

Where's it all going?

David Haugh BVSc

A neighbour of mine once lamented that two days after he had mowed his lawn in the spring it was like the regrowth was giving him the fingers. I remembered this recently when I heard a discussion on the radio where a Dairy NZ spokesman was saying farmers wanted the mitigating effect of their trees and shrubs to be entered into the farm greenhouse gas equation. Some anonymous person then text or emailed the radio station and had their contribution read out..."What's next, my roses and lawn?" This comment was meant to be very dismissive but it raises a valid point. Why are pasture and fodder crops not entered into the farm gas equation? The data tells us their CO2 captured is comparable with trees! Adversaries would argue the pasture is soon eaten and some is converted into methane. But if it is a good thing to grow crops to convert to ethanol (to be burnt in engines and boilers) or for industries to mitigate their emissions by buying carbon credits from forests capturing CO2, then why can't farmers use carbon credits from pasture and fodder crops they grow? To me it's not a question of science but one of marketing and politics.

In a world where it is getting harder and harder to know who and what to believe, I guess the best approach is to be pragmatic and work with the hand we are dealt. We can probably look forward to more and more



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severe weather events...more floods, more droughts and more very hot weather. Drainage and flood mitigation need serious consideration. Do you need new "escape" gates in low paddocks? Should you be planting more, tough, deciduous trees for stock shade? Where would you put a dam if the next few summers made it clear you needed one? Are your buildings easy to defend from bush fire?

RMT or paddle test high SCC cows after herd test.

The world human population has just passed 8 billion. It was 4 billion in 1974 and 2 billion in 1927, apparently. I have read that this explosive growth is not forecast to continue like this....because nature has ways of pushing back. Just as well, because I wonder if 16 billion people, in 48 years' time, could afford the land, water and fertilizer usage, land and atmospheric emissions of animal agriculture. But even if it doesn't get that crazy, 'environmental demands/taxes' (gas emissions, fertiliser runoff, water usage, waste disposal....) will get heavier and heavier. The pressure to use flat/easy farm land for horticulture, cropping

and housing people will increase as will the pressure to use hill country for trees. Plant based and animal cell cultured (grown in vats) 'meat' will, in a few years, be cheaper and much more environmentally friendly to produce than the real thing. Some of the big drug companies, like Zoetis, are turning away from anthelmintic research and concentrating on sophisticated new drugs that will be expensive and destined for the companion animal market. Animal agriculture of the future will have to get

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Wellsford
VET CLINIC

The Mad Cow
Client Newsletter

116 Rodney Street, Wellsford 0900. Ph 09 4238 008 Fax 09 4328 178

Vet Clinic Staff

Vets

David Haugh

Olaf Klein

Celine Lye

Steve McAulay *CEO*

Nena Nepia

Nurses

Nikki Humfrey

Aliscia Vujcich

Accounts

Steph Treadwell

Receptionist

Karen Partridge

Opening stanza

Stephen McAulay BVSc

Most farms have reported that any rain at this time of year is good rain. We currently do need reminding about how good it really is.

Mating is winding down on most dairy farms with the bulls having been turned out into the herd. Care is still required to ensure good results. Bulls showing dominant behaviour, especially holding cows up on the race, should be "benched" to see if the behaviour is removed from the remaining bulls in the team. A dominant bull may prevent other bulls from being mated!

BVD testing and vaccinating has again been low this year. We had BVD outbreaks (large numbers of calves identified as being PI's) on two dairy farms with 25 PI's identified. This is a tragedy and the hidden increase in empty cows is often overlooked! Test and vaccinate service bulls.

David Haugh is retiring at Christmas. David started as a veterinarian with the Wellsford Clinic on the 5th January 2009. Much has changed in our area in the last 14 years and David has continuously "put his best foot forward" every day since then. He has been an invaluable member of our veterinary team and community. We will miss his contribution and thank him for his dedication, veterinary knowledge and being an all round "good bugger".

David has diligently reviewed our "Mad Cow" Newsletter articles and made us all appear literally smarter than we are. He has contributed two articles this month and I always enjoy the view he provides, I trust you will too.

