



The magazine of Cambridge Vets *treating all animals large and small*

February 2016

## NEW CLINIC OPEN DAY!

You will have noticed a fabulous new building nearing completion on the corner of Empire and Alpha Streets in Cambridge. This will be our new premises, and we can't wait to move in mid March. We will offer you and your animals the benefits of our exciting new facility.

In addition to boasting the same experienced professional team, we will have new facilities that will enable us to provide the best care and service 7 days a week.

Keep an eye out for our official opening in April. We would love to see you there.



## LAMENESS SEMINAR

Book your whole farm team in now!

The inspiring and passionate Neil Chesterton is coming to Cambridge Vets on **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March** to talk about how to prevent and treat lameness.

We will have an on-farm session from 10am till 2pm to talk about cow tracks, crushes and trimming feet.

Then we will have an evening session to talk about the causes of lameness and how to prevent it.

This will be a fantastic day, and it is a great opportunity to inspire the whole team by learning practical things they can implement on farm.

The morning session will be limited in numbers, but we encourage the whole farm team to attend the evening.

Phone us on 8277099.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**Alan Bremner Memorial  
Farm Customers' Golf Day!**

**Friday 6th May 2016**

At Cambridge Golf Club - 9 holes only

(\$5 Green Fees Apply)

Tee off from 9:30am until 1pm

This is not a tournament, just a really fun social occasion for farm clients.

- Multitude of prizes, not just for the golf!
  - Alan Bremner memorial trophy
  - All day BBQ and liquid refreshments
    - Catch up with mates

**Book at the clinic now!**



# Theileria Associated Bovine Anaemia (TABA)

The recent NZ Vet Journal had a whole issue on the TABA epidemic. Here are a few highlights gleaned from the MPI and Massey authors:

*Theileria orientalis* was first reported in NZ in 1984, but the anaemia epidemic spanned from August 2012 to March 2014. In the first 18 months there were 496 case herds (reported to MPI); 79% were dairy and 21% beef.

Of 882 individual cases (submitted) 93% were positive for *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda. This is a protozoan parasite. There are 10 other types of *T. orientalis*, 3 of which have been found in NZ (chitose, buffeli and type 5). Chitose occasionally causes anaemia. Australia and Japan have also been significantly affected by *Theileria orientalis*, although it is found worldwide.

*Theileria* is carried and transmitted by the cattle tick *Haemaphysalis longicornis*. The larvae, nymphs and adults all feed on ruminants, but different individuals. The infection is not passed onto the tick eggs. A tick can pick up the parasite from the blood of an infected cow, and then pass it on to the next cow it feeds from. The piroplasm form causes destruction of red blood cells, leading to anaemia. Animals can recover from infection, but the parasites may persist possibly for life; periods of stress such as calving can lead to a relapse. Disease is more frequently seen when naïve animals are introduced into an endemic area, or when infected animals are introduced to properties with ticks. The ticks are found throughout the North Island, plus Nelson and Golden Bay, and TABA has only occurred in tick areas.

## Some interesting figures:

Incidence risk 1%, cumulative mortality 0.23%, case fatality rate 17%.

It is believed the epidemic's origin was the importation of infected cattle.

