates in your lame cows

When we have analysed the reproductive performance in herds there is huge variation in the in-calf rates of lame cows. The factors that influence the outcome of a lame cow are within your control. Record all lame cows so you can monitor their performance. This is critical for you to be able to review what worked for your herd:

- 1. Actively look for them and find them early in the disease process** (only slightly lame). Lame cows drop feed intakes and production well before they are obviously lame.
- 2. Get them out of the main herd into a small mob**, minimise time on concrete and tracks, ideally in a flat paddock, with minimal walking, adlib good quality feed and milk OAD. Lame cows lose BCS rapidly due to reduced feed intakes from less grazing time (as they sit down more).
- 3. Pick up the foot and fix the problem especially using a block/cowslip.** If you can't /don't have time, then get your vet or our partner Hoof It to perform this task. Getting the sore area off the ground will get the cow walking normally better and reduce her BCS loss.
- 4. Put your resting bulls in the lame mob.** Cows that are lame (both her and her lame buddies) are less likely to display signs of heat, however if she does come on you want to maximise her chance of being mated.
- 5. Treat them with a long-acting anti-inflammatory.** Inflammation can cause the corpus luteum to lyse and therefore lead to early embryonic death.

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Rearing great calves; an investment in the future of your herd

By Travis Scott, Anexa FVC Veterinarian

Rearing good young stock is extremely important for the future of your herd, as well grown heifers will be much more likely to get in calf early and have good production throughout their life. One of the secrets to producing great calves lies in minimising the number of growth checks that they suffer. All management changes should happen gradually and at the right time; this requires a little bit of forward planning so that things go as smoothly as possible.

Invasive husbandry practices like dehorning are going to be stressful for calves and will temporarily suppress their intakes. Dehorning calves while they are still on milk will result in a smaller growth check than if they are dehorned after they are weaned. It's also faster and safer for you to handle them when they are smaller.

Weaning calves off milk can cause problems as their rumen may not be developed enough to get all their nutrients from solid feed. Weaning on weight is a good way of ensuring that later born calves stay on milk long enough and don't get left behind. The DairyNZ recommendation is to wean calves at 80 – 100kg, depending on their breed.

Calves should have had access to high quality roughage right from birth to stimulate rumen development. Historically people fed hay or straw, but studies have shown that high protein meal is the best way to get the rumen going. Calf meal will usually also contain something to prevent coccidia, which can cause ill-thrift and scouring in young animals.

As soon as calves start eating pasture, they will be picking up worms. It takes most worm species at least three weeks between being eaten and starting to shed eggs; therefore, we recommend drenching young stock once a month. A dual action oral drench such as Arrest C is a very cost-effective way to achieve good parasite control and minimise the build-up of resistance in young stock.

The wet weather for the past six months has meant that pasture quality isn't as high as we might like. This makes the milk and meal components of a calf's diet even more important, and it might pay to hold off any weaning decisions until we've had a bit more sunshine.

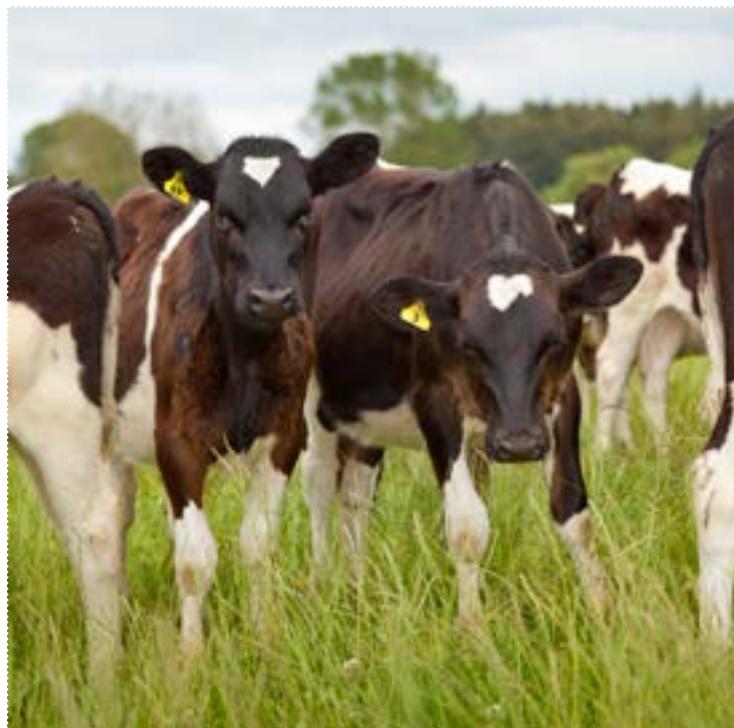
When you do decide to wean calves off meal, make sure it's done gradually. If calves have got a properly developed rumen, there shouldn't be a noticeable change to their growth rates, as they will be able to eat enough grass to compensate for the loss of the meal. A pre-ruminant calf is sometimes described as being round or 'apple' shaped when viewed from behind, and as their rumen develops they take on a 'pear' shape; it appears wider, lower down.

Remember that the meal has been preventing coccidia, and any scouring after meal is stopped should be investigated. Try to avoid weaning off meal at the same time as moving stock to run-off or to grazing, as the doubling down of stressors can make them even more susceptible to disease.

Before calves leave your property, they should be up to date with all their vaccinations. This means two shots for blackleg and leptospirosis, plus two shots for BVD if that is part of your BVD control strategy. You should be contacted by your local clinic soon to make sure that these are all done in time.

