

NEWSLETTER

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Vaccines at Lockington shop

Please ring ahead if you would like to get vaccines from our Lockington shop. We do carry a limited range at Lockington and sometimes are found short in larger orders.

Marshmallow can kill cows

Marshmallow can have dangerously high levels of nitrate in it. We have seen problems in previous years with marshmallow where cows or young stock have been sent on to channel banks or stockyards to clean up.

There have even been problems when cows have eaten most of the available pasture and then eaten marshmallow along the fence lines.

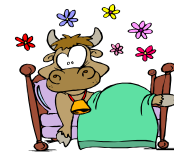
The best way to deal with marshmallow is to slash it.

Seasonal reminders:

- Put a halter on down cows with a prolapsed uterus as soon as you find them. When cows get up and walk the prolapsed uterus stretches and bangs into the cow's hocks.



- Treat dirty cows with metricure early. Dirty cows treated with metricure two weeks after calving are twice as likely to get in calf as those not treated.
- Use Vetrellyte-ZB calf electrolyte for scouring calves. Feedback from calf rearers who use Vetrellyte-ZB is that it is a superior product for treating dehydrated calves.



Uterine pessaries

It seems logical to treat cows with retained afterbirth with pessaries in the uterus to try and reduce the chance of infection. Studies have shown that in many cases pessaries do not help cows with retained afterbirth and maybe even make things worse.

It may be that pessaries can slow the "rotting" process of the afterbirth and increase the time that the afterbirth is retained. It is thought that the presence of antibiotics in the uterus decreases the production of white cells in the uterus as well as reducing the effectiveness of white cells in the uterus.

There is more and more evidence that the best treatment for cows with retained afterbirth is to do nothing unless the cow is sick (has a temperature above 39^o C). If the cow is unwell then she should be treated with an injectable antibiotic such as

Oxytet. If she is very sick, then she will benefit from veterinary help with anti-inflammatory drugs or fluids.

If you want to use pessaries, we recommend that you: -

- Administer them within the first week of calving while the cervix is open, and they are easily introduced.
- Do **not** use them when the afterbirth is still present.
- Give cows that are not well injectable antibiotics.

In general, we recommend the following treatment protocol for dirty cows: -

- Retained membranes should be left to rot out and not removed with force.
- Pessaries should not be used until the afterbirth has come away.
- Metricures are the best treatment for cows that have an infection in the uterus and should be used between 1 and 6 weeks after calving.



Humane killing of calves

The welfare of animals is becoming increasingly important to the general public. It is vital to the dairy industry that we do the right thing and that we are seen to do the right thing. One area that we can improve is the humane killing of induced, sick and dying calves.

The best way to kill calves quickly and humanely is with a captive bolt device. The effect is the same as shooting with a gun but there is not a projectile. For this reason, they are much safer. You do not need any registration or licence to own or operate a captive bolt.

The captive bolt device is available for **\$399** (inc GST). Please contact us if you are interested in owning a

captive bolt device. They are simple to use and are very effective. We recommend a short training session of 15 -30 minutes if you have not used one previously.

It is our opinion that it is not good enough to “knock a calf on the head” in order to humanely kill it. When it comes to animal welfare, it is better to be ahead of public opinion.

Metacam, mastitis and fertility

Recent studies into the effect of using the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) Metacam in cases of mastitis have yielded some interesting results for cow fertility.

A 2009 study in New Zealand found that cows with mastitis that received a dose of Metacam (along with standard antibiotic therapy) were **42%** less likely to be culled. The most likely reason was that fewer of these cows were empty at the end of the season.

Subsequent studies have confirmed that this reduced culling rate is due to improved fertility - with a **10% improvement in first service conception rate**, a reduction in the number of required inseminations and **increased probability of cows being in calf at 120 days** post calving.



Most of the mastitis cases were at or around calving so we are not sure of the exact mechanism, but it may have something to do with the effect on the oocyte (or egg) when the cow has mastitis.

It is important to note that in these studies the mastitis was mild clinical mastitis where the cow was not off its food or sick.

There is also evidence to suggest that Metacam has positive effects on the outcome of mastitis treatment – Metacam used with an antibiotic was found to result in a 16% improvement in bacteriological cure rates when compared to antibiotic alone. This

means more cows can eliminate the causative bacteria from their udders.

It has always made sense to give cows that are sick a dose of Metacam but now we have good evidence that all cows with clinical mastitis will benefit from treatment.

Calf deaths after difficult births

Calves that are at risk of being born dead or dying in the first 24 hr period after being pulled include:

-Any calf that requires farmer or vet assistance to be delivered.

- Large birth weight calves.

-Twins or triplets.

-From mothers that have a long labour.

-Immature/ premature calves.

-Calves coming back feet first.

-Traumatized during the birthing process i.e. broken legs, swollen face, broken ribs (21% of calves pulled with a jack can have broken ribs).

-Those calves that appear yellow at the time of birth.

A check list to follow for when pulling calves to try and reduce the number of deaths includes:

- Remove the membranes from the muzzle of the calf.

- Removed mucous and fluid from the mouth by using your fingers to scoop it out.

- Sit the calf up on its sternum (Never hang a calf up by its back legs or swing it around).

- The calf should take a breath within 30 seconds (You can stimulate the calf to breath by placing your finger or a piece of grass/ straw in the nose and rub the calf's head and chest with towels).

- Check for broken ribs or limbs

- The calf should 1) lift its head by itself within 5 minutes, 2) able to

maintain the sitting position by itself within 15 minutes, and, 3) stand and suckle within 2 hrs.

- Check for congenital defects i.e. Umbilical hernia, mouth defects.

- Dip or spray the umbilical cord with iodine or chlorhexidine.

- Correctly id and record the calf and mother.

- Ensure adequate colostrum intake (3L within 2 hours after birth, repeat in 12 hours).