

DAIRY TALK

PROVIDING
VET CARE
24/7

APRIL 2016 | NEWSLETTER



Have you booked your Milk Quality Consult?

Contact your local Anexa FVC clinic and make a plan for the coming season.

THIS MONTH'S ARTICLES:

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The tick disease is here to stay

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IT PAYS TO BELONG
anexa FVC

Upper Cow Roadshow

The vet club was established 93 years ago for farmers; by farmers. While much has changed over the years our philosophy has remained the same - to provide excellent service to our members through integrity, enthusiasm, commitment and innovation.

We are a club which means in commercial terms that we are service driven not profit driven. Our Directors are elected farmers, who are committed to serving and representing your interests in your local farming community.

In these tough times it is important to continue to hold events for our farmers, not only to inspire and educate but also to come together as a community. Our Incorporated Society rules state our purpose is to "promote and hold lectures, field days, demonstrations, projects and activities for the purpose of instructing and advising members and other animal owners in the treatment and care of animals." To make this possible this year, the team at Anexa FVC have collaborated with Vetlife, Vet South and sponsors to bring you the "Upper Cow Road Show" presented by Dr. Phil Poulton.

Scott McDougall Anexa FVC's Research and Development Manager states "Dr. Poulton is an experienced Veterinarian who has undertaken detailed research on the best approach to cows with metabolic disease. He is an enthusiastic speaker, with practical advice on how to get the best outcomes for cows with metabolic disease".

Dr. Phil Poulton is highly regarded in his field across Australasia and has completed PhD research on downer cows. He strongly advocates setting up a dedicated nursing area for downer cows on dairy farms and his presentation will cover this as well as the identification, treatment and nursing of downer cows, as well as productive effects.

We hope our members will join us and make the most of this opportunity. There are two events, details are as follows:



Anexa FVC Invites Dairy Members to attend the

UPPER COW ROAD SHOW

Guest Speaker Dr Phil Poulton

TWO LOCATIONS

Ngatea

Thursday 5th May
7.00pm - 9.00pm

Hauraki Golf Club
Cnr SH2 & SH27, Ngatea

Supper provided

Morrinsville

Friday 6th May
11.00am - 1.00pm

Morrinsville Rugby Sports Club
Campbell Park, 355 Thames Street,
Morrinsville

Lunch provided

Please **RSVP** so how know how many members to cater for:
Email Leanne anexa.events@anexafvc.co.nz
or online www.anexafvc.co.nz/events

Facial eczema

– where are we now?

Autumn 2016 has seen an almost unprecedented facial eczema season. Spore counts have been in the 100,000s for several weeks in some areas, with supply of Zinc boluses running low countrywide. Not all animals will show obvious clinical signs despite their liver being damaged by fungal toxins; this is especially true in cattle with dark pigmented skin. The liver is an incredible organ with the ability to regenerate, and affected cattle usually recover in autumn. In spring however the cow is under great metabolic demand, with a growing calf, calving and early lactation a challenging time; this puts extra pressure on the liver and hence further problems can ensue. Discussing the risk with your vet based on the local facial eczema picture this season is the first step towards minimising further problems.



The tick disease is here to stay

By Ashley O'Driscoll, Veterinarian, Anexa FVC Ngāruawahia

A couple of years ago, the Waikato exploded with discussion about this new tick disease, Theileria. Confusion reigned, cows got blood transfusions, and then life settled down. Most of the cows living in the Waikato have now contracted Theileria, and the vast majority of them never showed any signs.

We are still seeing cows with anemia from Theileria in areas where the disease has been slow to spread. Farmers are now more informed and quick to identify and treat these cows. There have however been some "outbreaks" in the past year. These have mainly been in "naive" cows brought up from areas without ticks and without Theileria (South Island and some southern parts of the North Island). This is the main concern for Waikato dairy farmers so:

1. You need to be able to recognize the signs of Theileria
2. You need to avoid buying cattle from areas that don't have Theileria. If you do want to buy animals from these areas, please talk to your Vet first about a plan.

