

NEWSLETTER

PLANNING AHEAD FOR CALVING SEASON

As the main calving season is almost upon us you may find the following list helpful. Planning ahead can help improve calving outcomes and significantly reduce stress.

Recommended Equipment:

- Calving chains or ropes/straps
- Calving jack or puller - *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; Aseptol 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 sterile sample bottles in the box to remind you to take and freeze samples of **all** clinical cases
- Fresh or frozen colostrum (obtained from mature cows within the herd)
- Bovelyte Plus electrolyte replacer—the only electrolyte we recommend

Tips for Calvings

- Use plenty of lubricant
- **Never ever** jack a calf unless both front legs and the head or both back feet and a tail are in the pelvis
- Never assume that a presentation is breech until you definitely identify a tail
- Always check for another calf after delivery of a calf
- If no success after 10 minutes seek help (from the vet!!)
- If the presentation or calf feels strange or you are unsure as to what is going on seek help because time is important eg twisted uterus, deformed calf. These calvings are much harder on the cow if not diagnosed early or interfered with too much. Remember the outcome is always better for your cow if professional help is sought early.

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HOW DO YOU STOP ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES IN BOBBY CALVES?

Antibiotic residues in bobby calves are a major concern for the Australian dairy industry. With calf rearing season already underway or just around the corner, it is important that any antibiotic used on farm is done so under the direction of your vets, ensuring **ALL** withholding periods are strictly observed. Many of the antibiotic residues found in calves occur due to breakdowns in calf management systems. Therefore, close attention to calf management practices is essential to minimise the risk of accidental contamination. In Australia, nearly 800,000 calves are sent for slaughter annually, so the effects of compromising this critical outlet for non-replacement calves would be very significant. We need to protect our industry.

We recommend following the simple steps below to avoid antibiotic residues in your calves:

Know which products contain antibiotics and adhere to the withholding periods:

Products commonly used to treat scouring calves include scour tablets such as **Trimazine** and **Streptosulcin**, powders such as **Preven powder** and some oral coccidia treatments such as **SD 333** and **Baycox**. All of these treatments contain antibiotics and all have withholding periods.

SULPHA CONTAINING ANTIBIOTICS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF SCOURING CALVES (such as Trimazine, Streptosulcin tablets and SD333) ARE THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO RESIDUES IN CALVES AT SLAUGHTER. OCCURRING MUCH MORE COMMONLY THAN RESIDUES FROM DRY COW ANTIBIOTICS.

Individually dose sick calves with oral antibiotic medications:

Oral scour preparations such as **Streptosulcin** and **Trimazine** tablets are **NOT SUITABLE** for adding to milk for mass medication of sick calves. These products **DO NOT DISSOLVE** and residual antibiotics are left in the feeding equipment. In cases where group medication is advised, it is preferable to use different feeding equipment for bobby calves.

Use the product as directed on the prescription drug label:

Changes to amounts given and route of administration can alter withholding periods. **ALWAYS** seek veterinary advice if you are unsure of the dose or what the withholding period should be if you alter the dose.

Wash and label any equipment used to administer antibiotics to calves:

Any residual antibiotics should be removed from appropriately labelled equipment by washing with warm water and detergent. This includes fluid feeders as well as drinking stations.

Separate antibiotic treated calves from calves destined for sale:

Treated calves may contain residue antibiotics on their mouth, skin or even urine and can contaminate other calves.

Clearly identify all calves soon after birth and if treated with antibiotics:

It is important to clearly identify all calves as soon as possible after birth and also once they have been treated with antibiotics. All staff on farm **MUST** be able to identify treated calves to stop them accidentally being sold.

Please note antibiotic pessaries have a withholding period and if a calf sucks from a treated cow before this period has passed, antibiotic can pass to the calf and meat residues may be present.

If you choose to feed milk from antibiotic treated cows to your calves, all the withholding periods relevant to that drug will also apply to the calf.