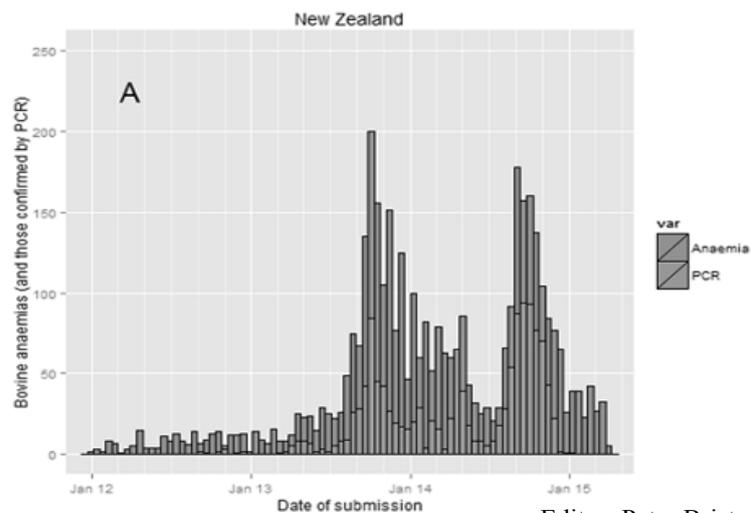
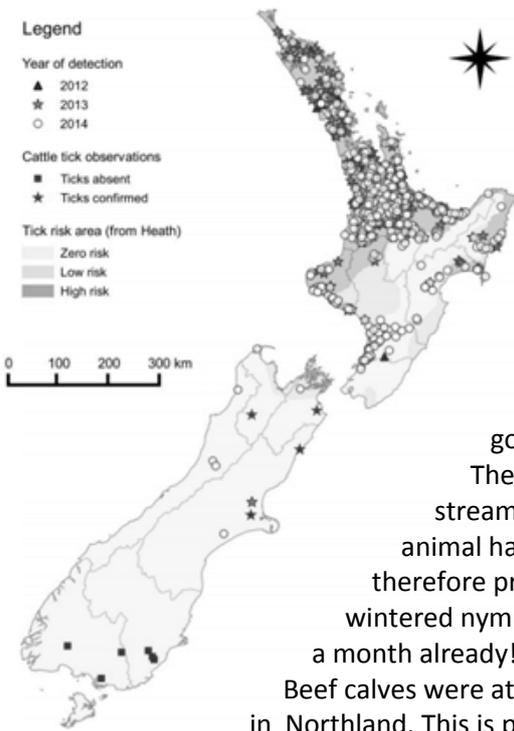
There appear to be two scenarios of *Theileria* spreading. Firstly via cattle movements: farms that had *Theileria* were more likely to have brought cattle onto the farm, and from a greater distance. Trucking in infected cattle to a naïve area would probably initiate each of these local outbreaks. Obviously the peak movement of 500,000 cattle happens on June 1<sup>st</sup>, leading to the mixing of infected and naïve cattle and ticks, and spread of the disease. Then a second localized spread via tick vectors: cases were seen in clusters within 20-30 days and up to 15-20km from a case farm. Infected tick nymphs can be carried to neighbouring properties by wildlife such as hares, horses, deer, dogs, goats and sheep. 100 ticks have been noted on the ears of a hare!

The time period from infection by tick bite to the parasite being found in the blood stream is 10 days, and the number of bugs increase to 30-40 days, which is when the animal has the most severe anaemia and clinical signs. The peak of TABA in October 2013 therefore probably arose from infection soon after calving via the re-emergence of overwintered nymphs. By the time you see a cow sick from it, she has been infectious to ticks for over a month already!

Beef calves were at greater risk of TABA than dairy calves, and calves were the most affected age group in Northland. This is probably because beef calves are born later (coinciding with the peak questing period of overwintered nymphs), dairy calves are housed for the first few weeks, and tick density is higher in Northland with earlier resumption of tick activity.

Data from Africa suggests that as an area becomes endemically stable, the incidence of obvious disease falls and is often restricted to young animals; this may explain why there was lower risk of disease in Northland. In contrast, the Waikato bore the brunt of TABA with adult dairy cattle.

The prediction is that some areas will reach endemic stability (with clinical disease not being seen much as ticks and theileria are a constant factor), but that epidemics (outbreaks of disease) may continue in areas of marginal tick habitat. Practical treatments still focus around pasture management, tick control, animal husbandry (minimizing stress), supportive therapy and, if needed, blood transfusion. Buparvaquone is effective but the with-holding is too long to be practical. Some research work for a potential vaccine was being done in Japan.



Editor: Peter Briston



## LEPTOSPIROSIS

A reminder to get your dairy youngstock vaccinated if we have not already done them. Leptospirosis is a horrible disease for people to catch, and can cause abortions and redwater in cattle. The milking herd and yearlings should be done before winter too!

## Johnes Herd Testing - Now is the time

We all know the frustration of losing one of our 'ole favourites' due to weight loss, watery diarrhoea and decreased milk production. Johnes continues to cause economic losses for dairy producers, particularly with respect to lost milk production, premature culling, reduced slaughter value and perhaps increased infertility and mastitis. Effective management of Johnes requires a significant, long term commitment from the farmer and begins by identifying the problem animals within the herd. February is the perfect month to do this. The test is authorised by your veterinarian through LIC herd testing and costs \$4.20/cow. The results will identify cows into 1 of 4 categories; not detected, suspect, positive, and high positive. Once the herd status is known we can develop a comprehensive, herd-specific, practical management plan to achieve cost-effective control of Johnes. Contact your vet to authorise Johnes testing at your next herd test or to book a time to discuss the development of a management plan.

## HEIFER GROWTH RATES A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Future reproductive performance depends on a successful program for raising calves and heifers. Raising heifers is a heavy fixed cost with no income to the farmer until the first lactation commences and no profit until the second lactation.

