FRANKLIN vets
update

October 2011

Better, faster, smarter

Ross Beal, BVSc, Managing Director

The Directors of Franklin Vets continue to invest in new equipment and knowledge to provide better, faster and smarter services to our clients, to help you enhance your business.

Some recent developments include:

Larvae culture of drench-resistant worms - Our faecal egg count reduction testing (FECRT) for finding drench-resistant worms has been improved by also culturing the worm eggs. This improves our ability to help our sheep, beef and dairy clients develop **drench plans** that improve animal performance and minimise the increasing problem of drench resistance on their properties.

Beef and dairy bull fertility testing - Spearheaded by Hennie Lock's experience and backed by our investment in top-class equipment, this service is growing rapidly as beef and dairy farmers see the value of knowing the bulls they are using are capable of doing the job.

***Infovet* dairy information system** - *Infovet* combines dairy industry information with our practice records to give rapid, accurate diagnosis of individual dairy herd production, mastitis and fertility status. This allows our vets to provide timely advice specific to each farm's needs. For instance, fertility analysis of some herds last autumn showed the main problem was bull fertility. This has linked into bull testing in August and the re-organization of bull management on these farms this spring.

Franklin Vets and DairyNZ sign MOU on *In-Calf*
The Directors have signed an MOU with DairyNZ to further develop *In-Calf* consultancy within the practice in keeping with the industry goal of improving 6 week in-calf rates. This is a two-way process, with DNZ becoming familiar with our current fertility services and Franklin Vets gaining more *In-Calf* consultancy capacity. Currently we have 6 vets trained as *In-Calf* advisors. Watch this space for more news.

Wishing you all a bountiful spring.

infovet information management for veterinarians

incalf TOWARDS BETTER HERD FERTILITY

Starting off on the right hoof!

Greg Lindsay BVSc

After successfully rearing your calves to target weaning weights, it is vital you don't take your foot off the pedal. Heifers in their first year of life are prone to a multitude of health conditions that can lead to rapid reversal of weight gains. With the first twelve months being the most critical for skeletal and muscle (frame) development it is essential to keep the scales ticking on up.

The *In-Calf* programme recommends that heifers reach 90% of their mature liveweight at 22 months, or their first calving. Consider the following points when next weighing or looking over your weaners:

- Keep an eye out for common post-weaning health problems: yersiniosis, coccidiosis, pneumonia
- Develop and maintain a regular parasite treatment programme, taking care to use effective drenches at the correct intervals. Discuss this with a vet if you are unsure
- Vaccinate twice with 6-in-1 or 10-in-1 to prevent sudden deaths as a result of clostridial infection
- Regularly weigh R1's: if weights and/or weight gains are below target (Friesians should average 0.54kgLW/day between weaning and calving) due to the amount or quality of pasture, consider feeding supplements, especially concentrates.
- Ensure regular trace element testing is performed and that any deficiencies are corrected
- Intervene early when it comes to the facial eczema season - zinc bullets are the most effective way of preventing eczema in young stock

We offer a very competitively-priced heifer weighing service providing reports on individual weights, growth rate graphs and comparisons with target weight set for your individual herd. These reports enable you to adapt management practices in time to achieve target weights.

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Bull Management

Hennie Lock BVSc

By now you should have organised your bulls for the season and worked out how many you will need. Once they are on farm, it is important to manage them well to get the most out of your bull team.

Number of bulls needed in the herd at any one time:

No. cows in milking herd	Likely % of herd pregnant at start of bull mating			
	very low	low	moderate	high
	<40%	40-50%	50-70%	>70%
100	2 to 4	2 to 3	2	2
200	5 to 6	4 to 5	2 to 3	2
300	7 to 8	6	4 to 5	3
400	9 to 11	7 to 8	5 to 6	3 to 4
500	12 to 13	9 to 10	7	4 to 5

Two teams should be run, with one team working for 2 days while the other team is resting for 2 days, **meaning double the number in the chart is needed on farm**. After the first 3 weeks of mating, if bulls are fighting, numbers in with the herd can be reduced. A minimum of at least 2 sexually active bulls at all times with the herd

Observe bulls on a daily basis and:

- Remove lame bulls immediately
- Remove bulls that are not mounting and penetrating cows
- Separate fighting bulls
- Do not use overly-aggressive bulls
- Replace bulls that are losing excessive condition

Ideally bulls should be left in the paddock when cows are bought in for milking. If this is not possible, at least limit the time bulls spend on the concrete.

