Welcome to the April issue of **Topvets**

Moosletter

Facial eczema 2026

We have had sporadic cases of facial eczema starting in February this year. It has been a wetter summer and with our warmer climate the risk could extend well into May. Bear in mind this is a tip of the iceberg disease ie whole mob could have damaged liver while only a few animals with skin signs. The liver damage can last for months or even permanently, depending on severity, so prevention is more important than treating the sick ones.

- Pasture management is the first step in preventing exposure:

- Keep grazing residuals above 4-5cm to prevent animals from eating the toxic base.

- Utilise crops that produce less dead matter eg brassicas, chicory, plantain.

- Avoid topping pasture in late summer/autumn, as this creates dead material for the fungus to grow on.

- Supplement feed silage, hay, or crops to reduce reliance on potentially toxic pasture.

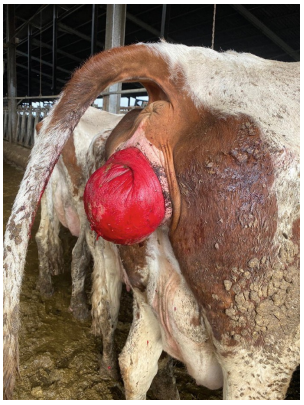
At high risk periods, we recommend spore count weekly on paddocks the stock are going into, as well as oral zinc treatment. Blood test can be a reliable way to detect active exposure. Group of 10 animals is sufficient.

Facial eczema spores thrives in dead grass

Hello all. We hope everyone has been doing okay since the flooding and not been too badly affected by the rain. We are certainly into the flow of the changing seasons with cooler, more temperate weather. As we come into autumn and winter calving, we wish you all success and a stress-free calving season. Any calving-related issues can always be addressed with a phone call to the clinic. In this issue of the newsletter, we are covering some calving-related issues such as prolapses, vaccines (important for both the dams and the babies), and a couple of other diseases.

In this issue

Vaginal prolapse in cattle


Vaginal prolapse

As the name implies, a vaginal prolapse is the prolapsing of the vagina itself. This condition most often occurs in late gestation, days to weeks before the expected calving date. During this process the cervix remains intact protecting the pregnancy. There are many predisposing factors to the development of a vaginal prolapse, the most important being the increase in abdominal pressure due to the growing fetus. Many other factors such as high body condition score, age, and breed/genetics will also predispose cattle to vaginal prolapses. Vaginal prolapsing is especially recognized in the Hereford breeds. An important factor to remember is that if a cow has a vaginal prolapse once, she is highly likely to prolapse again. This makes it an important management issue, and culling is recommended.


Uterine prolapse

Treatment of a uterine prolapse is less straight forward than a vaginal prolapse. Replacing the uterus into its proper position is more difficult than a vaginal prolapse. An increase in time spent outside of the body also increases the difficultly of replacing the uterus, and decreases the prognosis. The severity of uterine prolapses often indicates further supportive care. Unlike a vaginal prolapse, uterine prolapses are not hereditary in nature. This means that a cow does not necessarily need to be culled based on a uterine prolapse alone.

Here are some important highlights to keep in mind.

Vaginal Prolapse:

- Smaller in size
- Smooth to slightly wrinkled contour
- Most likely occurs before calving
- Genetic, recommend culling
- Make an appointment with your veterinarian

Uterine Prolapse:

- Larger in size
- Most likely occurs after giving birth
- No genetic component
- Medical emergency

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Salmonella vaccine

A number of farms had started Salmonella vaccine last year and we would recommend that this vaccine be kept up to date. Previously fully vaccinated cattle need only an annual booster, while your R2 will require 2 shots 4 –6 weeks apart.

- This vaccine should not be given with other vaccines so Lepto booster and Rotavirus vaccine should be given separately. You should space these vaccines at least 1 week apart.
- The vaccine can cause a drop in milk production, which is why we recommend the annual booster to be given around dry-off when the udder is starting to involute anyway. Some early trial work has also shown that vaccination close to dry-off can increase antibody levels in colostrum at calving, leading to increased protection for your calves too.
- Avoid vaccination during transition period as this is a time of high stress and vaccination can cause adverse reactions.

Healthy carriers are the main contributor to salmonella contamination, whilst stress period the main risk for outbreak. Floods/winter periods can increase stress in cattle and an ideal environment for Salmonella to thrive and spread.

Shipping fever

Pneumonia. Bronchial pneumonia. Fibrinous pleuropneumonia. Shipping fever. All of these terms describe the same costly disease: Bovine Respiratory Disease complex, or BRD. BRD is a major cause of economic losses to the beef industry. It usually is caused by a variety of pathogens, both viral and bacterial, that interact with one another to produce full-blown disease.

Depending on the organisms involved, death from BRD can occur within 24 to 36 hours of symptoms appearing, or the infection can become chronic, not causing death but instead producing widespread, permanent lung damage. Once the disease has progressed to the point that fibrosis, adhesions and/or abscesses have developed in or around the lungs, no treatment will satisfactorily correct the problem. The animal may survive, but it will always carry some residual lung problems that will impact performance. That is why early recognition and treatment of BRD are so important.

We these very commonly with weaner calves getting transported to new farms. If you are buying in animals, you should:

- Provide adequate rest, feed and water.
- Minimise exposure to environmental conditions such as dust, crowding, fumes
- Keep animals as clean and dry as possible
- Examine, treat and isolate affected animals promptly

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New parasite test for cattle

Parasite testing in cattle has been limited by one key constraint: lower eggs per gram (EPG) requirements. As a result, cattle parasite burdens have often been under-detected, under-monitored and/or managed using blanket drenching, rather than evidence-based decisions.

That approach is becoming increasingly risky.

Anthelmintic resistance is no longer just a sheep issue. Evidence of emerging drench resistance in cattle is growing, particularly in systems relying on repeated, non-targeted treatments. Key cattle parasites such as Ostertagia can impact production at low egg counts and are easily missed with higher EPG detection thresholds.

Cattle have traditionally been difficult to assess accurately because:

- Egg output is often low, even in the presence of meaningful parasite burden
- Standard McMaster detection methods can lack the resolution required to support confident decision-making
- Limited usefulness of routine FECs in cattle parasite programs.

One of the lab that we work with—Awanui lab, is introducing a new test—Parasight, in April that offers much higher accuracy.

Parasight has the ability to detect 6 epg (horse and cattle) and 12 epg (sheep). This lower detection rate is recommended for animals like cattle, where increasing the sensitivity of testing gives more power to the result. Especially with those lower egg-producing parasites like *Ostertagia* spp. Parasight testing is however limited by its inability to detect a wide range of parasites. It is capable of detecting the main nematodes but lacks the ability to detect *Coccidia* and *Strongyloides*. Due to this, its use in younger animals (calves, foals, lambs) and sick animals is not recommended. In these cases, a standard McMaster faecal egg count is still recommended.

A minimum 6 grams faecal sample is required for this test, with both pool and individual testing available.

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