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24 Hour Emergency Vet Service

## JUNE 2011 NEWSLETTER

### Clinic News

Please note that for the July 1 Canada Day holiday the clinic will be open 7am to 12 am but there will be no regular delivery service. Veterinarians will be on call for emergencies.

### Announcements

**June is Dairy Month!** We as veterinarians in partnership with you the milk producer have to strive to provide the highest quality pure milk possible for sale in Ontario. The industry demands it and the consumer whom we serve and protect must get it for this special trust to continue.

We are now providing Charm (Beta-Lactam, Tetracycline, and Sulpha) Inhibitor Milk Residue Tests which have a quick turnaround for results. Linwood Veterinary Services will test your milk samples submitted based on the antibiotics you request testing for. \* Linwood Vet cannot verify the source of the sample, what drugs were used on the animals or whether the drugs were used off label, and therefore cannot guarantee test results.

**Waterloo Cattleman's** Annual Bus Trip is July 12 2011- Touring Farms in Simcoe County. Call Jones Feed Mills to Register 519-698-2082

## **Why do cows stop eating?**

Milk production's highest expense is the cost of feed.

Therefore, attention has to been given to ration formulation, ration monitoring, using high quality forages as well as evaluating the cost of ration inputs to maximum milk production and maintain proper cow health.

How to get individual cows to eat enough feed can often be a major challenge on dairy farms.

Why cows stop eating:

### **1. NDF (Neutral Detergent Fibre)**

Cows stop eating when they are full. This sounds simple but the rumen needs NDF to stimulate appetite and to function properly as a ruminant. The ration NDF level is directly correlated to the amount of ration fibre. A cow eats approximately 1.3 percent of her body weight in NDF fibre per day. A properly balanced ration ensures that the NDF level in the ration is correct. If ration dry matter changes, this affect the as-fed amount of NDF the cow consumes and may result in underfeeding or overfeeding cows. Without nutrient analyses, you cannot know the amount of NDF in the TMR. If you underfeed NDF, you are not providing enough fibre for the cow to maintain proper rumen health. On the other hand if you are overfeeding NDF, this has the effect of reducing the energy concentration of the ration. A move either way has a negative impact on a cow's health.

### **2. Rumen pH level.**

The pH level of the rumen drops after a meal because starches and other easily digestible components are converted to acids; the cow stops eating and starts to ruminate. This rumination provides salivary sodium bicarbonate to the rumen to buffer the effects of the lowered rumen pH. If your herd has sub-acute rumen acidosis (SARA), cows will not have inconsistent intakes because cows stop eating too quickly when that rumen pH drops. Rations can be properly formulated to prevent SARA, but improper feed handling and delivery is a risk factor for this disease. If cows are sorting or the feed is not delivered on a consistent basis, a herd may suffer from SARA. Common errors are if the TMR is too dry or not mixed properly and too large a particle size.

### **3. No feed available.**

Empty bunk syndrome. With feed cost high, it can be tempting to try to cut costs by making cows clean up all feed. A reasonable goal is to have at least 5 percent of feed refused. However this should be closer to 10%, in situations where feed is not consistently available, weather affects intakes, or pens and bunk space is crowded. A hungry cow

with no feed to eat is extremely undesirable. Feed must be available when cows are done milking to promote maximum intakes. Try to increase the frequency of pushing up feed since this also improves interest in eating.

#### **4. Overcrowding/competition.**

Do cows have to compete for a place to ruminate and rest? Overcrowding cows or bunk space will lower intakes and is also a risk factor for SARA. Some risk factors are heifers competing with cows, lameness issues and feed bunk management.

#### **5. Illness.**

Individual cows will not eat if they do not feel well. Lame cows do not eat. Ketotic/metabolic cows do not eat. Cows with fevers do not eat. An off feed cow needs to be examined, diagnosed, treated and evaluated for follow-up care. This cow can potentially be an early warning sign of a larger herd health issue and should not be ignored.

#### **6. Heat stress/poor ventilation.**

Evaluate your facilities for cow comfort before the summer heat arrives. Heat impacts not just the cow's appetite but the actual feed quality with increased spoilage to reduce intake further.

Consult with your veterinarian and nutritionist as to whether anything is limiting feed intake.

## **Fly Control on Pasture Cattle is Critical**

It's that time of year when all livestock producers should be implementing fly management strategies. There are several management decisions that can be made that will greatly decrease fly populations in and around livestock facilities. Fly control should be viewed as having a positive economic impact on your livestock operation.

The economic loss due to fly infestation in pasture cattle is directly related to decreased weight gain and animal treatments. The three major ways that flies reduce performance are through reduced grazing (because cattle are searching for a way to ease the irritation), the result of sucking blood from the cattle, and through the spreading of disease. Horn and face flies are the two major flies that cause problems for beef cattle producers.

Horn flies are small, about half the size of a housefly, and usually concentrate on the withers, back, sides and the underline (where most of the biting occurs). Reduced weight gain from horn flies is caused by irritation (and the resulting decreased grazing time) and blood loss. As few as 50 horn flies per animal can be enough to negatively impact performance and 500/animal can remove up 200ml of blood per day.

Face flies more closely resemble houseflies. They concentrate around the eyes, nose and mouth where they feed on the mucosa found in those areas. Since face flies congregate around the eyes and can carry the causative agent of pinkeye, controlling them can help slow or limit the spread of pinkeye. The spread of pinkeye by face flies makes their economic impact two-fold. The disease reduces average daily gain in calves and performance of cows but also reduces the value per pound of calves at marketing due to eye problems.

Several methods, and many products within those methods, are available to control flies. These methods include slow-release ear tags, sprays, rubs and dusts. The most common methods seem to be ear tags and rubs. The chemicals that these methods deliver include pyrethroids, organophosphates (OPs), organochlorines and endectocides (pour ons).

Consider these factors when choosing a fly control program:

- Young cattle require more attention than cows and bulls because prevention has a direct economic affect through average daily gain. They also are more susceptible to pinkeye.
- Fly tags are convenient but should be used in combination with other methods to achieve full-season protection. - Use sprays or rubs early in the season and ear tags as late as economically reasonable.
- Horn flies quickly develop resistance to first generation pyrethroids. - New formulations are slower to build resistance.

Other flies occasionally impact grazing livestock. Many of these flies, such as heel or horsefly reproduce in areas of the farm that have standing water. Controlling these types is nearly impossible. In many cases the only relief livestock receive is through utilization of shelters Once again, the producer that starts early will most likely succeed but if you wait until fly numbers are out of control you may require a different approach to fly management.

Always remember to:

- Strictly follow label directions.
- Remove old tags at the end of the season.
- Alternate fly tag insecticides each year.
- Use plastic gloves when handling fly tags or insecticides.
- Keep records on what insecticide you use from year to year.