

DAIRY TALK

PROVIDING
VET CARE
24/7

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Articles:

Milk Quality Consultation

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)
Antibody Testing

Copper supplementation
during Zinc Season

It's not too early to start
thinking about drying off your
lighter cows

Controlling mastitis in late
lactation

Facial eczema

**IT PAYS
TO BELONG**
anexa
FVC

Milk Quality Consultations

As the time to dry off your cows approaches, so does the time to have your annual Milk Quality Consult with your local vet. We will shortly be sending out some forms for you to fill out - please take time to fill these out accurately before you have your consult, as the information in them helps form the basis of your upcoming discussion.

Your Milk Quality Consult is the ideal opportunity to sit down with your vet and, among other things, discuss how the season has gone for mastitis in your herd, to discuss possible culling decisions and to make informed decisions on drying off your herd.

Prevention is always better than cure, and your vet will be able to advise you on how to reduce mastitis incidence, and either maintain low bulk cell count levels, or reduce these levels in your herd during the coming season. They will be able to advise you on the best treatment regimes for the clinical mastitis cases that occur in your herd.

Anexa FVC have a number of vets specially trained in mastitis investigations and control. If you require more in-depth assistance with mastitis or related issues, your vet can refer you to a specialist within the Practice and they will work together on your behalf.

We advise you to have your staff members present at the consult as well so they can appreciate the cost of mastitis, and understand the importance and methods of prevention.



5 reasons to complete your milk quality consult early

1. It is an opportunity to discuss all aspects of your milk quality with your vet one-on-one
2. Your milk quality consult prescribes all the antibiotics and teatsealants you are likely to need in the next few months
3. Lighter cows will take a lot of time to put on condition coming into calving so you may need drugs on hand to dry off selected cows early to ensure they reach calving body condition score targets
4. You can book in your BVD antibody testing and complete your annual prescription requirement for other drugs
5. You can cull out or dry off 'repeat offender' clinical mastitis cows and cows with high cell counts; getting problem cows out of supply early will help keep your bulk tank somatic cell count down

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) Antibody Testing

By Lucy LeCocq, Anexa FVC Gordonton Veterinarian

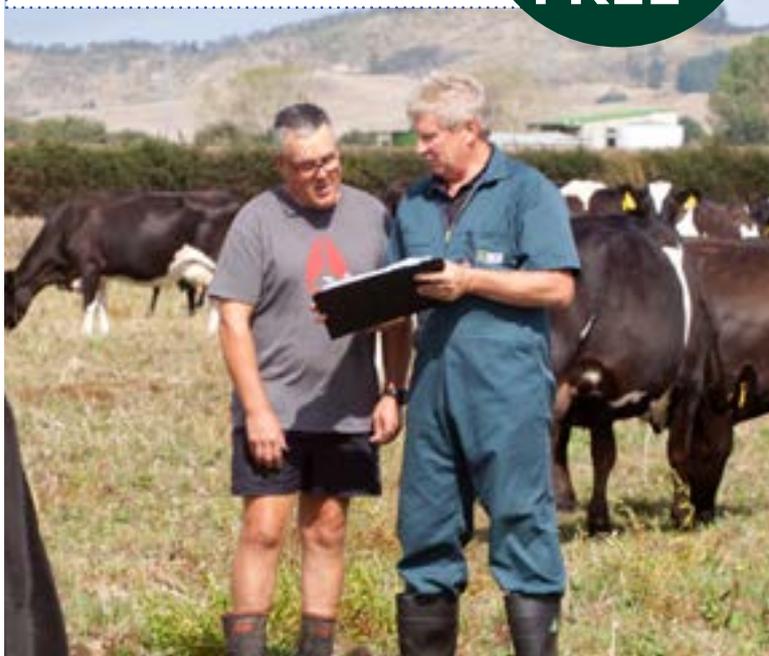
You may have read in our last newsletter that we are offering free laboratory tests for BVD antibodies in R2 heifers. The Antibody test is a historical test and is a common method of detecting BVD infection. A positive BVD antibody test tells us whether exposure to the BVD virus has occurred or not. When an animal catches the BVD virus, the immune system works to clear the virus from the body, and builds an immune response so that if re-exposed the body recognises and 'fights off' the virus more quickly. The antibodies which are created during this process are what are tested for. Because vaccination mimics a true infection without making the animal sick, antibodies can also be detected in vaccinated stock.

When we test the bulk vat, we are looking to see if the herd has been exposed to the virus. Depending on the level of antibody detected, and taking into account changes in antibody level from previous tests, an interpretation can be made regarding the likelihood of the virus itself causing a current infection in the herd. Where high antibody levels exist, a (PCR) will usually be ordered to look for the presence of a virus shedding animal – a PI (persistently infected with the virus) who will be spreading the virus around the herd.

Upcoming milk quality consults are the ideal time to review previous results and formulate your next seasons herd plan for BVD testing. Your local vet or clinic can help you order testing in advance, making one less thing to think about after calving.

