

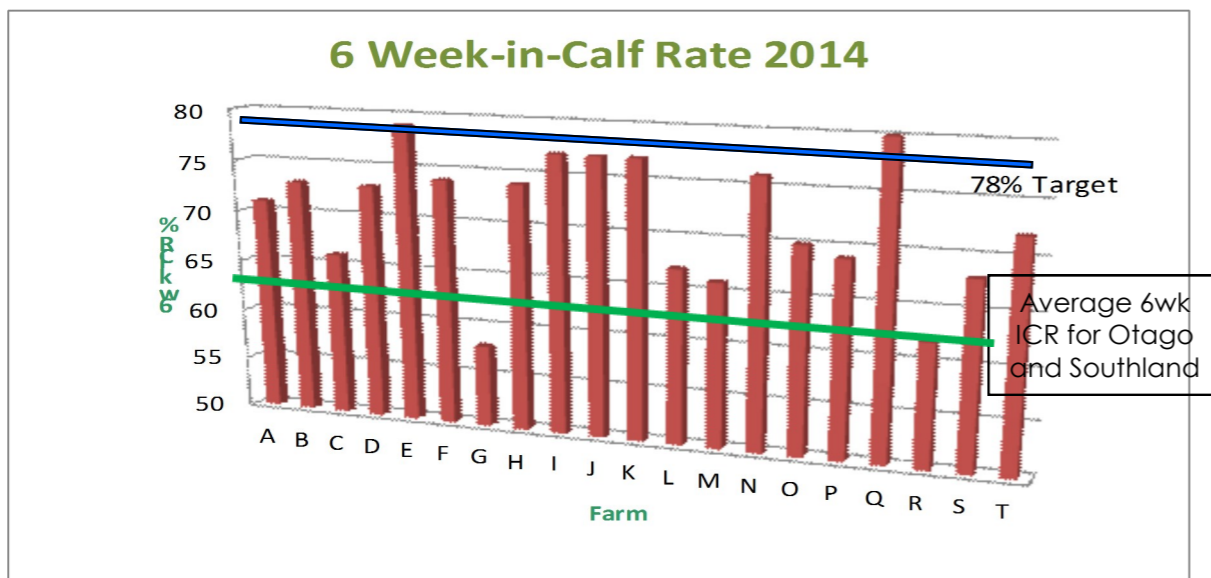
Local 6 Week In-Calf rates

Your 6 week in-calf rate is the number one measure of herd reproductive performance. Why???

- Increased milk production
- Fewer empties: a higher 6 week in-calf rate is well correlated to lower empty rates.
- Decreased matings
- Sustainable herd fertility: early calving cows get in calf earlier and better than late calving cows.
- Improved herd and milk quality with less cost through more culling options, less wastage, freedom to cull low producing or high cell count cows, and retain high genetic merit young cows into their peak productive years.
- Higher stock value
- Improved profitability through all of the above.
- Easier management: more early calves (easier to rear), shorter mating periods (easier to manage), shorter calving periods (easier to focus on job at hand).



Here is a graph showing some of our local results from some of the early scanning that we have done. We have Minda access for all of these farms and use our MindaMobile device at the time of pregnancy testing for fast and accurate recording of test results. We then download and synchronise the data to LIC. It also means that cows can be dried off and wintered in groups to both expected calving date and body condition score.



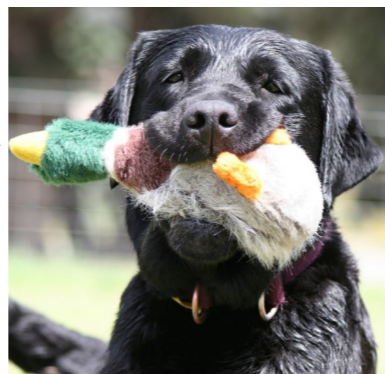
Note: Farm G was a 5 week ICR
Most of these farms are above the provincial average but fall well below InCalf targets. Excluding FarmG we have an 18% difference in the range from the best to poorest performing farm. At an average farm size of 714 cows for our farms this is valued at over \$50,000 for the 6 week gap alone. Food for thought.
Morgan Greene MVB MANZCVS

Deer Reminders

- Drench weaners
- Check copper and selenium status and treat if necessary
- Put chaser stags out

Duck Shooting Season is Fast Approaching!

Bring your duck dog in for their W.O.F during April to make sure they are ready for the first weekend in May. The vet will give them a thorough check over including joints, ears and weight. This is also a good time to check they are up to date with vaccinations and worming, especially if going onto properties where sheep are run. Make sure your faithful companion is 100% for opening weekend and go into the draw to win duck shooting prize!