If you need any help with bull evaluation, determining numbers or management, call us at the clinic.

Healthy Hoof Program

Jason Fayers Franklin District Advisor

DairyNZ — Profitability. Sustainability. Competitiveness.

Jason Fayers, BVMS Cert, Advisor

Lameness in dairy cows costs you in time, money and stress, and costs the cow in production, reproduction and welfare.

Lameness costs on average around $350 in treatment costs, lost production, reduced reproductive performance and increased chance of being culled. However, it can cost considerably more. For example, a cow with serious lameness around mating that ends up empty will cost around $1000 - the difference in value between an in-calf cow and a cull.

In partnership with Dairy NZ Franklin Vets is a provider of the **Healthy Hoof Program** to help dairy farmers reduce the incidence of lameness.

The main aim of the Healthy Hoof programme is to help farmers reduce lame cows through improved management of cows and people.

The full program involves a 5-step process with visits from the advisor to identify problem areas and implement action plans, followed by sessions on treatment and prevention for farm staff. Improved recording systems allow a 6-monthly review process to assess the effectiveness of the on-farm changes. Tailor-made packages can also be developed specifically for your farm.

Dairy NZ have put a significant amount of resources behind the program including information folders, field guides, recording sheets and DVDs. If lameness is a problem in your herd, don't put up with it. Now is the time to make a change, for your sake and the cow's. Veterinarian Jason Fayers is the Healthy Hoof advisor for the Franklin area, so for more information give Jason a call at our Pukekohe clinic or check the Dairy NZ website under the Healthy Hoof link.

Franklin Vets farm worker lameness seminar

We will be holding our annual farm worker lameness seminar at the Te Kauwhata branch of Franklin Vets, on Tuesday 15 November. This seminar starts with a theory session, covering the basics of lameness diagnosis and treatment on New Zealand dairy farms. This is followed by a practical session on farm, using real lame cases to put the theory into practice.

If you are interested in sending your workers along, please contact your branch of Franklin Vets for more details and to book a spot.

Milkfat percentage - what does it mean?

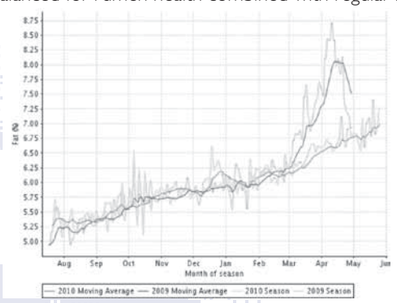
Greg Lindsay BVSc

Last month we delved into the wonderful world of milksolids analysis, looking in particular at the milk protein component of your production data. We discussed how tools such as Infovet can be used to monitor milk protein trends throughout the season, enabling early identification of nutritional issues before they turn into bigger problems. In this, the second chapter of our 'Tanker Docket' series, we will be taking a closer look at the other milksolid…milkfat.

