

DAIRY TALK



FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

PROVIDING
VET CARE
24/7

When you think **Animal Health** think **Anexa**

Prevent Facial Eczema

By now everyone should be well into their zinc supplementation programme to try to prevent facial eczema. Options for supplementation include zinc sulphate through the water, drenching with zinc oxide and zinc oxide capsules.

Zinc sulphate comes in two forms: Monozinc and Zinc heptahydrate. We are commonly asked what the differences are between these two forms and which one is preferable. The short answer is that **the zinc supplementation plan that you choose to use on your farm is likely unique** and both products are useful. It is important to remember that none of the zinc treatments are fully protective, particularly in situations where spore challenge is high.

It is imperative that you get the correct dosage for the product you choose to use.

The dosage required for Monozinc is lower than for Zinc heptahydrate, in fact it is almost half. There may be issues with some products clogging up the inline dispensers. This is more likely where large amounts of product are used. Animals may take time to adapt to the taste of the zinc sulphate in the water so increase to full dose gradually and consider adding a flavour enhancer such as Caramello or Aniseed to the water.

Zinc oxide boluses (Face-Guard and Time Capsules) are available for all classes of stock. They typically provide 4-6 weeks of slow release zinc. They are especially popular for young stock or dry stock, since young and dry animals drink a less predictable amount of water each day than dairy cows. They are more convenient than daily drenching and are the most reliable way of ensuring all stock receive the appropriate amount of zinc daily. Zinc oxide boluses need to be administered carefully to avoid putting them down the wind pipe instead of the oesophagus. This is a nasty business which is avoidable with a bit of care.

Zinc oxide drenching is an option in some herds. Animals may be drenched daily or every 3 days.

Beware of overdosing with zinc as it can predispose cows to milk fever.



Clinical signs of facial eczema include a purplish discoloration of the teats.



Severe cases can result in skin crusting and peeling.



TOP TIP:

Focusing on milk production?

Keep a close eye on your herd's body condition.

Articles:

Prevent Facial Eczema

Young Stock Meeting Growth Targets?

Milk Quality Consults

Pregnancy Test Targets

Weirburn Farm Case Study

Maintain Body Condition

Pre-Calving

Vet Profile: Katrina Roberts

AnexaPets: Keeping your pets cool in the Summer heat



Become our friend on FaceBook - AnexaVets

Young Stock Meeting Growth Targets?

The summer months can be a challenging time to rear rising one year old heifers. Dry weather and feed shortages may result in growth checks at a time when these animals can scarcely afford to be losing weight.

Daily liveweight gains for 6 month old Friesian heifers need to average about 550g to 600g per day - that's over half a kilo per day to produce an adult weight cow of 500kg! By mating time, heifers should be 60% of their mature liveweight. This means that **stalky grass of low nutritive value is not enough and often calves will need to be supplemented**, or at least given the pick of the grass on the farm.

Bear in mind that your own pure bred Friesians may have adult liveweights much heavier than 500kg so **you should calculate the adult liveweight for your particular line of heifers first**. Monitoring body weights regularly allows you to detect any weight deficiencies early and intervene appropriately. **Well grown heifers perform better, both reproductively and productively in their first season**, so producing a well grown and healthy mob of heifers will reap rewards later.

Remember to check your young stock both at home and at grazing! **Requesting regular liveweight updates from your grazier will mean there will be no surprises** when they come home. Many farms are still having trouble rearing young stock to target weights and this is affecting the reproductive and productive performance of these youngsters when they reach the herd.

It is important to recognise and address any problems early. Good nutritional management and disease prevention should allow you to capitalise on a profitable and productive young stock rearing enterprise.

Milk Quality Consults

It will soon be time again to fill in your milk quality questionnaire.

This is an opportunity to sit down with your vet and assess all aspects of milk quality and mastitis on your farm. While the prescription for dry cow therapy is tied in with this consult, **the primary objective of the milk quality discussion is to decide on areas for improvement and whether or not you are achieving your goals.**

Our database stores all the milk quality information from all our clients' farms to allow you to bench mark your performance against others in the district. The information you provide to your vet is very valuable and it is worth taking some time to fill your questionnaire out carefully. You will likely need to refer back to your treatment and somatic cell count records so that you can provide the best information possible and get the most value from your milk quality consult.



Want your stock weighed?

Anexa Technicians can weigh your stock at the home farm or at grazing, providing a service that is stress-free, independent and affordable.

- **No yards, no problem**
Anexa has portable handling facilities
- **Independent weigh reports**
We can offer regular weigh visits or on-demand

From only \$99 plus GST*, technicians will weigh the stock and provide either a written data report or enter the weights directly into Minda for you.

Optional services available while weighing include:

- ✓ Vaccinations
- ✓ Boluses
- ✓ Drenching

*Charges are calculated on an hourly basis and the exact number of animals weighed per hour varies. The above offer includes one hour of technician time. Mileage additional, price subject to change.

Contact your local clinic to book our technician weighing service today



Young Stock

FROM WEANING ►► MATING

Want advice on how to get the best returns from your replacement stock, talk to your vet about Anexa's Young Stock Programmes.



Pregnancy Test Targets

With pregnancy testing well under way it seems timely to address performance targets for your herd.

The target for cows becoming pregnant in the first 6 weeks of mating is 78%. This target is based on the average of the top 25% of New Zealand dairy farms, and relies on achieving a 90% 3 week submission rate and a 60% conception rate. Submission rates of below 81% and conception rate of below 53% require attention.

