

# NEWS ON FARM



## In this issue

- **Body condition at Dry Off**
- **Colic in the horse**  
By Vet Rory Dean BVM&S
- **Liver Fluke in your herd or flock**
- **Facial Eczema season is upon us**

## Where is Summer?

At this point in time, we have not really had the nice, hot, steamy Summer we are all used to, where we all crack a nice cold bevvy at the end of the day to get some relief. We have had rain, rain, wind and more rain, with flooding, road slips and small snippets of what should be summer. This has been great for grass growth.

However, the weather has not stopped the force that is The Vet Centre Vets and Techs going out on farm and getting the job done for our valued farmers.

This year you will see some new faces, with new vets starting, some old vets returning to locum (really they can't stay away), there will also be some new faces at reception and about the clinics.

### Ticks, Ticks, Ticks!

Treat problem ticks with Bantix pour on – In stock at The Vet Centre today.



## Staff News

Coming back because they can't stay away are –

**Vet Don Thomas** comes back to us as a full time LA locum for 4 weeks January and February

**Vet Emily Buswell** is going to come and help us out for short stints in February

**Vet John Alawneh** will be coming back to us mid-February as a LA locum

Joining the Large animal crew –

**Vet Rosie Gillis** joined us in January as a full time mixed vet

**Vet Ellie Green** has joined us in January as part of the mixed vet team

**Vet Ashlee Larsen**, joined in January as a full time mixed graduate vet

**Vet Victor Sanders** joins us as a full time mixed vet locum for 9 weeks from March until May.

We have said farewell to Vet Finn Maloney and Nurse/Tech Emma Hitchcock who left us in January. Vet Alice Neville-Smith will also finish in March. They will be very much missed by the whole team and members alike.



Joke

**How do you count cows??**

**See back page>**

## Body Condition at Dry Off

It can be difficult to look ahead and make decisions around drying off cows that cut the profit made from milk now, in order to achieve adequate body condition targets at calving.

The late lactation period is filled with managing what remains of the once-nutritious pasture, balancing declining milk production with increasing BSCC's, and safeguarding young stock performance.

We all know we should target a condition score of 5 for mature cows and 5.5 for first and second calvers. This rule helps to promote production and early cycling, setting a good foundation and benchmark going into the next season. Although less profound, we also know that lower BCS results in poorer cow health and resilience at calving, as well as influencing the sex of the foetus and the future productive performance of any heifers in utero.

We are good at picking the skinny, low producers and drying them off, allowing them plenty of time to fatten before calving. Shifting the focus to a whole herd level, you can use tools such as those on the [dairynz.co.nz](http://dairynz.co.nz) website. We highly recommend visiting the website where you can test your own BCS skills. Also, there is a "dry off date to reach target BCS at calving calculator" to make more effective dry off and supplementation decisions that will be worthwhile for the next season. Body condition score each cow in the herd today.

## Liver Fluke in your herd or flock

Is liver fluke affecting the production of your herd or flock?

The Liver Fluke parasite (*Fasciola Hepatica*) is a major cause of chronic wasting in both cattle and sheep here in New Zealand. Infection can occur at any time during the year but is most prevalent during the spring and wet summers, with effects seen during the rest of the year.

Immature fluke migrates through and feeds off the liver, before developing into adult fluke in the bile ducts. This causes massive inflammation of the liver, with loss of blood and protein, resulting in production loss through ill-thrift, anaemia and anorexia.

Some white drenches will kill the mature flukes but the immature flukes will survive and continue causing damage. It is important to use a product that kills immature flukes during the maximum risk periods in wet times.

Don't get caught up in the herd "average condition" score, at this point in the season it is all about the individual cow and setting a strategy for her. The ability to gain condition in the dry period is frequently overestimated. Cows gain half a condition score per month in the dry period, but only if fed quality pasture and supplement. Allow for no gain in the first 10 days post dry off, nor in the month pre-calving.

Go to the DairyNZ website and test your skills and if you would like some help with condition scoring or advice on feeding management.

Get in touch with The Vet Centre today to speak with one of our vets.



### Condition Score Targets at calving

Mature cows



BCS 5.0

Heifers & Rising 3 year olds



BCS 5.5



No more than 15% of the herd below BCS 5.0 or above BCS 5.5

All drenches that effectively control liver fluke have significant withholding periods and varied levels of control. Given for many that the dry period is the only chance you will get the right product for the job.