Keep an eye on your herd's Zinc and Copper trace element levels

By Rachel Hamill, Veterinarian, Anexa FVC Morrinsville

Zinc

Facial eczema has been very challenging this summer and many farmers have been experiencing problems, even in herds that have a good zinc supplementation programme. This has led to many people supplementing zinc at higher levels and some adding zinc to supplementary feed or using boluses when they traditionally haven't. There are **two potential concerns** that you should be aware of if you have made the decision to increase or change your zinc dosing.

- 1) **Zinc toxicity:** The levels of zinc recommended for protection from facial eczema are quite close to the toxic level, which means we need to be careful we don't push cows over the edge. Signs of long term zinc toxicity include cows off milk, milk fever like symptoms, constipation and in severe cases anaemia, jaundice and death. This is more likely when cattle are treated with Zinc on a more infrequent basis.
- 2) **As zinc interferes with copper uptake from the gut,** supplementing zinc for longer or at higher doses may reduce copper levels more this year than previously.

Copper

We have seen many of our farmers tightening their belts and cutting back on PKE this season. This is another reason that low copper levels may be more of an issue this year than in the past. Low copper can affect production, reproductive performance and growth rates in younger animals.

Liver biopsies are the key to allowing you to make good and economical copper supplementation decisions. Liver biopsies are the only form of testing that can assess copper storage levels and predict if the levels are high enough to get cows through calving and peak production. They will prevent you from wasting money on unnecessary supplementation if your herd already have adequate copper levels, and prevent you from risking copper toxicity by supplementing without knowing the copper status of your herd. Last year we saw at least three herds with copper at toxic levels, because they were feeding PKE and supplementing copper together.

The take home message is this year may be different.

- **Don't risk your animals becoming low in copper and suffering production losses.**
- **Don't waste your money on unnecessary supplementation if you don't need it.**
- **Don't supplement copper blindly and risk toxicity.**

Contact your local Anexa FVC Vet for advice on trace element testing and supplementation this season. We can also customise a mineral mix for you to meet the exact requirements of your herd, so that you aren't wasting a cent.



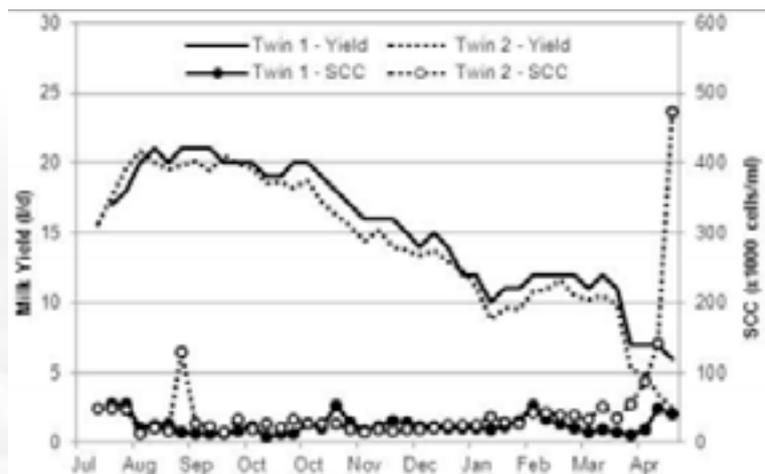
Making Dry Off Count

By Hamish Clare, Anexa FVC Morrinsville Veterinarian, Advanced Mastitis Accredited Advisor

