



Smithton Veterinary Service

June '06 Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 2

READ & WIN

Do you read our newsletter? This month there are 3 questions at the end. The answers are in the newsletter articles. Please drop in or fax your answers to the clinic (64521221). The first correct entry drawn will win a 2kg bucket of Bovelyte Plus, the new premium electrolyte replacer for calves. **Entries close 15/6/06.**

Buyer Beware!

What checks or questions do you ask when purchasing cattle? Time and time again we see or hear of problems that have occurred because of lack of background history on purchases. Examples include calves dying from blackleg, mismated young heifers, empty cattle, mastitis and leptospirosis to mention a few.

When buying very young calves it is important to ask about the farm's colostrum practices. Calves that do not receive adequate quality and quantity of colostrum in the first day of life can present with a multitude of health problems in their first few weeks of life. When buying older calves, check on their vaccination and worming history. We see calves dying from blackleg because it has been assumed they were vaccinated. If unsure it will not hurt to do them again. Ask when they were drenched and with what. What trace element supplements if any have been given etc. The same goes for Lepto vaccinations. With today's OH&S issues if the history is at all doubtful or lacking it is in your interests to vaccinate all introduced animals for Lepto. This also applies to situations where you might milk the neighbour's cows for periods.

When buying milking cows check for cell count and dry cow therapy history. If information is lacking it could be a high risk purchase. Some farmers have experienced lengthy and very costly mastitis problems from introduced cows bringing in particular bacteria. There is a pleasing tendency to ask these questions at sales nowadays however how many farmers ask the same questions of their neighbours for fear of offending them? The neighbour's cows have the same potential to cause serious problems as do cows from a sale. All your good mastitis and milk quality work can be undone by 1 cow that you are helping a neighbour out with. The Countdown Downunder Farmer Guidelines has a good section on this issue.

When buying heifers or cows it is important to check whether they have been pregnancy tested. Many caesarians, very difficult calvings, paralysed animals and out of season births are testimony to a lack of a pregnancy test or incorrect pregnancy test details. A certificated pregnancy test performed by a veterinarian should be a prerequisite for all purchases of breeding animals. This is important even if the animals 'have never seen a bull' or have been pregnancy tested by the farmer, often by 'eye', or are assumed to all be pregnant to the first day of a long drawn out mating! An extra dollar spent here can save on big costs down the track.

Bovelyte Plus – we have always had the problem in Australia of being unable to supply clients with an ideal electrolyte replacement product for scouring, dehydrated calves. Treating dehydration effectively is not just about providing water and salts. The many ingredients in electrolytes have to be in both the correct quantities and proportions to optimise the chances of a successful treatment outcome. This has meant that when you have treated calves with **any** brand of electrolyte in the past they have not addressed all of the underlying problems. Fortunately, this has now been solved with the development of a new product called Bovelyte Plus. It is currently the **only** electrolyte replacer formulated to comply with the requirements of calf rehydration treatment. Other features of the product include the addition of vitamins A, D, E and the B group vitamins; a flavouring agent to increase palatability (useful for calves with a weak suckle reflex) and the addition of a free-flowing agent to reduce clumping and aid mixing. This is the only electrolyte we will be recommending as soon as it becomes available in mid June. The good news is the price will be very similar to existing electrolyte products but you will be purchasing a premium product which will optimise the likelihood of successful treatment outcomes. We feel confident saying that Bovelyte Plus is the only electrolyte that should be used on farm.

New Products



Maxalac LC – A new intramammary mastitis product will soon be available and will replace Cepravin LC. Both products contain the same antibiotic in the same concentration and have the same dosage regime and withholding periods. Maxalac LC has been developed in Australia with recent trial work in Victoria showing that Maxalac achieved complete cures of mastitis in 9.8% more cases than the other equivalent product it was compared to. In addition, the ICCC's in milk from successfully treated cows showed a larger percent reduction. The reason for all this? Maxalac LC contains a buoyant carrier oil which allows better spread of the antibiotic high into the udder and uptake by the white cells which fight mastitis infections. Remember, this does not mean all mastitis cases will be cured. More good news – the price will be similar to, if not slightly lower than Cepravin LC, and the product should be available some time in June, 2006.

Mastitis- Calving, Cultures and Injectable Antibiotics

The costs and risks associated with mastitis in early lactation are well known to all of you. Management of springing and early lactation cows is very important in reducing the exposure of these cows to environmental bacteria responsible for causing mastitis during this period. CDDU guidelines recommend clean, grassed paddocks with no more than 2 faecal pats/m² and no surface water to help reduce incidence of mastitis, but in our climate this is often not possible and invariably some animals will be infected.

Treatment can consist of intramammary products which should achieve good cure rates in most cases or injectable products. Injectable products are available through the veterinary clinic but to meet Tasmanian regulations regarding the use of S4 drugs a farm mastitis profile needs to be established. Cultures of 6-10 clinical cases, cow histories and farm mastitis infection rates will probably be requested by the veterinarian approving the antibiotic. This information will be used to establish which antibiotics will be the most effective against mastitis bacteria, the prognosis of infected cows with respect to clearing the infection and methods to reduce infection rates in your herd. Once a mastitis profile has been established we are in a position to more legitimately prescribe injectable products for some cows. Please note that this information needs to be current and not from previous seasons or different stages of the same lactation. **Injectable antibiotics will not be prescribed over the counter without some or all of this information.** It is also important to note that if a mastitis cow appears sick eg lethargic, off food, down or has an increased temperature they will require other veterinary treatment such as intravenous antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and fluids to increase survival rates and maintain viable milking quarters.

Remember the CDDU guidelines and if you are seeing increased numbers of clinical mastitis (CDDU recommends <5% in early lactation) then consult a vet to help diagnose and remedy the problem. Have some milk sample tubes on hand before calving with a view to collecting milk samples from clinical cases in early lactation. These can be stored in the freezer and submitted to the clinic if you have a mastitis problem in your herd.

Leptospirosis and OH & S

The incidence of Leptospirosis infection in Australia appears to be increasing. It is an important occupational health and safety issue. There have been cases in the UK of farm workers suing their employers for not having their herd vaccinated - something to think about. There is currently no vaccine available to protect humans and hence it is important for any personnel dealing with cattle that the herd is fully vaccinated. As many of you are in the process of drying off, now is a good time to make sure your Leptospirosis vaccination protocols are up to date. If an annual vaccination program is already in place usually only a booster is required. It must be noted that vaccination does not always provide full protection but combined with other management protocols risks to you, your workers and us (the vets) are reduced.

Whilst on Health and Safety just a quick reminder to make sure your facilities are safe to work in including yards and crushes. If your yards are in poor condition and someone gets injured you are potentially liable. It is also important to remember that if a veterinarian is asked to visit your farm a responsible adult must be present. If no one is present we cannot legally examine and treat the animal(s), in which case we may have to move on to the next scheduled job. Bear in mind that during the calving season when unexpected emergencies come in and too frequently farmers throw in extras for us (please don't do this without forewarning us) it is difficult for our office staff to give accurate times. Rather, they will give you a time range and we advise that if the vet has not arrived as expected that you ring the clinic for an up-date. If our office staff had to do all the ringing around to keep farmers informed they would have no time to get all the other important tasks done eg preparing your drug orders etc. We try our hardest to be on time so please help us.

Quiz Questions (answers from newsletter please)

Name:

Phone:

Q1. Name 2 diseases which could be introduced from brought –in cattle?

Q2. What is Bovelyte and name one of its features?

Q3. What is Maxalac and where was the trial work done?