



The Vet Centre

WAIPU | RUAWAI | MANGAWHAI | MAUNGATUROTO | RUAKĀKĀ

April/May
2025



Howdy farmers

As we move into the more pleasant autumn months, there are many things happening on the farming front.

Spring dairy units are looking to "dry off," if not already started. Now is the time to book your dry cow/milk quality consult if you haven't already. Autumn is an ideal time to complete pre-winter checks, including trace element testing, by analysing liver samples taken through biopsy. Alternatively, blood testing 10 random cows in the herd would be your next best option. Also, consider drenching the herd with an Eprisure pour-on, with no withholding for milk. The younger stock could benefit from a boost of Multimin vitamins, along with drenching and weighing, to ensure growth rates are on target. Our vet techs are itching to come out on farm to help you trim all those feet that need a tidy trim and a pedicure before the wet weather.

Autumn dairy herds will be calving, which leads to calf disbudding,

metrchecking, curing, and pre-mating blood testing. Again, if you have not already done so, now is a good time to drench the herd with Eprisure pour-on, with no withholding for milk.

Sheep and beef units will have their rams already in the mob or ready to go. Ideally, the beef herds will have undergone pregnancy testing, completed vaccinations, and received a drench. Turbo or Boss pour-ons are both really reliable options at this time of year, before the high-risk period. For sheep, a good monthly drench regimen of Boss Sheep or Turbo Triple is important at this time of year. With any drenching, it is always good practice to check that the drench is working well by bringing in a sample of faeces to be tested at least 10 days post-drenching.

We can't forget about your working dogs. Did you know we stock a range of Black Hawk dog food?

REMINDER

For herds that have transitioned to the new Lepto 4way vaccine, please note that all stock will require two injections, 4–6 weeks apart.

Working dog food, ideal for working dogs. It features a high-endurance formula, rich in protein and fat, to promote sustained energy

release, strong lean muscles, and healthy joints and coats.

A 20kg bag is only \$174.79 including GST. For a 25kg dog, that's only **\$3.63 per day!** Less than a cup of coffee.



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Lifestyle News

We are pleased to introduce a place in our rural newsletter for the lifestyle farmers in our region. We would like to extend our knowledge and experience to help you keep on the right track, looking after your farm. Along with our valuable **Lifestyle Health Plans**, we offer important information to guide you throughout the farming year.

As the weather turns slightly cooler at night and the days become shorter, we can expect to see a downward trend in the incidence of many summertime diseases. During the summer, the incidence of facial eczema and barber's pole has been high. If we get a decent bout of rain through April, we may see a resurgence in these diseases, so be sure to remain vigilant and to treat preventatively as required.

Now is also a good time to give goats, ewes, and rams a thorough check-up and foot trim, ensuring they're happy, healthy, and fit for breeding.

Facial Eczema – Your sheep, cattle and alpaca should all be protected from facial eczema with zinc right now. Boluses, zinc pellets or oral zinc oxide are the most common ways to go.

Flystrike – Depending on what product you used for flystrike protection, you are likely going to need a second dose to keep your sheep protected throughout the high-risk season.

Weaning – Early Autumn is the best time to wean any big calves that are still on mum and give her a bit of a rest to put some condition back on before we get back into the cold and wet winter.

Drenching – It's essential to keep on top of drenching your young stock during this period, as autumn is a high-risk time of year, to ensure your young livestock are growing well and have a good head start before the cold weather arrives. Running faecal egg counts every 4 weeks during this time will help determine if your animals need to be drenched, particularly in alpacas, goats, and sheep under 2 years old. Keep a close eye out for pale conjunctivae (anaemia) during the warm and wet weather, especially after a little rain.

Are you looking for a healthcare solution for your lifestyle farm animals?

The Vet Centre Lifestyle Healthcare Plans include *EVERYTHING* your lifestyle block animals need on an annual basis to optimise health and prevent disease. Pop into your local Vet Centre and talk to one of the team about the best options for your livestock and our Lifestyle Healthcare Plans.