Wobbly, blind weaners

David Haugh BVSc

This is my annual reminder about Polioencephalomalacia aka Cerebro Cortical Necrosis. It is a sporadic, brain disease that is caused by acute thiamine (vitamin B1) deficiency. In stock, the microbes that live in the reticulorumen doing their cellulose digestion thing also make vit B1 for their host. Something stops that process. Over about a week the animals become progressively more in-coordinated and they go blind (although there is nothing wrong with their eyes), they go down and eventually fit and die. You can save all but the most

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advanced cases simply by injecting plenty of Vit B1. It can be quite amazing. Apparently sheep can be affected in big numbers but in cattle I have seen it only in ones, twos or threes usually in animals under two years old but mostly in spring born, dairy weaners in November, December and January.

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Parasites and Growth

Olaf Klein DrVetMed

The importance of parasite control remains undisputed but opinions on how to go about it have changed over time. Concepts of how to improve development of immunity in livestock population have been proposed, modified, discarded and re-invented. The research findings on the life cycle of nematodes like lungworms for example remains largely unchanged though. The mechanisms of how the parasitic worm ensures its survival is mind bogglingly intricate, it involves the development of three larval stages in the external environment (paddock). The third and final larval stage gets eaten and travels from the intestine via the bloodstream into the lungs. In the lung tissue the larvae develop into the adult worm this is where the lasting tissue damage is done, it takes a long time to heal and will seriously impact on development and growth of the animal. The adult worm causes congestion of the airways all the while it produces eggs which get coughed up and ingested to develop to stage one larvae to be excreted with the faeces maintaining the cycle.

It is the damage to the tissue of the host that determines the rate of setback in liveweight gains, this applies to young animals in particular because with age the host's immune response improves. In cattle we are focussing on the first year of development and animals under 200 kg liveweight in particular. These animals should be drenched at least

**< 81% herd
3-week
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every six weeks with a product that has 3 active components all these products have a mectin component, a wide range of activity as well as a longer duration than the old white drenches. Wet weather and moderate temperatures favour the development of stage 3 larvae of all nematodes. In other words it is the early grazing period that presents the greatest challenge, mid to late summer when things get dry, worm larvae have a lot harder time to build up numbers. Now is the time of challenge, that exposure is the highest and weaner calves are still too young to mount an adequate immune response.

**> 90% herd
3 week
submission rate**
**Top farmers
achieve**
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Go give them a leg up.

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David Haugh BVSc

smarter and smarter and cater to more and more specialised markets to stay profitable. If anyone can make it without subsidies, my guess is NZ can.

What about veterinary practice in the future? Companion animal practice will continue to follow the human medicine model, but still without someone else paying. Treatment options for those who can afford it will be more and more amazing. But when I look into the crystal ball for vision of what farm animal practice will be like...I just don't know. Maybe rural towns will have veterinary technician businesses. Like other trades, any afterhours service they provide will be governed by market forces and not legislation decree. Maybe the vet, employed by say...the local dairy company... will be in

an office in the corner of that company's retail outlet. Occasionally the door will be shut, if an on-farm manager is in there discussing an animal health/production issue. But, you know, most of that sort of thing will go on with the big bosses, at the farm corporation headquarters on the 10th floor in the city with the corporation's own vet, who will also work on the 10th floor. Mostly though, the door to the vet at the retail outlet will be open to facilitate the foot traffic of those wanting stuff signed off. Maybe some kid in the future, who has inherited his or her rifle from their grandfather, will wonder why granddad gave his farm rifle a guy's name and who the hell anyway was James Herriot?

Remove Service Bull 74 days after start of mating

Theileria

Nena Nepia BVSc

Theileria is a microscopic blood parasite that made its debut in New Zealand around 2012 and has since become endemic in Northland. For cattle born in the area, their immune system slowly learns to cope with a small burden of Theileria without any significant ill effects. We do see the occasional cow with clinical illness due to the parasite – causing anaemia, ill-thrift, lethargy and possibly death. There is usually also a co-morbidity challenging the immune system of the animal, eg BVD or recent calving. Most at risk are young (2-4) month old calves going through weaning or other stressors, and naïve stock trucked in from other parts of NZ and exposed to a large burden of the parasite at once. There is no treatment for

Theileria directly, other than a special drug Buparvaquone that isn't used practically due to its extended milk and meat withhold periods (18months!). Because the parasite is spread by ticks, focusing on tick control will help, particularly with younger stock. In heifers, you can monitor for anaemia by checking the membrane colour of the vulva – it should be pink rather than white, pale or yellow (open up the vulva and look at the colouring inside).

Replacement Lepto/5in1 boosters are now due

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