The InCalf programme is designed to identify areas for improvement in your system to help you achieve these targets. **If your 6-week in-calf rate is less than 68%, you should seek advice.**

Empty rates are also a useful measure of reproductive performance, but they do not indicate how quickly cows become pregnant, so should be used in conjunction with the 6-week in-calf rate to assess overall herd performance. Empty rate can only be assessed at the end of the mating period and relies heavily on the mating period length. **Top farmers achieve an empty rate of 10% to a 9 week mating length and a 6% empty rate to a 12 week mating length.**

The best way to get an accurate 6-week in-calf rate is to pregnancy test early (12 to 14 weeks after the planned start of mating), but it is possible to get an intermediate report from your mating information, even in the absence of early pregnancy test results. **Alternatively, if you have no mating information you can estimate your herd's 6-week in-calf rate based on the calving pattern from the following season.** The Minda Fertility Focus Report will provide you with this information. If you need help generating a Fertility Focus Report for your herd then **please do not hesitate to contact one of our trained InCalf advisors, via your local clinic.**

Weirburn Farm Case Study



At Weirburn Farm the herd body condition score (BCS) is still being monitored and at the early January BCS both the young mob and older mob of cows had lost 0.2 BCS since the last visit. This has coincided with the cows having dropped milk production, which many farms will have seen with the Waikato humidity this month. The effect of heat stress in cows can be significant. DairyNZ states that when air temperature is greater than about 23°C and relative humidity is greater than 80%, cows begin to experience heat-induced depression of feed intake, and lower productivity.

Kylie started feeding grass silage to both mobs on the 12th January and maize silage to the young mob on 14th January and the older herd a few days later.

The herd is booked for their pregnancy test on 22nd January, and with only a 9 week mating, this one test will enable us to accurately confirm conception dates for all cows, and determine a final empty rate.

Kylie's focus is now on ensuring the herd is well set up for next season. The young herd is going to go on once a day milking (OAD) as soon as the pregnancy test is done. The empty cows will be removed from the OAD mob, and this mob will be well fed with supplements (maize silage) in order to encourage them to hold milk production in the transition to OAD.

Anexa's Herd+Plus, InCalf Advisors



Katrina Roberts



Angela McEwan



Katie Denholm



Margaret Perry



Ashley O'Driscoll



Steve Harkness



Geoff Plant



Matt Peters



Hamish Clare



Maintain Body Condition Pre-Calving

Planning Summer and Autumn nutrition is very important to maintain body condition pre-calving and, more importantly, to put weight on skinnier cows in time for calving.

Regular body condition scoring of your herd from January onwards will allow you to have a realistic idea of where your herd is sitting relative to the target body condition scores of 5 in the cows and 5.5 in the heifers and second calvers by calving time. It is important to look at the range of weights in your herd, not just the average score, as there can be quite a range of BCS values in a herd.

Drying off skinner cows early will allow them the necessary time to reach their target calving weights. The following table from the InCalf book shows how many days a cow needs to be dry to reach these targets.

Days (months) from next calving	Condition score at dry off	
	Cow	Rising 3-yr heifers
120 (4)	3.0	3.5
90 (3)	3.5	4.0
60 (2)	4.0	5.0
Calving	5.0	5.5

If you have cows that are BCS 3.0 in your herd in early March, and your planned start of calving date is in early July, these cows need to be dried off in early March to allow the necessary 4 months for them to reach a BCS of 5.0 at calving time.

Contact your vet to organised an accredited body condition scoring vet to score your herd in February.

Katrina Roberts Body Condition Score Accredited Vet

At Anexa Animal Health we endeavour to have our reproduction and nutrition consultants body condition score (BCS) accredited with DairyNZ. The accreditation scheme is run nationwide and aims to standardise the results that farmers can expect when their vet body condition scores their herd. Body condition scoring by its very nature can be subjective, but accreditation objectifies the process as far as possible. We also record results in a database that has been custom built to report body condition score trends, so that farmers can also benchmark themselves against local herds. Analysing the BCS data we have collected will enable us to understand relationships between herd performance and BCS better and will lead to better recommendations to you, our farmers.



Katrina Roberts has been working at Anexa Animal Health for over a decade. She is a qualified Intelact consultant and an InCalf consultant, so she wears both reproduction and nutrition consultancy hats.

Katrina is an Australian graduate and lives with her Welsh husband Adrian and their two beautiful girls Hannah and Ellie in rural Matamata. She is a keen horserider and has been involved with Riding for the Disabled for a number of years. Katrina and Adrian's small-block is a veritable menagerie of animals including horses, chickens, cattle and cats, and recently a puppy!

AnexaPets

Keeping your pets cool in the Summer heat

- ✓ Fresh cool water
- ✓ Provide shade
- ✓ Clip heavy coats
- ✗ Never leave pets in vehicles

Cool off

- ✓ In the shade
- ✓ Wrap in a wet cold towel
- ✓ Under the hose/paddling pool
- ✗ Ice water

If your pet becomes distressed please contact your vet, heatstroke can be serious.

0800 2 THE VET | anexa.co.nz

Morrinsville
P 07 889 5159

Te Aroha
P 07 884 8014

Matamata
P 07 888 8068

Rototuna
P 07 854 0772

Gordonton
P 07 824 2103

Ngaruawahia
P 07 824 8630

Te Kauhwhata
P 07 826 3581

Huntly
P 07 828 7660

Raglan
P 07 825 8390

0800 2 THE VET | anexa.co.nz