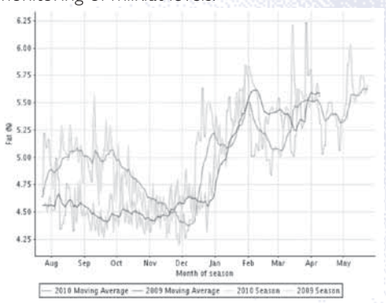
As with milk protein, the level of milkfat and how this changes through a season can provide insights into aspects of herd management. The following table summarises the effects certain management factors have on milkfat and milkprotein:

Factor	Fat	Protein
Genetics	Jerseys higher % than Friesians	Jerseys higher % than Friesians
Stage of lactation	% increases as lactation advances	% inc as lactation advances
Low BCS at calving	% reduced	No major effect
Low rumen fibre /acidosis	% reduced	No major effect
Feeding of bypass proteins	No major effect	% increased
Low dietary energy intake	No major effect	% reduced

When these factors are well-controlled, milkfat percentage graphs over a season will present a steady curve that rises as the season progresses with minimal day to day fluctuation (see Farm A graph). Sudden drops in milkfat percentage need to be avoided as these indicate an unstable and potentially acidotic rumen (see Farm B). Similarly, running very low or declining milkfat percentages for extended periods can be indicative of a more long-term dietary issue; subacute ruminal acidosis (SARA). SARA is usually a herd problem causing variable feed intakes and reduced milk production with very subtle clinical signs. Long term consequences associated with this condition are abomasal ulceration, liver abscesses and laminitis/lameness. Of high importance therefore is the consistent feeding of a diet balanced for rumen health combined with regular monitoring of milkfat levels.



Farm A



Farm B

Interpretation of fat and protein graphs can be challenging, however when done properly can provide an accurate assessment of not only farm performance but herd health. Please don't hesitate to talk to us if you are at all concerned about your current performance or are interested in viewing your graphs.

The first herd test is in - now what?

David Hawkins BVSc

So you have the data from your first herd test but what do you do with it?

Don't be tempted to go straight to the high-somatic-cell-count-cow section. Start at the top of the somatic cell count (SCC) summary page (part 3).

Under each test date, two columns show the numbers and percentage of cows in each SCC category. Focus on the top and bottom lines; cell count ranges 0-149 and 500+. This tells you the amount of "clean" cows (<150) and "really dirty" cows (>500) at each herd test. "Clean" cows should comprise >85% of the herd at the first herd test and >70% at the last herd test of each season. "Really dirty" cows should be less than 5% at the first herd test and less than 7% at the last herd test. Heifers come in cleaner than cows and their "clean" targets are therefore higher and "dirty" targets lower. Low numbers of "clean" cows and high number of "really dirty" cows at any stage of the lactation indicate mastitis issues are present. E.g. 65% of cows in the 0-149 category at the first herd test may indicate poor dry cow protection, high levels of chronic infections, problems in the colostrum mob, high levels of heifer mastitis and environmental contamination around calving, amongst other things.

The "likely infection rate" box tells you the likely number of infections at the most recent and the previous herd test. By looking at the differences between tests you can see how fast infection is spreading or clearing in a herd. At the first herd test, this acts as a rough estimate on the efficacy of your dry cow and the effectiveness of early season management. At the second and subsequent herd tests, this indicates how well infection spread is controlled in the herd.

Then look at the bottom section where individual high SCC cows are listed.

Remember: "not all high cows are problem cows and not all problem cows are high cows". For a cow to make it to your potential problem cow list, she must have been on the high list more than once or had repeated clinical mastitis.

You might want to treat some cows to reduce the BMSCC. Before treating any cows, ensure that they are still high (i.e. have not self-cured since the test) by using the RMT paddle to look for gelling and sub-clinical infection. A weak reaction in only one quarter means reassess her in a few days. She may self-cure. Consider treating quarters with strong reactions to the RMT. Extended courses of your recommended antibiotics work best. Discuss treatment selection and WHPs with your vet.

However treatment of subclinical cows is often frustrating and poorly effective. Running a separate repeat high SCC mob is effective in reducing spread of infection from high SCC cows to the rest of the herd. All cows can be milked into the vat when BMSCC allows and when BMSCC is high the culprits are in a handy mob to quickly withdraw from supply. Small numbers can be run with the herd, being cut out at milking and run back into the shed to be milked last.

If BMSCC or clinical mastitis problems continue to plague you, please contact your nearest clinic. We offer a range of effective solutions to resolve mastitis up to and including a full referral level package.

