



# Smithton Veterinary Service Newsletter

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**August 2007**

## **Milk Quality Awards**

Congratulations to the following CH farmers listed for the 2007 Weekly Times Milk Quality Awards. This award recognises those farmers in the top 5% of the industry in terms of low cell count milk provided to their suppliers.

Geoff and Wendy Ablitt, the Batty family, Rev and Ruth Blake, Chris and Suzanne Cowley, the Finlayson family, the Kokshoorns, Bob Parr and the Fowlies, Gerald Porteus Anne Poke and Anthony Cleary, and Jerrod and Lisa Smith. (and obviously any other staff on these farms).

Some of the methods identified by these farmers that have helped them achieve such low cell counts are: regular herd testing and using this information to cull, correct teat spraying, good milking technique eg not waiting for 'slow milkers', milking mastitis cows last and wearing gloves.

## **Salmonella Seminar**

As per the enclosed flyer, we are organising a free information evening on Salmonella on 30<sup>th</sup> August. Intervet, the manufacturers of the Salmonella vaccine will be co-hosting the evening. We understand it is in the middle of the calving season for many of you but would encourage you to attend and we would expect the evening to finish no later than 9.30pm. Light refreshments will be provided. If you are interested in attending please RSVP to the clinic as outlined in the flyer.

## **Lame Cow Workshop**

After a highly successful workshop held in early June, we are now taking expressions of interest for another half-day lame cow workshop. We have not set a date yet but envisage it will be scheduled for some time in Spring once the calving season has settled down. We have had positive feedback from the farmers who attended the workshop in June and already have a few interested in the next one so please let us know if you would like to attend or require more information. The cost will be about \$90 per participant and includes a set of bound notes. Topics covered include:

- Basic anatomy of the foot
- Cow factors and lameness
- Diseases of the foot
- Cost of lameness
- Equipment and facilities
- Laneways, shed and yard design
- Demonstrations on feet

## **CHANGES AT SVS**

After 35 years of work at SVS, Graeme and Sherryl have retired from the practice and moved to Hobart. Graeme's contribution to the veterinary profession and dairy industry has been considerable and we will miss his sage advice. We wish Graeme and Sherryl well in retirement and welcome Craig Dwyer as a new partner in the business.

## **Australian Calf Scour Survey**

We have been approached by Sydney University to partake in an Australian Calf Scour Pathogen Survey. The survey involves collection of samples from 6-10 scouring calves per farm (up to 5 farms in Circular Head) that are less than 6 weeks of age; autopsies of some calves if deaths are occurring; and completion of a questionnaire by a vet interviewing the farmer. Farm visits for sample collection and autopsies would be heavily subsidized and samples will be analysed at no expense to the farmer. If any of you are having calf scour problems and are interested in taking part in this project please let us know so we can provide you with more details.

### **Animal Welfare Act**

Primary production enterprises are coming under increased scrutiny and pressure in regards to animal welfare. It is important to ensure there is good stock management in place, especially coming up to what is expected to be a difficult calving season.

All staff members should be aware of the Animal Welfare Act, which states that *'a person in charge of an animal has a duty of care to take all reasonable measures to ensure the welfare of the animal'*

Some points that should be noted include;

- Appropriate shelter, food and water must be supplied – this is particularly important with down cows and certainly improves outcomes.
- Veterinary attention must be provided for sick or injured animals. This means at least seeking veterinary advice and not just using a drug you may have left over in the dairy on a sick cow. This is one of the reasons vets have strict control and responsibility over restricted drugs like antibiotics. The Standards of Veterinary Practice require us to have an intimate knowledge of any farm and its animals to enable us to appropriately prescribe restricted drugs.
- It is an offence to overdrive, beat or abuse stock.
- Animals should not be used for a purpose if they are unfit to do so.

Within the act there are some management strategies that should only be performed by a Veterinary Surgeon including the castration and dehorning of cattle over the age of six months.

Whilst most farmers have good intentions when it comes to their animals' welfare, it is important to be aware of your legal responsibilities.

If you have any queries in regards to specific animal welfare concerns please don't hesitate to call us.

A copy of the act can be viewed at <http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au>.

## Pink Eye Vaccine

Many of you will have heard us talk about the up-coming release of a vaccine for pink eye. The manufacturer of the vaccine has now informed us that the product is registered in Australia and they are awaiting arrival of stocks from the USA. They are hoping product will be available from August.

The important things to remember about the vaccine are:

- It should be administered 3-6 weeks prior to likely challenge from pink eye (this will probably mean cattle should be vaccinated in November/December, but could vary depending on the season)
- It does not cover all strains of the bacteria that cause pink eye infection. From samples we have submitted to Sydney University in the past, however, it would appear that approximately 80% of the Circular Head strains **should** be covered by the new vaccine.

We will keep you up-dated as more information comes to hand. If anyone is interested in Smithton Veterinary Service trying to organise a bulk buy on vaccine later in the year, please register your interest and we can use this to negotiate a better price for us and you.

## Planning Ahead for Calving Season

Following is a list of useful equipment and medications to have on hand for the calving season. Planning ahead at this busy time of year can help improve calving outcomes and significantly reduce stress.

### Equipment:

- Calving chains or ropes
- Calving jack - This is not essential but if you have one ensure it is in good working order. Remember that calving jacks, while extremely valuable, must be used **only** when the calf is in the right position. This avoids damage to the calf and the cow's reproductive tract and pelvis.
- Obstetrical lubricant and gloves
- Sterile milk sample collection tubes (and gloves)
- Needles and syringes
- Disinfectant (e.g. iodine to spray calves' navels, for calvings etc)
- Calf fluid feeder or bottle
- Pelvic lifter and/or cow jack for lifting down cows

### Medications:

- Letdown injection
- Pessaries
- 4 in 1 Milk Fever packs
- Mastitis treatment tubes - put sample bottles in the box to remind you to take and freeze samples of **all** clinical cases before their first treatment.
- Fresh or Frozen colostrum (obtained from mature cows within the herd)
- Bovelyte Plus electrolyte replacer, the **only** electrolyte we recommend
- Udder oedema injection for heifers