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Smithton Veterinary Service November '05 Newsletter

Open Day Saturday 10th December 11am – 2pm At the Vet Clinic

Come along to see behind the scenes at the vets. Take a look at the displays and grab yourself some handy info, a microchipping voucher for your dog or cat or a free sausage. Prizes, giveaways and a drawing competition for the kids.

Entrance by Gold Coin Donation to the Tassie Devil Fund

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Mating is Here Again!

Most of the district has started thinking about or are well into mating. After the drain of calving it can be hard to get motivated for heat detection, mating and the continuing cycle that is dairy farming. It is important to remember that what happens now will shape your calving period next year, including the number of inductions carried out etc.

Some important questions to ask yourself are:

1. Are my cows in adequate condition and on a rising plane of nutrition?
2. Have my cows had enough time between calving and mating? (i.e. should I have induced earlier?)
3. Have I ensured my cows are not infected prior to mating? (i.e. by booking in a Vis Vag 2-3 weeks prior to mating start date)
4. Have I identified and treated non-cycling cows early in the mating period? (i.e. by carrying out pre-mating heat detection or by using a why wait PG program)

There are many ways to manage the mating period and we can tailor these to suit your situation and expectations. Prostaglandin price has decreased again this year making synchrony programs more affordable and increasing the economic benefits to farmers. Feel free to talk to any of the veterinarians about any questions you have or about setting up your mating plan for this season.

Lame Cows – approaching treatment

Often October/November can be bad months for lameness and with recent rains this year will be similar. In an ideal world every lame foot should be lifted, cleaned and closely examined to establish the cause. This allows for the most appropriate treatment be it trimming, draining abscesses, treating with antibiotic etc. Prompt and effective intervention will minimise the possibilities of major foot damage or joint infections.

However often a lame cow is simply treated with penicillin and if no response she may be looked at more thoroughly. As a general rule and to avoid wastage of drugs and development of resistance, only use antibiotic if there is redness above the hoof and/or swelling and/or heat. If using antibiotics it is important to treat for the full course ie at least 3 days. There is no real benefit in treating feet that are only bruised as there is not an infection present. Treating these cows does not make them less likely to become infected when the antibiotic wears off.

Please remember the product Excenel, that has a nil milk withholding period, is available to use in lame cows. Once again a minimum 3 day course is recommended, and whilst dearer to purchase initially, the savings come in not having to discard 6 days of milk. At today's milk prices Excenel is looking a better alternative than ever to penicillin.

Clients are reminded that we have more detailed information on lameness causes and prevention which we have included in past newsletters. If you would like copies please let us know.

Photosensitivity

What is it? : Photosensitivity is an allergic type reaction occurring in the skin of animals resulting in moderate to severe sunburn when the animal is exposed to ultra-violet light.

Why do cows get it? : Photosensitivity occurs when the liver is unable to detoxify pigments normally found in plants. Chlorophyll, the green pigment of grass, is one such pigment. The liver may be unable to detoxify pigments as a result of damage (disease) or excess amounts of pigment (fast growing grass in spring & autumn).

What happens ? : If the liver can't handle these pigments they can become deposited in the skin and, under the influence of ultra- violet light, result in sunburn.

What does this all mean? : The first thing to note is that by the time you notice photosensitivity a lot of damage has already occurred. The second thing to note is that the only way to prevent further damage is to remove the animal from sunlight completely.

Treatment : Remove the animal from light – this means locking the animal in a dark shed with no access to sunlight. Secondly treat any sunburn that has already occurred. Some animals, if diagnosed early enough may benefit from veterinary treatment.

We find that newsletter articles are often repeated so if anyone has any suggestions for new topics they would like discussed in future editions then please let us know.