Sponsorship

Franklin Vets are a long-time supporter of school Ag Days in our community. Since the late '90s, we have committed to sponsoring our area schools in partnership with our farmer clients, who generously give their time and animals, allowing children the opportunity to raise an animal.

Our vets and technicians were able to attend a number of schools, offering free calf and lamb vaccinations and docking. We were most impressed with the high standards of young animals! To those schools that are yet to hold their annual Ag Day, we wish you the best of luck with your preparations and hope the weather co-operates

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Herd reproductive treatments - treat early

Kris Brownlee BVSc

Dairy NZ's *In-Calf* shows us that maximising submission rates and conception rates is vital to improving the 6 week in-calf rate. Increasing the 6 week in-calf rate up to target 78% will also increase the economic farm surplus. This information must be focused on when deciding whether or not to use herd reproductive treatments.

Body condition score at calving and feeding levels post-calving determine condition score loss prior to mating. In combination with non-cycler treatments, they play a vital role in determining the submission rate. Non-cycler treatments are most profitable if used early in the mating period. Treating non-cyclers 8-9 days prior to the planned start of mating maximally improves submission rate. It is most profitable to treat cows calved more than 30 days at condition score 3.5 or better to achieve the best conception rates.

Trials show a treated mob of anoestrus cows will calve 14 days earlier than a non-treated anoestrus mob. The resulting extra days in milk give a return on investment of $126 on average (14 days x 1.5kgMS x $6 payout).

To capture this improvement in profitability, it is important to detect and treat non-cycling cows early as a core reproductive treatment.

This is best done by:

1. Tail painting all calved cows 30 days prior to planned start of mating.
2. Observing heats and touching up tail paint every 2-3 days so all cycling cows are detected.
3. Arranging an initial vet visit 8 days prior to planned start of mating. This will be the first out of 3 visits which ends with cows either being detected in-heat from 8 days after the first visit or put up at a fixed time 10 days after the first visit.

Clevedon A&P Show 12 & 13th November

Franklin Vets is now in its fifth year of supporting the Clevedon A&P show and this year, we're proud to sponsor this local event at its new and exciting purpose-built grounds. Come and meet the staff and see our displays! It's a good opportunity to chat to some of the vets outside a normal working day.

Broodmare wellness check

Holly Walton BVSc

We are heading into the horse breeding season, which can be a very exciting and fairly nerve-wracking time, especially for first-time breeders.

There are some simple ways to prepare your mare for breeding that will optimise your foal's health and well-being.

Vaccination

Even if your mare is not due for re-vaccination, it is good practice to administer a tetanus booster 1 month prior to foaling. This provides antibodies in the foal's first feed of colostrum and means you don't have to inject your foal with a tetanus antitoxin on the day of birth.

De-worming

We recommend treating your mare with a moxidectin product (Equest Plus or Ultramox) one month prior to foaling. This product has a longer **persistence of activity** so provides longer protection for the foal, by providing a less contaminated environment. It is also good practice to wash down the mare's udder with a warm, soapy wash a few weeks prior to foaling if safe to do so. This removes some of the round worm eggs that may accumulate there waiting to infect your foal directly.

Caslicks

If your mare was sent to stud for breeding, please check to see if she had a caslick procedure performed. If mares have poor conformation behind, this procedure is often performed to prevent air and faecal contamination tracking into the vagina during pregnancy. The vulva is sutured closed, leaving enough room for urination and some breeding procedures. You will need to have this opened by a vet prior to foaling. If left unopened, it can result in trauma to the mare or worse, death to the foal during delivery.

If foaling down your mare for the first time, we recommend that you employ the services of a reputable stud/foaling-down unit or at least use a foaling alarm. These send a signal to a receiver in your house or on your mobile phone when the mare lies down. Mares rarely lie down in the last stages of pregnancy so this is often associated with labour. Some studs will now not honour a live-foal guarantee if either of these 2 practices are not adhered to.

PAPAKURA
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