1. **Your Milk Quality Consult (MQC)** is a great opportunity to review the current season's performance as well as deciding on the best approach at dry off for your herd. There are a number of different products available this year so discussing this now will ensure you don't miss out on any potential savings and can decide on the most cost-effective strategy for your herd.
2. **Antibiotic dry cow therapy (DCT)** and internal teat sealants (ITS) are valuable investments in your herd with benefits felt long after calving has finished. Even at the current payout the cost of a clinical case of mastitis during lactation is estimated at \$160-\$200, so DCT is cheap protection.
3. The number of herds using ITS through selective therapy or in **combination therapy** (ITS + antibiotic DCT) has increased a lot in the last three years. We have seen some fantastic results, with clinical mastitis rates over the calving period often dropping by half or more with combination therapy. On two particular farms the incidence of mastitis dropped from 27% and 32% to 7% and 12 % respectively in the following season after moving to combination therapy! From a cost benefit point of view at the current payout, doing combination therapy over antibiotic DCT alone is still worthwhile if you are having more than about 9% clinical mastitis in the first 2 months after calving. This doesn't account for any of the extra time and stress of dealing with more cases.
4. **DCT and ITS administration has some hazards, for cows and operators so it is critical that it is carried out properly.** Strict hygiene is necessary. Bacteria present on the outside of a cow's teats come from dirt and faeces, and can cause severe infections if pushed inside the udder during treatment. These can be highly resistant to antibiotics and can cause cow deaths. This is especially important if you are using ITS alone. If you have never used ITS before and are planning to this season make sure you discuss this with your vet. If you are not sure about hygiene or you need extra manpower, our Technicians are available to insert dry cow and/or ITS in your herd.
5. **Keep the time between cleaning a teat and treating it as short as possible to avoid treating a dirty teat.** Our Technicians have found the most effective technique for good hygiene is to treat one teat at a time starting with front teats. Cleaning often needs more than one alcohol soaked cotton ball.
6. **Be organised and don't miss out on the opportunity to protect those cows which are being dried off early.** There are a large number of cows being dried off at present due to

facial eczema as well as lighter cows and low producers. Be aware that there is an increased risk of inhibitory substances grades if antibiotic DCT is given to cows producing less than 5L of milk per day. If this is a concern for you don't hesitate to discuss this with your vet.

7. **Cull persistently infected cows.** Culling cows is the only way to eliminate some infections from the herd. If cows had high somatic cell counts (HSCCs) last season and are high again this season despite having received DCT then they should be placed on the cull list. Cows greater than seven years old and cows with lumps (abscesses or scar tissue) felt in the udder should be prioritised. Getting problem cows out of supply early will help keep your bulk tank somatic cell count down. We can help you sort out a cull list using herd test and treatment information if required.
8. **Avoid milking every other day as this can significantly increase the risk of mastitis** and the risk of SCC grades. Remember BTSCCs are likely to double after going to OAD so use caution if the BTSCC are close to 200,000. If there are flare ups of clinical cases at this time the increases can be even greater.
9. **Do not restrict water intake, water cannot be withheld.**
10. If you are struggling to keep your BTSCC down late in lactation and are not finding clots on your filter, and haven't herd tested recently to identify HSCC cows then **look for and dry off those cows doing less than 5L/day.** The graph below shows two identical twin dairy cows with a history of low SCC. The blue arrows show one twin which maintained production between 5-10L/day until drying off and her ISCC remained below 100,000 compared to her twin with the red arrows whose production dropped below 5L/day and her ISCC rose dramatically to just under 500,000 in the last month of lactation.



10 reasons to weigh your young stock

By Katie Denholm, Anexa FVC Herd+Plus Veterinarian

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 two 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 supplement 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.



TECHNICIAN SERVICES On-farm Support

- ✓ Calf disbudding
- ✓ Weighing
- ✓ Drenching
- ✓ Hoof trimming

Book at your local Anexa FVC clinic

Coromandel
P: 07 866 8556
Gordonton
P: 07 824 2103

Huntly
P: 07 828 7660
Maramarua
P: 09 232 5891

Matamata
P: 07 888 8068
Morrinsville
P: 07 889 5159

Ngaruawahia
P: 07 824 8630
Ngatea
P: 07 867 7256

Paeroa
P: 07 862 8815
Raglan
P: 07 825 8390

Rototuna
P: 07 853 0027
Te Aroha
P: 07 884 8014

Te Kauwhata
P: 07 826 3581
Thames
P: 07 868 7005

SAVE THE DATE

Calf Rearing Workshop

25th May 2016 for further details visit

www.anexafvc.co.nz/events



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