Smithton Veterinary Service
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Requirements for
The National Vendor Declarations

Livestock Quality Assurance Systems (LQS) provides certification and verification systems to instill confidence in on-farm food safety practices. Its five major subprograms are:

- Livestock Production Assurance (LPA)
- National Vendor Declarations (NVD)
- Electronic Declaration Programs
- Livestock Fodder Declarations
- Chemical Usage Management

In order to sell cattle through the saleyards you will need to complete a NVD form. As part of your requirements for the NVD, you need to be able to establish competency in on-farm food safety practices. Guidelines have been prepared by the LQS to enable you to achieve these standards. These guidelines include standards for the storage and administration of veterinary medicines and the types of records that may be required in order to demonstrate correct on-farm food safety. It is essential that you are able to show the chain of events from the purchase of a veterinary medicine, its correct storage and usage through to proof of valid ESI (export slaughter interval) withholding periods being observed. You MUST retain any Advice Notes accompanying veterinary medicines and record in a diary how and when these products were used. The LPA web site contains a guide to the standards and suggested records.

For more information on your obligations under LPA go to the Meat and Livestock Association web page at http:/www.mla.com.au and in the left hand column at the top select the LPA Overview.

I would urge anyone selling cattle through the saleyards to visit this site or review the information contained in 'Guide to the National Waybill' and accompanying CD. You should have received this information when you first applied for NVD forms.

Treatment of subacute or chronic uterine infections

Uterine infections in cows after calving can be a significant problem. They can result in irritation of the cow, decrease in milk production, reduced fertility and in extreme cases sick toxic cows and death.

The treatment of uterine infections should be directed towards resolving the infection and improving the health and fertility of the cow. Ideally, therapy should eliminate harmful bacteria from the uterus, not inhibit the normal uterine defense mechanisms, result in as short as possible withdrawal periods for milk and meat and be cost effective.

Research has shown that the use of antiseptic substances as solutions or pessaries in the uterus inhibits healing within the uterus. Antiseptics have been shown to disable the bacteria-destroying activity of uterine immune cells for several days following their administration. At concentrations of 0.25% chlorhexidine which is found in some pessaries has been shown to be irritant to the uterus. Other studies have shown no difference in uterine infections with infusion of antiseptics compared with infusion of water into the uterus.

We recommend that the most effective way to treat these infections in recently calved cows is by the use of foaming antibiotic pessaries (**not antiseptic pessaries**). Intra-vaginal examination eg vis-vaging of cows, can be performed in cows calved for a longer period. Infected cows in this group would normally be infused with an antibiotic preparation eg Metricure.

Early Inductions are cost beneficial

Induction of calving is a useful management tool. When used correctly it will enhance the reproductive performance of a herd. The most significant reproductive gains will be made if inductions are carried out early in the calving period. The InCalf project showed no difference in 6-week in calf rates and empty rates between those cows induced early and cows calving naturally at the same time.

If inductions are used at the end of a 6 or 8 week calving period to clean up the tail any potential benefits are virtually lost. These cows are still calving late, and having the added pressure of recovering from the induction process, are likely to be late again next season.

To induce effectively accurate calving dates are needed. An early pregnancy test, preferably with accurate mating records is essential. This allows identification of cows that will calve in the first 6-8 weeks. Those cows not detected in calf at this pregnancy test are either late or empty. This practice allows for early identification of

potentially late cows. A second pregnancy test, 6 weeks after the bulls have been removed, of the 'late and empty' cows allows identification of cows that can be induced up to 2 weeks pre-calving and those that should be left to the beginning of calving. In herds that we monitor through our Herd Health program those cows induced early tend to conceive to AI as well as natural calvers. This supports the InCalf findings.

The added economic benefit of planned early inductions is that it allows for better feed budgeting. By shortening the calving period many of the problems associated with a long drawn out calving period are avoided. The other major benefit of early inductions, is extra milk in the vat. By inducing, say 6 weeks earlier with cows producing 20 litres per day, $210 in extra income is earned. Extra income and superior reproductive performance more than cover the cost if induction.

