

**Repercussions of a cat fight**

'Felix' is your typical middle aged, domestic short hair cat. He has a well-defined territory that needs daily patrols. Always vigilant and on high alert for any intruders onto his patch and ever ready to respond. Felix was presented to NSVets with a left forelimb lameness of two days duration. Felix's owners noted the lameness to be improving and on clinical exam we found multiple scratches over Felix's left shoulder blade and above his left eye. We thought Felix must have been in a cat fight but fortunately all the visible injuries were superficial. The wounds were cleaned and Felix returned home.

However over the subsequent five days Felix's lameness deteriorated. Now Felix was quite tender on his left fore and pained in particular around his shoulder. Still suspicious that the scratches sustained in the cat fight could have penetrated more deeply, or sprained a ligament or tendon around the shoulder, Felix was treated with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Initially Felix responded well to treatment, but relapsed a couple of weeks later. Now Felix's shoulder joint was extremely sore and swollen. X-rays were taken and a fine needle aspirate of the shoulder joint. This is a procedure where we prepare the area of interest as if for surgery and insert a fine, sterile needle into the area to collect a sample of fluid or tissue. It is minimally invasive and can yield a lot of information very quickly. As we aspirated the fluid from the shoulder joint we could immediately see it was abnormal – cloudy and blood tinged.

	Normal joint fluid	Felix's joint fluid
Colour	Clear	Yellow
Clarity	Transparent	Cloudy
No. of cells	Low/Nil	High
Red blood cells	No	Yes



Normal joint fluid



Felix's joint fluid

A smear was prepared and examined under the microscope. This confirmed the presence of red and white blood cells (in particular neutrophils that respond to infection) and a diagnosis of a joint infection was made. This would have started from the cat fight but it was amazing how superficial the wounds were yet there must have been a claw or tooth that pierced the skin and penetrated more deeply, seeding bacteria into the shoulder joint. Antibiotics alone would not resolve this. It was necessary to flush Felix's shoulder joint, initially with sterile saline and then antibiotics were placed directly into the shoulder joint. Felix has responded well to the flushing of the joint and his lameness has resolved. He will be able to build up the muscle mass that had atrophied through the lameness as he continues his daily patrols of the neighbourhood.

Jill MacGibbon BVMS



**Horse Reminders**

- Check teeth
- Hoof care

Grey texts from Dog. Green texts are his owner.



**Pet Reminders**

- Check for barley grass
- Flea & worm treatment and prevention

**Staff Comment**

Our congratulations to Danielle and Matt Clearwater on their wedding in December. We are not sure if it was their nuptials that caused it but we have had a major outbreak of engagements. Tash McCaskie and Joel Sweeney and Janelle Avery and Lance Healy are engaged, we wish them well.

We have our new vet, Andrew Cochran joining us in Riversdale at the start of February. Just back from travelling, he is from Clinton via Massey and Oamaru. We are certain he will be an asset to our staff.

**Body Condition Score - The Underpinnings of Farm Production**

Profitable, productive farming is all about forward thinking and now's the time to set your cows up for success next season. High 6 week in-calf rates deliver more early-season days in milk next year and **early days in milk are far more efficient than trying to squeeze in extra days at the tail end of the season** (at the detriment of next seasons 6 week in calf rate).

When cows are dried off they're primed to put condition on if you give them enough time and feed to do so. **Usually it is time rather than feed that is the limiting factor so plan now.**

How much time? Measure it! Professional input ensures an objective measure of current herd BCS levels. Get us out to do a herd BCS assessment and some feed budget planning now so you can make the right drying off decisions.

As a general rule:

- 4 months from calving (March) dry off cows ≤ 3.0 and R3's ≤ 3.5
- 3 months from calving (April) dry off cows ≤ 3.5 and R3's ≤ 4.0
- Aim to hit BCS 5.0 at calving (R3's and heifers = 5.5)
- Aim no more than 15% of herd ≤ 5.0
- Don't expect a cow to gain more than 0.5 BCS over winter

Options to help meet BCS targets at next calving include:

- Early dry off of all or part of the herd,
- once a day milking,

- using various feed input/grazing off choices available.
- It is vital cows are at BCS target 5 (and 5.5 for first and second calvers) at calving, or it will cost you next year, when who knows what the payout will be! Managing BCS is a year-round game.

We can help you with BCS management with regular herd assessments and review. BCS is the main driver of cycling success and higher 6 week in-calf rates next season so make sure it's sorted for well ahead. We're happy to discuss options with you, just give the clinic a call. Read more science about BCS

impacts on herd fertility on the What's New page in the member's zone of the 6 Week Challenge website at [www.6weeks.co.nz](http://www.6weeks.co.nz) We're registered on there too and one of our four accredited Body Condition Scorers can help you meet your challenge.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS



**Deer Reminders**

- Sex and tag fawns
- Copper supplementation - pre-mating & weaners
- Weaners—Yersiniavax first injection
- Clostridial vaccination

**New addition to the family?**



Bring your puppy along to puppy school at the Riversdale clinic! Your puppy will be taught basic training and socialisation skills. Suitable for puppies between the age of 3 and 6 months. Please phone Janeece on (30) 202 5636.



### Cow Flow

Lame cows are expensive. They cost time, money, effort and emotion. Prevention is preferable to on-going treatment. Part of prevention is ensuring good cow flow. Make your farm safer for the cows and reduce frustration of staff as well as freeing up time. **WE CAN HELP.** Use your HEALTHY HOOF provider to assess cow flow, track surface and design, identification of congestion areas as well as staff training and awareness to help resolve lameness and cow flow issues.