Weighing calves just before they go off grazing is a great way to check your own calf rearing, but also to ensure that expectations with your grazier are clear. If you send well grown calves off grazing, you should expect well grown heifers to come

home, but if you send under-grown calves they may never be able to catch up to targets. If you can identify animals that might need a bit of extra help and preferentially feed them from the get-go then their prospects are much brighter than if they are identified later.



CALF VACCINATION SEASON

Why do we vaccinate against Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a horrible debilitating disease that is spread through urine from various animals, including your dairy cows. It is also a zoonotic disease, meaning that cow urine can cause disease in humans.

Vaccination is one part of the puzzle in protecting your cows, yourself and your staff, but you need to vaccinate early. A recent Massey University study showed that vaccination needs to happen before calves are exposed to the disease. Once an animal contracts Leptospirosis, it will shed the bacteria despite vaccination, which might give you a false sense of security. You will vaccinate the animals and think they are protected but, the vaccine does not remove an already existing infection and therefore these animals pose a risk to you, your staff and any unvaccinated animals on farm.

The best timing to start vaccination is when your youngest replacement animal is eight weeks of age, with a booster to follow 4 weeks later. A good 'rule of thumb' is to vaccinate your calves twice before Christmas to give them early protection against Leptospirosis. They will need annual booster vaccinations after these two initial shots to keep their immunity up, which usually means that you give your calves a third vaccine in winter to line them up with your heifers and herd.

Make sure you complete a Leptospirosis risk assessment with your vet to fill in the other parts of the puzzle. There are other aspects of leptospirosis control to consider, for example, don't smoke, eat or drink in your cow shed, keep on top of your rodent control and keep pigs well away from your cow shed. This is a serious health and safety issue for you and your staff. You need to take the necessary precautions to protect your animals and your team.

Book your scanning now and get your preferred date

It's easy...

1. Register online at www.anexafvc.co.nz/herd-pregnancy-testing or
2. Fill in the Herd Pregnancy Testing registration form and mail or fax it back to your local clinic or
3. Phone your Anexa local clinic on 0800 2 84 3838



From the Board

The annual AGM of Anexa FVC was held on the 27th of September this year. The two standing Directors that retired by rotation both stood again and were returned unopposed for a further 3-year term, congratulations Bruce Thomas and Mike Karl.

Bruce Thomas, Chairperson acknowledged that it had been a better year financially for the members and the business as dairy prices recovered and sheep and beef prices had remained buoyant. He thanked members for their support of the business over the past year. Your Board continues to focus on delivering quality services and good value to our members. One area the Board has focused strongly on over the past year was developing the longer term strategy for the business. As more and more industry based compliance comes to bear on our members we need to ensure that the business is keeping in touch with the changing needs of our members in the animal health space.



Your current Anexa FVC Board are Bruce Thomas (Chairman)
David Firth (Deputy Chair), Alister Smith, Peter Le Heron,
Neil McLean, Mike Karl and Wayne Berry.



Be Gone Plastic Bags!

Here at Anexa FVC, we have made an easy decision to join the "ban the plastic bag revolution", and replace our standard plastic bags with paper and compostable bags, and recycled boxes. Why? It's simple, it's the right thing to do!

Even when disposed of properly, plastic bags take many years to decompose and break down, generating large amounts of rubbish over long periods of time, clogging landfills, waterways and sewers. And, if not disposed of properly, plastic bags can pollute waterways and oceans affecting the habitat of animals and marine creatures.

So, when you next pop into your local Anexa FVC Vet Clinic, we ask that you too embrace the revolution and our new environmentally friendly packaging options; better still, bring in your own bag. Why? Because it is the right thing to do!

IT'S WIN - WIN!

Keep on top of your stock's worm burden and prep for Christmas at the same time. Catch up with your Vet or Sales Rep now!

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Herd Pregnancy Testing - BOOK NOW

Early Pregnancy testing involves scanning your herd approximately 12 - 14 weeks after the planned start of mating. Booking your scanning now, gives us a better chance of meeting your preferred date and time.

Our pregnancy testing service includes:

- ✓ Ultrasound diagnosis of pregnancy dates
- ✓ Predicted calving dates given for cows pregnancy tested 12 - 14 weeks after PSM
- ✓ Manual confirmation of non-pregnant cows
- ✓ Printed report of results, including calving dates, recheck list and lates date.

Additional services available on request:

- FREE entry of results into Minda Pro
- Technician to record results
- Herd Body Condition Score assessment
- Review of Fertility Focus Report

Registration

Please fill in the following information and return to your local clinic or post back (see overleaf).

Or register online visit www.anexafvc.co.nz/herd-pregnancy-testing

Farm Name: _____

Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Shed Type: Rotary Herringbone

Preferred date: _____ Preferred time of day: _____

No. of cows to be tested: _____ Planned bull-out date: _____

This season's mating start date: _____ My local clinic is _____

Are you using Minda Pro? Yes No

If yes, please print out the pregnancy worksheet once the date for pregnancy testing has been confirmed.

Pregnancy test details required: (tick one box)

- Every cow given a calving date
- Late calvers dated only (balance pregnant / not pregnant)
- Pregnant / not pregnant

Additional services required:

- Entry of results into Minda Pro
- Technician to record results
- Herd Body Condition Score assessment
- Review of Fertility Focus Report

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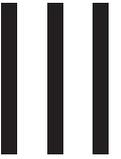
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