



our quality-focused veterinary care for your farm

# THE milk carton Dargaville Vets

FEBRUARY  
2020

## Mastatest Machine:

### What can it do for you?

With the changes in the rules around antibiotic use in animals, especially red category RVMs, now is the time to consider making better treatment decisions.



When choosing an antibiotic to treat mastitis it is best practice to use the most narrow spectrum antibiotic available to target the bacteria causing the problem. To be able to do this, we need to know what bacteria this is.

**A practical way to achieve this is by having a Mastatest machine on farm.**

When you find a new case of clinical mastitis you take a milk sample before you treat. Then you start treatment with a broad spectrum antibiotic.

You then run the sample in the machine, which is very simple to operate. 24 hours later you will be emailed a result and you then have the option of changing to a more appropriate antibiotic depending on the culture result. We will generate a simple flow-chart for you to decide what is the best course of action.

If this sounds like something that would benefit your farm, talk to your vet about getting your own machine

## Managing The Transition Cow

Nutrition of the cow four weeks before and four weeks after calving is critical to health and productivity in the coming lactation season.

Cows fed inappropriate transition diets have an increased incidence of disease, metabolic disorders, and culling post calving.

Successful adaptation of the pre-calving rumen to a lactating rumen will minimise the risks of:

- metabolic disorders of macro-minerals including calcium, magnesium and phosphorus deficiencies
- ketosis and fatty liver arising from inadequate energy intake
- acidosis associated with sudden dietary change
- impaired immune response increasing risk of mastitis and metritis

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## Basic Principles

Have transition cows in a separate group for at least two weeks before calving. This will require regular checks and identification of all springing cows in the 'dry mob'.

Do not restrict cow feed intakes pre-calving. Aim to have a minimum dry matter intake of 10-12 kg per day. The key is to keep cows eating!

Use hay, grass silage and maize silage to make up any deficiencies of the diet.

Avoid giving any PKE to cows pre-calving as it will increase the risk of metabolic disorders at calving.

Magnesium is also a key trace element in all transition diets, with Magnesium chloride the preferred form pre-calving.

## After Calving

Increase pasture allocation whilst still maintaining supplements as required. PKE is ok to feed post calving (care to monitor quantities fed to keep below Fonterra's FEI thresholds).

Supplement magnesium, calcium, and salt if feeding maize silage. Avoid underfeeding which can result in ketosis and excess weight loss. Fibre is also important in early lactation to prevent rumen acidosis.

## New Welfare Standards For Dairy Cattle



Off-paddock facilities provide shelter during cold and rainy weather, and provide shade from the sun. But, facilities that impose confinement restrictions on dairy cattle pose risks to their welfare. To address this issue an amendment was added to the code of welfare for dairy cattle.

Confinement increases the risk of greater exposure to social stress, increased risk of diseases such as lameness and mastitis and the potential to restrict a cow's natural behaviour.

NAWAC has included a minimum standard stating that cattle must be able to lie and rest comfortably for sufficient periods each day to meet their behavioural needs, and another minimum standard to ensure cattle are able to walk, turn around, lie in a natural position and lie down and rise freely

Keeping cows off paddock, especially in the long term, can present risks to animal welfare and the new standards address this. Dairy cattle kept in off-paddock facilities beyond 3 days now have to be provided with a well-drained lying area with a compressible soft surface or bedding and shelter.

The aim of the amendment is to encourage all those responsible for the welfare of dairy cattle to adopt the highest standards of husbandry, care, and handling.

It is expected that the amendment will be used as a guide for best practice.

The new standards came into effect on 31 October 2019.

For anyone wanting to know more about the new regulations they can be found at

[www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/new-standards-for-dairy-cattle/](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/new-standards-for-dairy-cattle/)

## Dehorning Amnesty: Have you missed disbudding 2019 born animals?

At Dargaville Vets we are offering clients a heavily discounted option to get any 2019 born cattle dehorned if you missed disbudding them before the law change came into effect on 1 October 2019.

Cattle of any age are now required to have a local anaesthetic during any disbudding or dehorning. Some farmers missed out disbudding their calves so during the months of

February and March 2020 we will visit you on farm, and administer local anaesthetic to your 2019 born cattle for only \$5 per animal (incl GST) so they can be legally dehorned. To qualify for this offer the animals have to be 2019 born (spring or autumn), have yard facilities with a working head bail, and at least two farm staff available on the day; one for loading and the other for dehorning.



The attending vet will only be administering the local anaesthetic. This is a one-off offer. Going forward farmers will need to disbud calves early.

# Introducing Annie

Annie is a new graduate from Murdoch University, that has just started working with us at Dargaville Veterinary Centre



I have moved to Dargaville from Perth to work as a mixed animal vet, and I look forward to meeting you, either on your farm or in the clinic. I have already enjoyed my first week becoming familiar with the area and learning from my lovely new work colleagues.

Outside of work, I enjoy playing the guitar and ukulele, surfing and playing social sports. I am looking forward to exploring some of your beautiful beaches and forests.

## LIVER FLUKE COULD BE COSTING YOU!

There are lots of parasites that love our warm climate – liver fluke is one of them. The immature stages of liver fluke migrate across the liver surface to the bile ducts where they live as adults. While most animals with liver fluke show no obvious signs of disease, liver fluke could well be reducing milk production by 10% or more. In growing cattle, liver fluke can cause reduced growth rates.