#### Track design affecting cow flow

- Too narrow – 250-350 cows need 6m tracks that widen at the yard.
- Poor surface
- Poor drainage
- Excess crown (3-5 degrees only)
- Poor concrete junction
- Shading and dung build up
- Underpasses
- Slippery surfaces

#### Shed design affecting flow

- Narrow entrance
- Turns - indirect flow to shed
- Yard too small – need 1.3-1.5sq m/cow +
- Slippery concrete
- Backing gate too fast and overused
- Uncomfortable milking (e.g.vacuum, pipework heights and angles)
- Staff coming out of shed
- Yelling, excess noise
- Stray electricity

#### Guidelines for cow flow

- Cow's heads down at all times.
- Cows don't like to bump other cows, avoidance will cause lameness.
- Cows like to follow leaders
- Dominant cows in the front half of the herd set the speed.



- There is no benefit in pushing the back cows.
- Cows are creatures of habit and like routine (it should be boring).
- Allow plenty of time and be patient at congestion areas – can travel at 2.7 km/hr
- Don't 'bulldoze' cows to the yard, stay 2 posts behind
- No dogs
- Never frighten cows
- Check out DairyNZ videos on lameness



Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS

### Cattle Reminders

- Calves worm treatment
- Remove bulls
- Pregnancy test
- Dairy yearlings - lepto vaccination

### Liver Biopsies- Why all the fuss?

Liver biopsies can be performed in any production animal to provide a better indication of the animals copper stores.

It is a minimally invasive procedure that requires a small incision to be made between the ribs and a small probe to be inserted into the liver. A small cylinder of liver tissue is removed and analysed. The liver regenerates rapidly and risks are low. Occasionally accidental entry to the rumen occurs but rarely does this cause a problem.

An animal with depleted copper stores can have an adequate serum level as this is the last parameter to decline, as such blood copper is not a good test of adequacy. It is however a good indicator of deficiency so its use is appropriate in spring when this is most likely to occur.

Copper levels increase over summer up until autumn, then decline from this time into mid spring with lowest levels occurring in late winter/early spring. This low coincides with increasing copper requirements of pregnant animals due to the needs of the developing foetus. Testing in April/May provides a picture of the group's status and the need for supplementation to prevent deficiency occurring over winter.

As with all trace element testing, individuals tested have to be representative of the group from which they come and testing more gives a more accurate picture of group levels, but also increases cost. A compromise has to be reached as testing too few is wasted money as it will not give confidence that the results are representative.

We recommend sampling 5 individuals including animals of different ages (ie 4 MA and a heifer) or management groups.

Justin Hogg BVSc



### Drenching - Knockout, Exit or Quarantine?

Modelling has shown using a unique drench family in your routine parasite programme can significantly delay the onset of resistance to regular drenches. Here are three ways to implement this.

	Knockout	Exit	Quarantine
What	The substitution of a routine lamb drench with a new drench active	A unique drench active at the end of a drench season	A highly effective combination drench given to new stock before being put on your pasture
When	Prior to times of rapid larval development (late summer, autumn)	e.g. After a long acting product such as capsules near the end of its period of activity	Whenever new stock are arriving on farm <b>or</b> 24 hours before leaving your farm.
Why	To remove parasites that have survived previous drenching and to prevent an autumn larval peak of resistant parasites.	To remove parasites that may have survived the previous treatment.	Prevent introduction of resistant parasites to your farm or parts of your farm

Remember we don't recommend drenching on to 'clean' pasture anymore. Based on the refugia theory, any parasites surviving the drench are resistant and will become the predominant parasite on that clean pasture – making it the most harmful pasture of all. Either send back to the same pasture/quarantine pen for 24-48 hours post drench or put onto 'clean' pasture 24-48 hours prior to drenching, and send them back there afterward.

Rochelle Smith BVSc MANZCVS



### Body Condition Scoring – Looking beyond the dairy sector at deer.

The dairy industry is using body condition score (BCS) monitoring as a tool for (hopefully) proactive decision making more than ever before. Dairy NZ provide training and accreditation to standardise the way the test is done and the reliability of results. In young dairy stock, *individual* weight gain monitoring is perhaps more important but it is still possible to measure and record individual animal BCS and the data is very informative.

Dairy cattle require intensive management to produce expected milk solids, to calve and to get back in calf in timely fashion. There is no reason why other farming sectors should be any different in terms of monitoring BCS as a tool to improve productivity and profitability. Sheep, beef cattle and deer are under their own pressures to perform, and most people do assess body condition in an eye-ometer kind of way. This may work well enough for many situations. With fleeced and longer hair coated animals, just how *sensitive* is passive (hands-off) body condition scoring going to be to small condition changes that can have marked implications for future performance? For example, good hind feeding pre-mating to shift BCS up by even 0.5 units is known to increase

first cycle conception rates and improve fawning outcomes, yet how much will the eye-ometer approach stand to miss in terms of accuracy? DINZ has recently sent out a wallchart with the latest Deer Industry News to help promote a more standardised method for BCS. The article reports the only reliable way of assessing deer (or, for that matter, ewe) body condition is by hands-on palpation. Ideally this should be done and recorded at critical times in the production cycle, such as prior to weaning or sorting of hinds into mating mobs. This may mean a lot of work; individually palpating, recording and managing hinds according to BCS, but the exercise may perhaps throw up some surprises and make it easier to manage those needing a boost before mating.

Nigel Dougherty BVSc

### Sheep Reminders

- Inject Toxovax
- Inject 1st dose Campylobacter Vaccine
- Faecal egg count lambs
- Check & exercise rams
- Palpate rams
- Treat ewe lambs—long acting cobalt
- Dipping
- Weigh ewe lambs & assess for mating
- Inject iodine at least 4 weeks pre-tup