**Terms and conditions apply.*

Get your
rising 2 year olds
tested for BVD
FREE*



Copper Supplementation during Zinc Season

Copper and Zinc compete for absorption from the gut. This means that while we are giving zinc to prevent facial eczema from January to May, the uptake of copper from the diet is going to be reduced. This can leave cows with low copper storage levels going into late pregnancy and calving; a time when copper demand is at its highest.

Many people simply withhold copper supplementation during this time. Others prefer to use organic copper, a form of supplementation that can still be absorbed despite zinc. However, remember that not all organic copper sources are created equal; some working better than others. Regardless of what you do, it is advisable to check copper status at the end of zinc season in May. Blood sampling for copper levels can highlight current deficiencies, however liver biopsies provide the most valuable information about copper storage levels and allow us to predict potential future deficiencies.

This helps us to advise you about the most appropriate supplementation options for your herd. Remember that supplementation requirements for trace elements can vary from season to season, and twice annual testing is the best way to ensure your stock do not become low in these important minerals. Want to know more? Talk to your vet, we're happy to help.

It's not too early to start thinking about drying off your lighter cows

By Hamish Clare, Anexa FVC Morrinsville Veterinarian

Most of you will know the body condition score (BCS) targets at calving of 5.0 for mixed age (MA) cows and 5.5 for first and second calvers (R3yo). **These are not just nice targets to achieve. They should be the aim of every farmer at this time of year** and a number of studies have shown that reaching these targets will maximise milk production and reproduction potential.

Through following the BCS of cows over a number of farms in the last two seasons I've found that typically cows struggle to gain significant condition while they are still milking i.e. gains of only 0.1 BCS per month are common. If cows are fed very well and on once a day (OAD) milking they may gain 0.3 BCS per month. When cows are dry however farmers are often able to achieve gains of 0.5 BCS per month and in some cases gains of 0.5 BCS in 20 days when they are being well supplemented (for example with PKE and/or maize silage).

Time is limiting so often drying off lighter cows early is the best option. MA cows at BCS 3.5 or less and R3yos at BCS 4.0 or less need attention now.

Example dry off dates to reach BCS targets:

If the start of calving is around the 9th July (PSM 1st Oct), then the recommended dry-off dates are given in the following table.

Controlling mastitis in late lactation

By Katie Denholm, Anexa FVC Gordonton Vet, Advanced Mastitis Accredited Advisor

As cows reach the end of their natural lactation length and milk volumes drop, somatic cell counts can creep up and clinical mastitis can rear its ugly head. It can be extremely tricky to keep your bulk tank somatic cell count down under 400,000 cells (the Fonterra penalty threshold). It becomes important to be vigilant in looking for clinical mastitis cases during milking in late lactation.

A good strategy could be to choose a quarter each milking to strip out and look for signs of clinical mastitis- such as clots in the milk and heat or swelling. If clinical cases are detected early, then milk can be held out of the vat to keep bulk tank somatic cell count low.

Subclinical mastitis (with no obvious changes to the milk) can be more difficult to tackle, as high somatic cell count cows with subclinical mastitis are essentially invisible. Regular herd testing can become a useful tool here to detect your 'repeat offender' cows. Older cows with consistently high somatic cell counts (over 200,000 cells) should be moved up the cull list as they can often be difficult to keep in check and they may be contributing to high bulk tank cell counts. A Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT) paddle can also be used to detect subclinical mastitis cases where herd testing records are unavailable. Each milking cow needs to have a small volume of milk stripped into the RMT paddle to be mixed with blue reagent which will become 'snotty' if the cow has subclinical mastitis. This can be a time consuming task, but Anexa technicians can help to RMT your herd. Really 'snotty' cows need to be held out of supply and monitored to keep the bulk tank somatic cell count down.

Milk cultures can help by identifying bacteria present in the affected quarters. This allows us to make a much more informed and cost effective decision about what to do with these cows, and also gives us a picture of the herd's overall mastitis dynamics. Taking milk cultures can benefit your culling decisions to read more about this visit:

<https://www.anexafvc.co.nz/factsheets/high-somatic-cell-count-cows-make-the-right-call-1>

Wondering if Milk samples are worth it? For this client it was.

Subclinical *Staph aureus* causing BMSCC problems in a herd of 230 cows

In late February, one of our members took advantage of our 'pays to belong' milk culture deal, and submitted milk samples from the top 22 highest SCC cows on a recent herd test. All cows were subclinical (had no signs of mastitis but high individual SCC). The BMSCC had been bouncing around between 270,000 – 350,000 recently. The results of the milk cultures, shown below, were quite an eye opener.

15 of the 22 samples grew *Staph aureus*, a highly contagious mastitis pathogen that can be notoriously difficult to treat.