It is also timely to remind farmers about withholding periods in general. Now that the blue dye is progressively being removed from mastitis tubes (lactating and dry cow products) the 'visual alert' has been removed. Treated cows must be properly identified at all times such that their milk/meat is withheld for the appropriate periods.

Some of this information has been adapted from the Dairy Australia Website. For more information, please contact us.

Common meat withholds for Bobby calves:

Drug Name:	Meat Withholding Period:
Streptosulcin Tablets	14 days
Trimazine Tablets	14 days
Preven Powder	21 days
SD333	14 days
Baycox	56 days

For cows that are induced to calve, the meat withholding period for bobby calves is 7 days.

RESPONSIBLE DRUG USAGE

We are hoping to hold another Responsible Drug Usage course before calving season gets into full swing. For those interested, who don't already have their names on our list please contact the clinic and register your interest. As in the past and subject to numbers we will probably hold the course one evening on a week day at the local TAFE building

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ORDERS



Legal requirements are that all prescription medications must be approved by a veterinarian. Our staff are not allowed to dispense them if there is not a vet there or contactable if you come in unannounced. To avoid frustrations and as the season hots up we would ask that you pre order your S4 medications by phone. Our staff will make every effort to have your requirements approved and be ready for when you arrive at the clinic.

Thank you for your understanding.

TEATSEAL® — COST BENEFIT

By now, all of you should be aware of the product Teatseal®, and many farmers have asked us about the potential benefit of combining traditional antibiotic dry cow treatment with Teatseal® at drying off. Each product works differently in that antibiotic dry cow treatment is aimed at curing existing udder infections whilst Teatseal® is aimed at preventing new infections in the dry period. Many of you will also be aware that Teatseal® can be used in rising 2 year old heifers 4-6 weeks prior to calving to reduce the incidence of mastitis in early lactation.

Circular Head farmers who have used Teatseal® in heifers over the last couple of years have been very pleased with the results, particularly with the very wet conditions last Winter/Spring. New Zealand trial work has shown that Teatseal® used in this way in heifers reduced the incidence of clinical mastitis in early lactation by 50% and subclinical mastitis (high ICCC) at calving by 65%. Of course, the cost benefit of using Teatseal® will depend on a number of factors. Below is an example scenario for heifers based on:

Assumptions: Average milk price \$4.20/kg MS (32c/Lt).
 Average yield 5500 Lt (430kg MS @ 4.5%MF & 3.5%MP) / cow
 Cost of Teatseal® \$10.00/animal
 Labour cost \$30.00/hr
 Cost of clinical case \$236.00 (drugs, milk withhold, lost production etc)

If the normal clinical mastitis rate in your heifers is greater than 9-10% (5 cases per 50 heifers), it will be cost beneficial to use Teatseal®. Many farms in Circular Head have a mastitis rate in their heifers well above this figure.

What about antibiotic dry cow and Teatseal® used in combination, versus antibiotic dry cow alone in adult cows?

Using the same assumptions, the break even point is 7% clinical mastitis in early lactation for the cows. In other words, if the normal rate of mastitis in your herd is 3-4 cases/100 cows or greater in the first month after calving start, there will be a cost benefit in using Teatseal® in combination with dry cow. Again, many herds exceed this threshold level of clinical mastitis. This is one reason why it is so important to keep accurate records of mastitis cases as they occur to actually measure your level of mastitis.

These calculations do NOT take into account the frustration cost of dealing with clinical mastitis or the benefits associated with the concurrent decrease in BMCC that will follow. In trial herds, BMCC at the first herd test was 100 000 cells per ml lower for combination treatment cows. This treatment group had 20% fewer individual cows with ICCC's greater than 250 000 compared to the group treated with antibiotic dry cow alone.

If anyone is interested in making a more informed decision around the use of Teatseal® in their herd, we have a very useful cost benefit spreadsheet at the clinic that we can run your own herd figures through.