Rural Professional Events in the region – NORTHLAND

AGRIHEALTH – The Mastitis Game Plan

Maungaturoto Country Club
Tues 15th April 10.30am
RSVP needed

Whangarei, Barge Park.
Wed 16th April 10.30am
RSVP needed

DAIRY WOMEN'S NETWORK – Webinars, open to everyone

From grass to growth: mastering dairy farm budgets
Mon 7th April 1.30pm
Register online

LEVEL UP AS A BOSS; grow your team with confidence Pt2

Wed 9th April 12.30pm
Register online

B+LNZ AND BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS Making your Fertiliser Count Workshops

Maungaturoto Country Club
Wed 21st May, 10am
RSVP needed

MOLESWORTH SHEEP DOG TRIAL CLUB – 75th Jubilee Dog Trial

616 Oneriri Road
Friday 11th and Saturday 12th April - Morning



What did the little goats say when they were caught playing a prank on the sheep?

ANSWER ON PAGE 4



Gold Colostrum

What is “Gold” Colostrum and Why is it Important?



Ashlee Larsen
BVSc
Farm Vet

Gold colostrum is the first milking of colostrum from a healthy cow. It is nutrient-rich and contains the most antibodies of all milk produced.

Feeding adequate volumes of gold colostrum to newborn calves is critical to ensure their short-term and long-term health. This is largely due to calves being born with a poorly developed immune system and thus requiring the ‘passive transfer’ of antibodies from their mum by drinking colostrum. After ingestion, the antibodies are absorbed into the calf’s bloodstream, where they exert their infection-fighting properties to protect the calf. The high nutritional content is also important to kick-start energy and growth requirements.

But there is a catch! The calf can only absorb these crucial antibodies for a limited time. Calves that have not received enough antibodies suffer from a syndrome known as ‘failure of passive transfer’ (FPT). Evidence suggests that this condition increases the likelihood of farmer-reported health events and is associated with higher mortality rates in calves (Cuttance et al., 2018). In the long term, FPT is also associated with reduced growth rates and decreased reproductive

success in adult cows. Therefore, colostrum management has lifetime consequences!

How can we ensure colostrum protects our calves?

Remember the 3 Q’s: feed calves an adequate **quantity** of good-**quality** colostrum **quickly**!

Quickly:

- Newborn calves need gold colostrum within the first 12 hours of life.
- This is because calves can only efficiently absorb antibodies in colostrum for the first 6-12 hours of life. After 12 hours, only 5% of antibodies can be absorbed, and by 24 hours, no further absorption takes place, and the ship has sailed!

Quantity:

- Calves should receive 10 - 15% of their body weight (4 - 6 litres) of gold colostrum within the first 12 hours of life. Achieving this generally requires picking up calves twice daily and feeding them colostrum in the shed.*
- However, because a calf can only hold 2 litres in the stomach compartment, two feeds within 12 hours is the target. Calves should be fed 2 litres of gold colostrum as soon as possible, followed by another 2 litres later in the day.

Quality:

- Colostrum quality is measured by the antibody concentration (the higher the better!). Colostrum produced immediately after calving contains the highest levels of antibodies, but can still vary significantly between individuals
- We can assess the quality of colostrum using a device called a Brix Refractometer to measure antibody levels.
- Gold colostrum = 22+ on brix refractometer → to be fed to calves <1 day age
- Transitional milk = 19 - 21 on brix refractometer → to be fed to calves 2 - 4 days age
- Lower antibody milk = < 21 on brix refractometer → to be fed to calves > 4 days age
- Quality can be improved by ensuring good maternal nutrition and vaccinating cows to ensure they have high levels of circulating antibodies, which they can pass on to their offspring. Healthy dams promote healthy calves!
- Reducing bacterial contamination is also crucial for maintaining good quality. Collect colostrum into clean buckets and wash regularly to ensure good hygiene. Feed the youngest calves first, then older calves, and finally sick calves last.
- Colostrum that is not fed immediately should be stored properly. It should be kept in a lidded drum or vat and ideally refrigerated or frozen. Alternatively, you could consider

Potassium Sorbate Colostrum Preserver

Potassium Sorbate is chemical food preservative routinely used in the food, wine and animal feed industries to inhibit bacterial growth.