Situation Comment

Most of our dairy recheck scanning has been completed with final not-in-calf rates varying hugely from 4-15%. The length of mating has a huge impact and so we are not comparing "apples with apples" in a lot of these cases. L.I.C. data for Southland has the average 6 week in calf rate at 67% on a fertility focus report. You should be at the stage of being able to printout your own to compare.

Beef scanning has started and again results have been mixed so far. (Dry rates from 6-30%)

B.V.D. has been identified on many farms at this stage. Do you know your status???

Worms continue to be a problem this season with ideal conditions for their growth. While rain has arrived at just the right time in many instances, the lack of sunshine, worms and the effects of clover root weevil in some parts has meant that lambs have been slower to get away than desired. So far we have seen very little enteric Salmonella in Northern Southland though Eastern and Western Southland have had a number of cases. Remember to keep an eye out for barley grass in your dogs and cats, we are continuing to see a number of cases.

1. Situation comment, staff situation, Finn Leamy
2. Winter is coming
3. Attention graziers and dairy farmers, heifer mastitis
4. Local 6 week In Calf rates, duck shooting season is fast approaching.

Winter Dairy Training

Over winter we will be holding weekly afternoon training sessions on a wide range of topics. Keep an eye out for these exciting staff development opportunities.

Staff Situation

Congratulations to Megan and Damian on their recent wedding. A great day was had by all.

Justin will be out in the field a little more often after having his moon boot removed as he is now a lot more mobile. Unfortunately for the local rugby team I don't think they'll get to use him this year.

Mike has had a well deserved break overseas to a friends wedding so if he comes back sounding like Keith Urban with an Aussie-Yankie twang don't be surprised. Otherwise we are all fully staffed and fit and healthy, touch wood.

Finn Leamy

Starting out as a vet, I swore I would not follow the weak and soft hearted path of many before me; I would not give in and adopt an animal in need. My first challenge came 2 months into working here, in the form of a 3 month old huntaway cross puppy, with eyes that'll break your heart. I failed miserably. He came in with a fractured femur, after being run over. His owners opted for euthanasia, but were more than happy with my alternative idea – that I would fix his fracture and take him home! We inserted a metal pin into his femur, after which four weeks cage rest was required. It is no easy feat keeping a three month old puppy on strict cage rest, but we did it and his fracture healed perfectly. He is now the most entertaining and sweet natured dog I could have asked for, albeit extremely clumsy. Finnegan has a tendency to eat whatever he comes across, including tea towels and whole bunches of bananas. He also falls over on a frequent basis and is an excellent example of how to love life with immeasurable enthusiasm. At 33kg, he's pretty decent, which makes it all the more amusing that his partner in crime and number one playmate is Becky's 1.5kg Chihuahua, Dora.

Tash Leamy BVSc



Winter is Coming!

Is your horse ready to cope with the Southland Winter?

The days are getting shorter and the temperature is dropping...winter is on its way. It is important to check that your horse is ready to handle the cold temperatures and lack of feed that comes with a Southland winter. Follow our winter checklist to ensure you and your horse are ready for the colder months.

Nutrition:

Maintaining condition during winter will be much easier if horses enter winter in a good body condition. A body condition scoring system objectively measures the amount of fat on the body. Take the time to assess your horse pre-winter and alter their feeding schedule as required. On a 1-9 scale, 4 or 5 is the ideal body condition. Bear in mind that a bit of extra condition in winter will keep your horse warmer but that being overweight can predispose them to conditions such as equine metabolic syndrome and laminitis.

Providing enough feed during winter is paramount to ensuring the good health of your horse. Horses require 2% of their bodyweight in hay per day. It is a good idea to feed extra hay in colder weather. This will keep your horse warmer as heat is produced during the digestion process. Other feed such as grain may be required to maintain the body condition of your horse. Feeding a fat-based supplement will provide extra calories without giving them too much excess energy. If you are feeding solely hay, a mineral and vitamin supplement is also recommended.

Feet:

Standing in mud and wet pasture during the winter can affect the health of your horse's feet. Wet conditions soften the sole of the foot, predisposing it to infections. Thrush is a common problem during winter. It is a bacterial infection of the sulci of the frog, resulting in a characteristic foul-smelling discharge. Thrush seldom causes lameness unless severe. Treatment consists of removing the affected horn and applying disinfectant. The best way to prevent thrush is to clean out the hooves every day. This will also allow you to detect any other problems early. Mud fever or pastern dermatitis is another common winter ailment. It is usually seen as redness, swelling, crusting or scaling on the lower limbs, especially around the heel. If severe, your horse may become lame. The best treatment for mud fever is to clip the hair away, remove the scabs and get the horse out of the mud!