### So how are we doing rearing our replacers?

NZ dairy heifers are failing to meet their target live weights by the time they enter the dairy herd at 24 months of age. The truth of this has been starkly revealed in the findings of a 2012 study of over 105,000 heifers with weights recorded in the national database between 2006 and 2010. In addition a recent NZ study of heifer synchrony programmes, showed 40% of 1137 heifers were reported to be prepubertal 13 days prior to the start of mating. This is likely to be related to failure to achieve liveweight targets, as the onset of puberty is regulated mainly by live weight.

### When do our heifers start to fall behind?

Calves appear to wean at target live weight, however growth rates quickly start to fall behind target from weaning. The gap continues to widen with particular risk periods occurring between 9-12 months (i.e. the first winter) with growth rates of 0.32kg/day, compared to the target of 0.58kg/day and again between 15-22 months (i.e. the second summer) with growth rates of 0.6kg/day compared to target of 0.73kg/day. A period of rapid growth between 12-15 months, where animals on average exceeded the target weight gain (actual 0.65kg/day c.f. target 0.55kg/day), failed to compensate for the slow winter growth. As a result 18% of animals were more than 20% behind target at 15 months of age and therefore at risk of being pre-pubertal at start of mating. A staggering 73% of the population were more than 5% below target at 22 months and by that age, on average the heifers were 11% below target. Even the upper quartile, on average, failed to meet liveweight targets by 22 months, despite being on track until 15 months of age.

### What do we do about it?

Being proactive by establishing and implementing a regular weighing program of all replacement stock at regular intervals is the cornerstone of keeping on track. Individual weights can then be compared to a predetermined target for weight age and intervention instituted if animals start to fall below the line. This approach allows critical events and periods of risk to be identified and management changed to provide positive, planned outcomes rather than continually responding to system failure.



## Dry Cow Therapy

As drying off mobs looms closer, it is a timely reminder to book in your dry cow, mastitis and udder health consultation.

As you may have seen in the press releases last year, the NZ Veterinary Association released an aspirational statement that "by 2030 New Zealand Inc will not need antibiotics for the maintenance of animal health and wellness". The key ambiguous word there is "maintenance"...It was a deliberately provocative choice of words by representatives of our profession, to underline the growing concern about antibiotic resistance and the potential impact we can have on this. From my perspective it was done without adequate consultation, and was not very supportive of the work we do, but it does underline our duty to prescribe appropriately and responsibly. If political pressure builds to reduce antibiotic usage in the agricultural sector (& we are already the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in the world), then dry cow would be the obvious target. So we need to demonstrate we are making sound decisions based on data.

In the future, I foresee that these types of consultations (looking at farm systems, underlying factors, and management interventions for herd health), will become pivotal, and a formal requirement for several different areas.

### Facial Eczema and Zinc

The spore counts are rising in general, so it is important to give zinc supplementation to susceptible stock on at-risk paddocks. Spore counts for specific areas are available from the clinic and on our website. We can do spore counts on grass samples to give you an accurate risk assessment of your property. Calves, cows, sheep and alpacas are all susceptible. Options include:

- Time Capsules or Face Guard blouses – ideal for youngstock or hot properties. Our staff can help you administer them if required.
  - Zinc sulphate in the drinking water
  - Zinc oxide drenched / in the feed
  - Fungicide spray of the paddocks (e.g. mycotak)
  - Blood testing stock will check the zinc levels are correct – we have seen cases of toxicity where too much zinc was given.
- Dose rates and more details are available on our website.



# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SURVEY

A big thank you to all those of you who completed our survey. We really wanted to know what you thought of us, both our strengths and the things we need to improve. So first of all, congratulations to Floyd Smit, who won the draw for a night out on us! I was hoping for some incriminating photos of an evening of debauchery, but I think it's a case of "what goes on tour stays on tour..."

We had nearly 400 respondents, with about 70 from the farming side.

Rather hearteningly, the overwhelming feedback was positive, with 96% satisfied with our customer service. Consistently over 95% of respondents felt we are professional, caring, helpful, polite, responsive to your needs, good at listening and explaining, and that we deliver solutions. In addition, we were commended for being welcoming and our provision of knowledge / advice was seen as a major strength:

**"They are a superb veterinary practice that we really value having as a part of our professional team".**

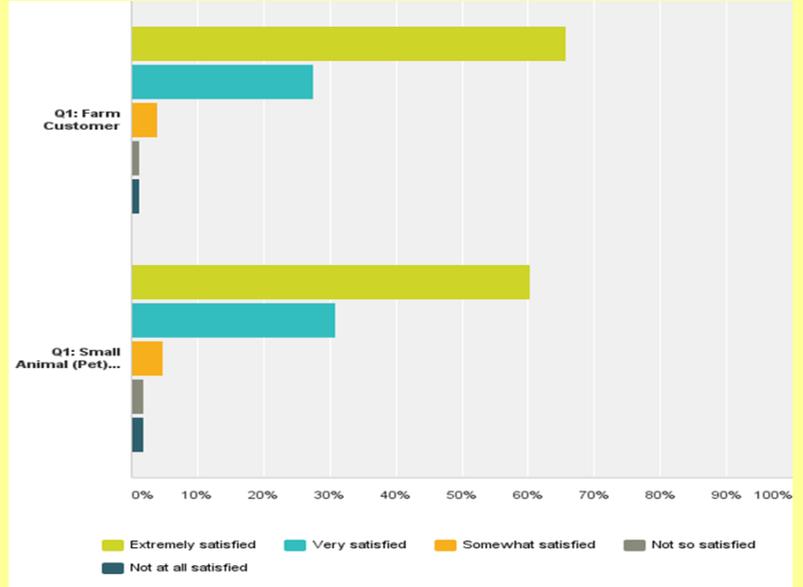
**"The vets are passionate about their jobs and go the extra mile to achieve the best outcome".**

**"Listen to our needs and understand our business".**

**"Helps us find solutions to our animal health issues in a sympathetic and effective manner".**

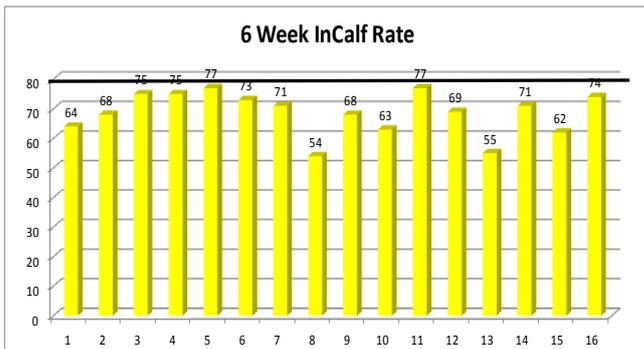
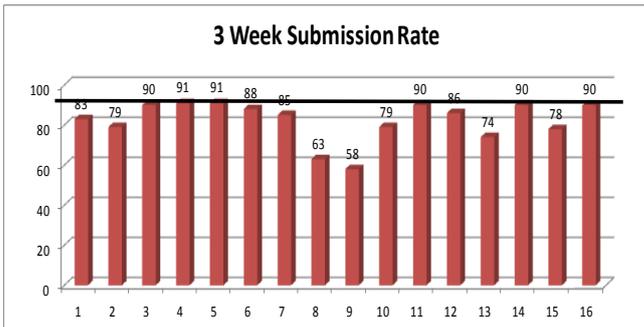
However, the suggestions on where we can do better were very useful, and we have taken these to heart! Some of the changes (or re-emphasizing) we have implemented in response include:

- Our commitment to be client-focused
- Our commitment to communicate clearly
- New building with better facilities for people and animals!
- Opening on Sundays
- Q Card payment option



**EARLY REPRO FEEDBACK** The 6 week in-calf rate is a KPI for mating success. If it is low, the whole calving pattern will be spread out, and impact on next year's mating. Also, the empty rate is more likely to be high. It generally assesses AI performance, and we can see that half of our monitor farms were close to target (78%), and half were behind. The 3 week Submission Rate is one of the reasons an In Calf Rate is high or low, and we can see that the farms that had a good submission rate generally had the better in calf rates. Farms 8, 9, 10, 13 and 15 had low SR and hence low ICR. The target is 90%.

**Conclusion: It is vital to focus on getting cows cycling, and on heat detection. At this time of year, drying off decisions can influence body condition score at mating, so make sure the low BCS cows are not milked too long. Look out for more mating advice later in the year, or contact us for a repro assessment to highlight areas that will most benefit herd performance.**



**FROM THE EVOLUTION OF HARD WORK...**

**...LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND DECADES OF DEVELOPMENT**

When you treat with Merial Ancare, you're using products built with decades of technical development and local knowledge - to get the best results for your stock. A bit like the humble vest - a development of rolling up your sleeves and getting stuck in. Take advantage of any of these tried and proven Merial Ancare products to keep your stock at their best, and we'll give you another technically advanced hard worker - this Degree vest, or this 'be safe be seen' vest.

Products shown: Delta, Genesis, Exocel, Matrix C.

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