PACKS: 1kg, 2kg, 5kg and 25kg





← adding a preservative agent such as potassium sorbate

*** But picking up calves twice daily is not practical for our farm!**

In some herds, adequate colostrum intake can be achieved by leaving the calf in the paddock with the dam to allow natural suckling.

A recent study assessed the likelihood of FPT in New Zealand pastoral farms and compared the natural mothering method with the farmer-provided colostrum method. Overall, the more successful strategy varied and depended largely on individual farm and animal factors (Mason et al, 2022). Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all rule here.

If your farm practices daily pickup or less, we can determine if your calves receive sufficient colostrum from the dam with a simple set of blood tests. Book for one of our techs to take 10-12 blood samples from newborn calves BEFORE they receive their first feed in the calf shed. The vet will inform you of the results and the best plan for your farm.

References:

E.L. Cuttance, W.A. Mason, R.A. Laven, C.V.C. Phyn, *The relationship between failure of passive transfer and mortality, farmer-recorded animal health events and body weights of calves from birth until 12 months of age on pasture-based, seasonal calving dairy farms in New Zealand*, The Veterinary Journal, Volume 236, 2018, Pages 4-11.

W.A. Mason, E.L. Cuttance, R.A. Laven, *The transfer of passive immunity in calves born at pasture*, Journal of Dairy Science, Volume 105, Issue 7, 2022, Pages 6271-6289.

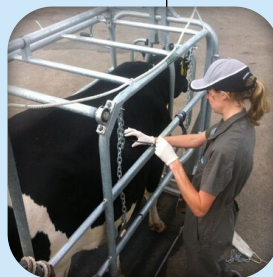


Sorry,
we were just kidding.

Liver biopsy

Did you know Copper is at its lowest concentration during the winter, which makes autumn (now) the most important time to assess copper reserves to know if supplementation is required.

There are several methods for checking copper levels in cattle, including a blood test that examines serum copper levels. However, serum copper levels only decrease once all reserves have been depleted. This is often compared to the “tap and reservoir” analogy. The copper will continue to flow out of the ‘tap’ (serum) at constant levels until the copper in the reservoir has completely run out. So, to accurately look at an animal’s copper levels, we need to see how much copper is in the reservoir. For cattle, the liver serves as the reservoir. Copper is stored in the liver and released into the bloodstream. The only way to identify these copper reserves is to perform a liver biopsy.



Kallum Green
Rural Tech

The liver biopsy procedure involves drafting out 10 randomly selected cows for the vet to sample. The vet will then administer a local anaesthetic to numb the area

where the probe is to be inserted. The probe is inserted between the ribs into the liver to obtain a small amount of tissue, which is sent to the lab for testing. No post-op check, stitches, or additional pain relief is generally required.

Knowing your herd’s copper status helps make informed decisions about copper supplementation, ensuring that we do not over- or underdose your animals, and provides an indication of when the animal should next receive supplementation. Additional trace element testing, including selenium, B12, and zinc, can also be performed using the collected liver tissue.

PERFORMANCE READY ON EVERY FIELD

ASK YOUR VET FOR MULTIMIN

29 Cu Copper	30 Zn Zinc	25 Mn Manganese	34 Se Selenium
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Waipu Clinic

53 The Centre
Waipu
P 09 432 0693

Opening Hours

Monday–Friday:
8.00am–5.00pm
Saturdays:
9.00am–12.30pm

Ruawai Clinic

23 Jellicoe Road
Ruawai
P 09 439 2506

Opening Hours

Monday–Friday:
8.00am–5.00pm
Saturdays: CLOSED

Mangawhai Clinic

36 Moir St
Mangawhai
P 09 431 4535

Opening Hours

Monday–Friday:
8.00am–5.00pm
Saturdays:
9.00am–12:30pm

Maungaturoto Clinic

184 Hurdall St
Maungaturoto
P 09 431 8318

Opening Hours

Monday–Friday:
8.00am–5.00pm
Saturdays: CLOSED

Ruakākā Clinic

385 Marsden Point Road
Ruakākā
P 09 433 4916

Opening Hours

Monday–Friday:
8.00am–5.00pm
Saturdays: CLOSED