Feed Additives

More and more dairy farmers are feeding grain or pellets and are commonly using in-feed additives. But are they necessary and do you know how they work? Following are 3 common additives:

Rumensin alters the population of rumen 'bugs', resulting in the following effects:

- Increased production of propionate in the rumen. This provides glucose to the cow. Milk production relies heavily on glucose, and more glucose available via propionate means less protein has to be utilised by the cow for glucose formation i.e. protein is spared for other uses.
- Methane production in the rumen is decreased which means more energy (ME) per unit of feed dry matter. Methane production uses energy.
- Decreased breakdown of feed protein by rumen bacteria, resulting in a similar effect to supplementing with 'bypass' protein i.e. protein which escapes breakdown in the rumen. This is of particular benefit on high quality pasture where the feed protein supply is high and most of it is normally degraded in the rumen. Increased 'bypass' protein can result in increased milk production, which drives dry matter intake.
- Increased efficiency of the small intestine via improved blood flow and uptake of nutrients.

Rumensin is likely to result in increased milk production (volume) and hence, an increase in total milk fat and protein production (kg's). Do not expect an increase in fat and protein percentages. The greatest cost benefit with rumensin feeding to dairy cattle is likely to occur on high quality pasture (or feedlot rations). Low quality/quantity protein (Summer pasture) or high silage diets will not see the same benefit.

NB. In-feed rumensin is now registered as a bloat preventative.

Causmag (Magnesium oxide) provides a source of magnesium helping to:

- Maintain blood Mg and so prevent grass tetany. Lush pasture is high in potassium and protein, which can lead to reduced Mg absorption from the stomachs.
- Maintain blood calcium levels in very early lactation
- Stabilise rumen pH. Causmag is an alkylating agent (opposite to acids), not a buffer like sodium bicarbonate. In NZ trials the feeding of Causmag has been associated with higher milk fat levels probably due to the effect on rumen pH and hence enhanced fibre digestion.

We would recommend Circular Head dairy cows receive Mg supplementation pre-calving and in early-mid lactation whilst grazing high quality pasture. This would also apply to irrigated Summer pasture.

Tylan is an in-feed antibiotic, which is registered to help in the reduction of the incidence of liver abscess. When cattle suffer from ruminal acidosis (see last Newsletter), the wall of the rumen becomes inflamed and damaged, allowing bacterial invasion and entry to the blood vessels supplying the liver. Liver abscesses are more likely to be a problem of economic significance where cattle are fed high energy, highly fermentable diets e.g. feedlots. For most Circular Head farmers we **would not** recommend routine feeding of tylan unless very high levels of grain/pellets/vegetable waste are being fed or reports from the abattoir suggest that liver abscesses are a common finding in cull cows from your farm. At this stage little research into the economic benefits of feeding tylan has been undertaken in dairy cattle.

Is it or is it not JD (Johnes)?

We are concerned a number of cows around the district are being misdiagnosed as Johnes by farmers and are being destroyed unnecessarily. Johnes more often than not appears as a chronically scouring yet 'happy' cow with progressive loss of body condition. They seldom appear as sick and rarely go down. Most farms that have been 'diagnosing' these cows as Johnes have already had cases tested positive so their status will remain unchanged. Rather than shoot these suspect cows please consider having them looked at – other conditions may be present and diagnosis may be useful in preventing similar cases in the future.

Apology – Mastitis Preparations

We would like to apologise again for any inconvenience caused last month when we were unable to supply Orbenin, Mastalone or Special Formula. The same company makes all these products and due to an internal reorganization in the company our order was misplaced. On top of this when the oversight was realised the usual freight transit time of 4 days maximum turned into 10 days. We are hopeful this is now all remedied and everyone's angst levels are back to normal for this time of year.