Parasite Management:

Remember to give a drench containing moxidectin in the autumn. This will ensure any encysted cyathostome larvae are taken care of. Routine pasture management such as regularly mucking out the paddock will also help prevent parasitism

during winter.

Coat Condition:

Before winter, check that your heavy rugs are in good condition and do not need any repairs or waterproofing. A cover that fits your horse correctly is important for preventing cover rub. The cover should not cut into the withers and should allow normal movement of the shoulders. Back straps should not be too tight or too loose to allow the cover to slip sideways. It is important to regularly remove your horse's rug and check for any cover rub and to monitor the condition of your horse. Horses that are not rugged during the winter may develop rain scald. This is a bacterial infection of the skin causing matted tufts of hair and crusting along the top of the back. A simple and effective treatment is bathing the affected area with an iodine wash. Be prepared for winter this year. Follow our winter checklist to ensure your horse is comfortable during the colder months.

Winter Checklist:

Before:

- Enough good-quality hay to last for the winter
- Drench with moxidectin in autumn
- Check winter covers are in good condition and still fit your horse correctly
- Body condition score your horse
- Ensure annual dental is up to date

During:

- Feed 2% of bodyweight per day in hay
- Extra hay on cold days for warmth
- Sufficient available water – may need to break ice on the trough!
- Pick out feet regularly and check for signs of mud fever and thrush
- Take off cover regularly – check for cover rub and monitor body condition



Shelly Hann BVSc

Horse Reminders

- Vaccinate foals for Salmonellosis, Tetanus and Strangles
- Drench for encysted cyathostome using moxidectin
- Wean foals

Attention Graziers and Dairy Farmers

BCS Reminder

Despite best intentions issues can arise when grazing others stock. Be sure both parties agree on the condition of the stock and that expectations are clear.

As a safeguard we recommend condition scoring animals a week from arrival to the run off block. This is a very busy time for you but we can be left to BCS several groups in your absence (provided we are lead to the group) and provide you with a report. This can be repeated at critical times.

Occasionally it can be advisable to take photographs of animals onto or arriving off the truck. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

APRIL BCS

As we are just 3-4 months from calving, cows below BCS 3.5 and first calvers below 4.0 should be dried off **now** to allow time to reach targets of BCS 5 and 5.5 at calving respectively. Call us if you are unsure or would like a hand to identify these.

Below are DairyNZ BCS 4.0 image.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MACVSc



Sheep Reminders

- FEC ewe lambs
- Record mating data
- Check and change ram harnesses
- Check rams feet
- Teasers out with hoggets

Pet Reminders

- Worm cats and dogs
- Get W.O.F. check for duck dogs
- Get 6 month old kittens de-sexed
- Booster vaccination for cats prior to winter

Heifer Mastitis

Heifers calving down with mastitis are frustrating and expensive. Time, energy, milk, drugs (and kicking bloody heifers) all add stress to what is already a busy time of year.

Is heifer mastitis a problem for you? SMART SAMM recommends that if you have more than 16 cases of mastitis per 100 heifer calvings within the first 2 weeks something should be done. 16% is a high percentage to have as a target and economic returns are available at lower levels if improvements can be made.

What can be done? Having heifers enter the milking shed for the first time when they calve increases stress levels and reduces milk let down. Shouting at them or otherwise physically encouraging them onto the platform increases the stress. Training heifers to use the shed before their first milking makes life easier for staff and the animals. Teat condition and contamination increase mastitis so teat spray heifers 3-4 times a week for a few weeks before they calve. Swollen udders reduce let down so milk out animals before calving and check heifer diets to avoid udder odema. Avoid muddy paddocks for calving. Done everything practical but still having a problem? Internal teat sealants can be inserted into each teat a month (up to 1 week) before calving to form a physical protection against infection. This is a common procedure and each year gains in popularity. The key is to remember that alone it will improve, but not solve the problem.

Michael Baer BVSc



Cattle Reminders

- Pregnancy test
- Beef weaners-drench
- Review mastitis control-plan dry cow therapy and inductions
- Vaccinate for Salmonella
- Liver biopsy check for copper and selenium or check cull cow livers at works
- Lepto herd and heifers
- Drench cows at least 4 weeks prior to dry off
- Dry off poorer condition cows and culls
- Lepto booster for calves

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