Fortunately, there are a range of products to treat liver fluke; please talk to us about the best option for your herd. **Genesis Ultra Pour On** is a pour on product that will kill all stages of liver fluke. Unfortunately, there is a very long withholding period, so if treating dairy cows or cattle that are going to the works in the next few months take care.

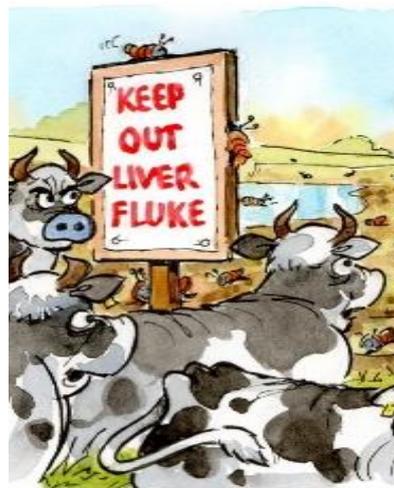
**FlukeCare** is an oral drench that will kill all stages of liver fluke and has a relatively short withholding period.

**Switch Fluke 10** is the product

we recommend if you are treating young cattle.

**Ivomec Plus** is an injectable product but does not kill all the immature stages of liver fluke.

Unfortunately, in cattle it is the immature stages that can cause the most damage. For this reason, we would recommend reserving Ivomec Plus for cases where it is not possible to use an alternative product.



## 5 Ways To Fight Facial Eczema

### Pasture Spraying

Pasture must be sprayed with fungicide before spore counts rise as it doesn't kill spores but reduces their production.

### Spore Counts

Keep an eye on regional spore counts, we collect samples from each region, and post these on our Facebook page weekly. Do spore counts on your own property once danger levels are detected in your region. Grass samples can be brought into the clinic and tested for \$25.

### Blood Test

Zinc levels must be elevated to 'protective' levels for it to be effective, test 10 cows to check supplementation is working.

### Pasture Management

Avoid feeding paddocks with history of high spore counts, or use supplementary feed such as silage or crops.

### Zinc Treatment

Faceguard boluses, zinc drench or supplements in feed/water. Although scientists don't know how it works, zinc is the most effective prevention method! It somehow stops sporidesmin from beginning the reaction chain that causes liver damage.

Check out Bayers podcast on Facial Eczema;  
"The cost of Facial Eczema"  
<https://www.animalhealth.org.nz/>

# Johne's Disease Whole Herd Testing

We are currently seeing a rise in the number of farms with Johne's Disease. By testing milk samples at herd testing, we can identify and manage high-risk cows to minimise the spread of Johne's disease. For more information go to: <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/cow-health/johnes-disease/>

## How Johne's disease whole herd testing works:

The whole herd test uses milk samples from a routine herd test to detect the antibody that shows an animal has been exposed to the disease-causing bacterium, MAP. Whole herd testing for Johne's disease can identify super-shedders for culling that are excreting large amounts of bacteria and putting your herd at risk

## When To Test

Test towards the end of the milking season so you can identify and cull high-risk cows before calving.

Talk to your vet today to book Johne's Herd Test



**FACIAL ECZEMA DEFENCE**

**TIME TO CHANGE YOUR CAPSULE TO THE DURABLE FACE-GUARD BOLUS THAT WON'T CRACK UNDER PRESSURE**

A single application lasts up to 6 weeks with the option of topping up to give additional cover for longer periods.

**Face-Guard**

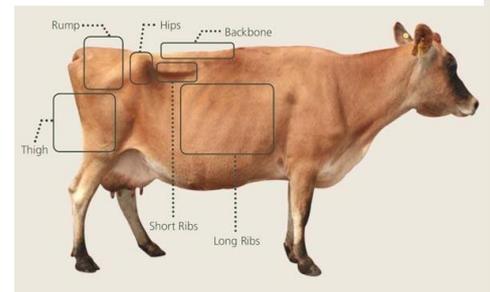
SEE YOUR VET

Check out Bayer's podcast with Dr Emma Cuttance BVSc MVS (epi) discussing the cost of facial eczema.

BAYER

# Body Conditioning Score at Dry-Off

With herds (hopefully) drying off in April or May, it's time to assess condition score and ensure your herd is on target for optimal production and reproduction next season. BCS and feed budgets are critical information required to plan your dry-off dates.



Body condition score (BCS) at calving is a vital influencer of milk production and reproductive performance in dairy cattle. A cow that calves at BCS 4, on average will produce 15 kgs of milk solids less and cycle on average 8-10 days later than a cow that calves at BCS 5. The lost days in milk from cycling later results in a further loss of 15-20 kgs of milk production the following season.

The optimal BCS at calving should be 4.5-5.5/10 with all heifers and 1<sup>st</sup> calvers above 5/10 if possible.

Due to the increased demands of the foetus and udder development during the late dry period it is difficult to put weight on cows at this time. Further, cows put on body weight up to 20% more efficiently during lactation compared with the dry period. These two facts make it a preferable option to increase BCS now and maintain it as close to the optimal calving BCS as possible.



## Dargaville Veterinary Centre

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