Given the high proportion of *Staph aureus* positive cultures, our farmer is going to submit a further set of milk cultures; although these cows all had individual SCC > 500,000, about 50% of cows infected with *Staph aureus* can have SCC less than 500,000. With this information under his belt, our farmer has been able to make management decisions around culling cows that have been the source of infection, get his HSCC under control, avoid those costly penalties and in the long term, benefit from the savings.

Assumptions:

- ▶ Dry cows are fed only Autumn pasture
- ▶ No BCS gain in the 1st 10 days after drying off
- ▶ Dry Cows are gaining 0.5 BCS in 30 days
- ▶ No BCS gain in the 30 days prior to calving
- ▶ The cow is calving at the PSC i.e. 9th July

MA Cow BCS	R3yo Cow BCS	Increase required	Days required	Dry off date
-	3.0	2.5	190	1st Jan
3.0	3.5	2.0	160	31st Jan
3.5	4.0	1.5	130	1st March
4.0	4.5	1.0	100	31st March
4.5	5.0	0.5	70	30th April

If you know the calving dates for your cows, then your later calvers can be milked for longer. A rougher way can be to work back from the half-way point of your calving (around 14 days after the start of calving depending on your calving pattern) so the majority of cows are at target.

If you can feed your dry cows well (good quality supplements make this more achievable) and have gains of 0.5 BCS over 20 days rather than 30 days then a BCS 3.5 MA cow or BCS 4.0 R3yo could be milked for a month longer and still achieve calving BCS targets.

As with life nothing is perfect and the same applies to the BCS of your herd. So **don't get too caught up on solely the average of your herd. Focus also on the range of BCS in your herd and aim to have no more than 15% below and 15% above** their BSC calving target (yes too many fat cows can be a problem).

Drying-off low producing, fat cows early can also be beneficial.

These cows put fat on their back instead of milk in your vat. When feed is short, it makes sense to feed your more productive cows better. There is often an area of low quality feed on the farm where these cows can be put to maintain themselves, such as steep sidelings or gullies.

Don't forget your youngstock. This is often when groups begin to start falling behind. Don't let the time between drenches stretch too long, especially after periods of rain and when stock are eating pasture down to low levels.

Anexa FVC has 14 Vets certified as BCS assessors. **We offer a service whereby we can condition score your herd as either a one off visit, or on a regular basis.** This provides valuable information, in particular for feed management. Contact your local vet if you are interested in discussing this further.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE YOUNGSTERS...

Facial eczema (FE) is a pretty nasty condition. Cattle of all ages can be affected.

By Finley Koolhoven, Anexa FVC Matamata Veterinarian

Some facts:

FE caused by: ingested spores from fungus (*Pithomyces chartarum*)

Fungus growing in: dead material on/near the ground (grass)

Spores contain: toxins (*sporidesmins*)

Toxins cause: damage to bile tubing in the liver

Bile used for: digestion, but also to get rid of pigments and breakdown products from grass

If bile builds up in liver: liver damage (can't live without the liver, hence the name 'live-r')

Build up of pigments: jaundice

Build up of 'the green stuff' of grass (*Phylloerythrin*): light colored skin easily sun burnt (photosensitivity)

Preventing damage: Zinc (*drenching, drinking water, bolus*)

Treat cows AND calves.

Calves have less reserves/resilience than cows, don't forget about them!

Give calves boluses: Faceguard or Timecapsule rather than through drinking water. Calves drink less than cows (relatively) because they don't lactate. They may not consume (drink) enough zinc to protect them against FE.

Need help? Our technicians are expert 'calf-bolussers' and are happy to help you protect these bovine babies and future members of your herd.

What else can you do?

- If possible, **don't let animals graze to the ground** (more dead stuff there)
- **Monitor weather:** warmth and moisture stimulate growth of the fungus
- **Monitor spore counts in the area** (sign up for Anexa's FVC's FE spore count alert service via texts or email visit www.anexafvc.co.nz/newsletters)
- **Spray paddocks with anti-fungals**, but make sure there is 100% coverage otherwise there may be 'hot-spots' (with a lot of FE spores) present

Get more information: Read further articles on our website

<https://www.anexafvc.co.nz/factsheets> and call any of the Anexa FVC clinics and

have a chat with the vet

Let's keep them safe!

Member Offer:

Contact your vet or local clinic for further information



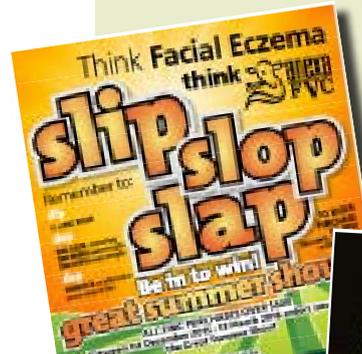
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Need product delivered?

We can help



January Winner for the Anexa Slip Slop Slap Zinc Promotion



TECHNICIAN SERVICES On-farm Support

- ✓ Calf disbudding
 - ✓ Weighing
 - ✓ Drenching
 - ✓ Hoof trimming
- Book at your local Anexa FVC clinic

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