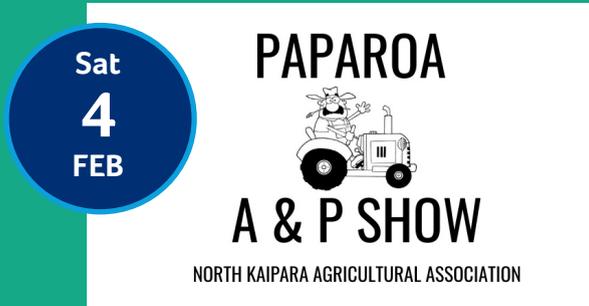
The Vet Centre have great drench products to control liver fluke – get in touch with the clinic today to discuss your options.



## Events

The Vet Centre are proud to be supporting the community through the appearance at the Paparoa A&P Show – Come and have a chat to the team.

We will also have the team representing The Vet Centre at The Northland Field Days – It would be great to see you there.



## Colic in the horse – time is of the essence!

By Vet Finn Maloney BVSc

Colic (borrowed from the French term colique) is defined as “severe pains that grip the abdomen.” While potentially seeming largely academic, this definition helps us understand the relatively common condition of equine colic. Often, when I discuss colic with horse owners, they refer to colic as a diagnosis; this is a common misinterpretation. Colic is the syndrome of abdominal pain that the horse is suffering leading to the multitude of signs we see. It is therefore a symptom, and not a diagnosis.

Luckily, the vast majority of colic cases the Vet Centre team attend are ‘medical’ colics that your vet will be able to treat on your property. These are typically managed with veterinary drugs to relieve pain, reduce spasm in the gut and, if necessary, sedate the horse. These cases may be due to: spasmodic colic, where the intestines spasm leading to pain, flatulence, where the presence of gas leads to distension of the intestines and pain, or impaction (blockage).

Unfortunately, some medical colic cases may require intensive treatment such as intravenous fluids, or more involved diagnostics that are better carried out by an equine specialist at a veterinary hospital. In addition, some colic cases require surgery – these must be referred early to have the best chance of success. The ‘wait and see’ approach in cases of severe, unrelenting colic where aggressive pain relief hasn’t helped can really reduce the chances of successful referral, if this is an option. My advice, having been in a similar situation recently, would be to communicate with your vet, discuss the options for your horse, and if referral to an equine hospital is possible and necessary, do it as quickly as possible.

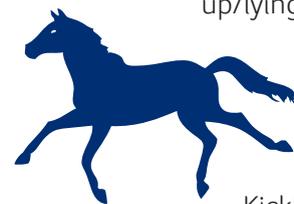
Your local Vet Centre is well suited to dealing with equine colic in the first opinion scenario. The Vet Centre has experienced vets, trained technicians, and understanding support staff that will ensure your horse is attended to in a timely manner.



Those of you with experience of colic in the horse will understand that it is often a dramatic and a stressful situation – your local Vet Centre team are fully aware of this and endeavour to do our best by you and your horse.

### What might colic look like?

- F flank watching
- Sweating
- Frequent getting up/lying down
- Rolling
- Pawing the ground
- Kicking at the abdomen



**! Unsure? Call your local Vet Centre clinic!**

Joke answer  
"With a  
cowculator!"



## Facial Eczema season is upon us

The Vet Centre promotes early prevention which in turn reduces loss of production and better liver and overall health. Blood testing, cull cow sheets for liver measuring and monitoring grass spore counting are all preventative options of facial eczema. The Vet Centre can provide zinc boluses as treatment.

Cows showing clinical signs of facial eczema can recover if prompt action is taken

Talk to our amazing team at your local clinic for options in preventing facial eczema.



Above: Returning locum Vet Don Thomas making breakfast for the team after early morning scanning.

### You can help by:

- ✓ Dry off affected cows now, to reduce pressure on the liver
- ✓ Put zinc cream on white areas of the coat and the udder (if affected)
- ✓ Move affected stock into dense shade. Indoors is best (hay-barn, calf-rearing and implement sheds) but make sure there is a good water supply and supplementary feed available for cows
- ✓ Feed cows at night so they are not exposed to sunlight, and stop hard grazing so cows do not graze down into dead matter where the spores that cause FE liveproperty. e.g. Contractors or hunters.
- ✓ Feeding maize and/or silage can help, but cows will still tend to graze if they are kept on pasture
- ✓ Make sure the diet is balanced, with good levels of energy and protein.