



Happy Cows Like To Lie Down!!

I recently read an interesting article on cow comfort and in particular, the cows requirements for resting.

Studies have shown that feed conversion efficiency decreases as lying times decrease, and the cows maintenance requirements increase. (It takes more energy to stand than lie down and cows process food less efficiently.) Milk production can decrease by 0.8–.09 litres / cow / day for every hour less lying down!! Losses in NZ have been reported when lying down time gets down to 2–4 hours per day.



Cows don't like to lie down in wet conditions, mud makes the situation worse. Dry matter intakes are reduced and more of this dry matter is used for maintenance. Ideally cows should be able to lie down for more than 10 hours / day, this allows them to process feed most efficiently.

Practically, what does this mean.

- Plan grazing programmes to best utilise dry parts of the farm in wet conditions.
- Allow cows on crops etc access to dry loafing areas. (When looking at grazing options, keep in mind how wet the paddocks will get. This is also important for mastitis control.)
- Ensure stand off areas are as dry, clean and comfortable as possible and ideally big enough that cows can lie / sit down.

PS. While the above information was sourced from a dairy article, it stands to reason that the same theories could be applied to all cattle and even sheep. All stock do better with dry feet and a comfortable spot to lie down—much like humans!!

Congratulations to John Batley who won a chainsaw in the Autumn Cattle Drench promo.

BVD Vaccination Programmes

Remember that cow / heifer vaccination booster programmes should be carried out before mating. Most bulls sold now are BVD vaccinated. All older bulls should also get a booster before mating. This also applies to bulls on properties that do not vaccinate cows / heifers for BVD, in fact it is probably more important it occurs on these farms.

Drenching Programmes For Bucket Reared Calves

We frequently get asked how often hand reared calves should be drenched and when drenching should start.

Frequency of drenching will be determined by the degree of worm challenge expected. This is likely to be much higher on farms where high numbers of young cattle are grazed. (ie. Bull units, dairy grazing blocks, calf rearing units.)

As a general rule we recommend 4-6 weeks drenching with an oral combination drench from around 75kgs live-weight (or 7-8 weeks of age). Oral combinations can be used until calves become too difficult to drench orally.

While triple combinations are a good option please note that if they contain **abamectin** we have seen abamectin toxicity problems and deaths in small calves (under 120 kgs that have been overdosed). It is very important that calves are dosed to their current body weight. Don't drench calves to cover the heaviest at say 140kgs when some calves are only 80kgs!!! Sort them into lines for drenching.

Contact the clinic to discuss suitable / safe drench options. And don't forget to ensure your calves trace element requirements, especially selenium, are covered off.





Calves and Colostrum

Generally most calf rearers have had a pretty good run this year despite the wet, challenging conditions that have occurred at times. However a few points have come up that are worth commenting on.

1. Colostrum Intakes

Some calf rearers have experienced problems with calves that have struggled or suddenly become ill, often with scours and died. Problems have been worse for farmers sourcing calves through sale yards or agents.

These problems would appear to be the result of calves receiving insufficient colostrum on the first day of life. Failure to get enough colostrum antibodies makes calves far more susceptible to infections and scours.

Always try to source calves that are well looked after in those first 24 hours of life and if you are concerned about how much colostrum calves have had we can blood test them up to two weeks of age to check.

2. Rotovirus

This has been a problem on some properties—including some dairy farms where it has not been seen before. It is important to remember that this virus can spread on boots, clothing, hands, etc. Make sure people entering your calf rearing facility—vets, calf purchasers, bobby calf collectors—are 'risk free'. i.e. clean boots, overalls etc. Ideally for dairy farmers, have isolated areas for calf purchases and a designated pen for bobby calves which is the only area collectors need to enter.

3. Umbilical Infections

With the wet Spring there have been plenty of these. Early detection and antibiotic treatment gives the best chance of recovery. Good hygiene, iodine spray on the naval and plenty of colostrum in the first 24 hours of life minimizes the problem. (We see some pretty dirty calf trailers loaded with calves in the middle of Spring!!)

How Well Have Capsules or Long Acting Injections Worked For You??

For the last three years we have offered free faecal egg counts for farmers using capsules or long acting injections to check how well these products are working for you. We will do this again this year.

Despite this being 'free', many of you do not take up this offer which we find surprising given the investment you make in these products and the value of the information that the faecal egg count results give!

How hard is it to take an egg carton and pick up 10-12 ewe faecal samples while docking? We would really encourage you to take up this offer this year.

PS. If you have untreated ewes you may want to collect samples from these ewes as well to establish the worm challenges these ewes have been under and whether drenching could be of benefit. A standard worm count is \$35.



A boy is selling fish on a corner. To get his customers' attention, he is yelling, "Dam fish for sale! Get your dam fish here!" A pastor hears this and asks, "Why are you calling them 'dam fish.'" The boy responds, "Because I caught these fish at the local dam." The pastor buys a couple fish, takes them home to his wife, and asks her to cook the dam fish. The wife responds surprised, "I didn't know it was acceptable for a preacher to speak that way." He explains to her why they are dam fish. Later at the dinner table, he asks his son to pass the dam fish. He responds, "That's the spirit, Dad! Now pass the f*cking potatoes!"

With all the new technology regarding fertility recently, a 65-year-old friend of mine was able to give birth. When she was discharged from the hospital and went home, I went to visit.

'May I see the new baby?' I asked.

'Not yet,' she said 'I'll make coffee and we can visit for a while first.' Thirty minutes had passed, and I asked, 'May I see the new baby now?'

'No, not yet,' She said.

After another few minutes had elapsed, I asked again, 'May I see the baby now?'

'No, not yet,' replied my friend.

Growing very impatient, I asked, 'Well, when can I see the baby?' 'WHEN HE CRIES!' she told me.

'WHEN HE CRIES?' I demanded. 'Why do I have to wait until he CRIES?'

'BECAUSE I FORGOT WHERE I PUT HIM, O.K.?!'

After Hours Vet



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