



# Veterinary Centre MoozNews

## Early Pregnancy Test Results

**Hamish Newton BVSc PhD – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**

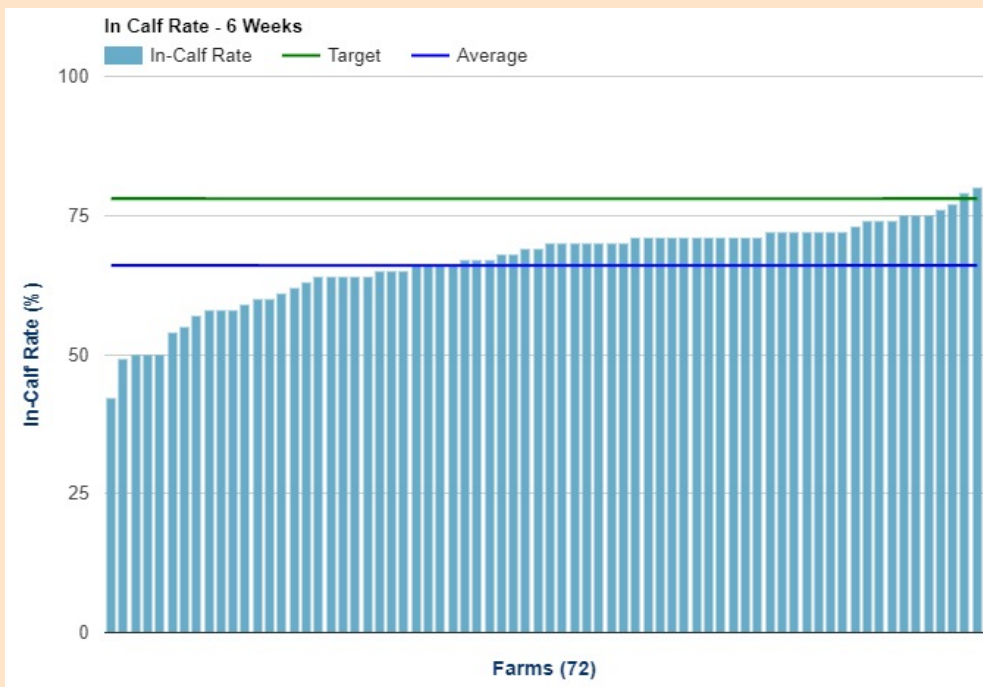


The key measures of optimal reproductive performance are the 6-week-In-Calf-Rate (6w-ICR) and the final not-in-calf rate. To achieve the industry target of a 78% 6w- ICR you will need a >90% 21-day submission rate and >60% CR.

At the time of writing, we were able to benchmark 72 farms that have done an early pregnancy test in our practice. Currently the

average 6w-ICR is sitting at 66%, whereas 2021/22 season this was 67%, in 2020/21 69% and in 2019/20 it was 65%. This season the 3 week Submission Rate (SR) was 79%, compared to 80% last season.

The green line below indicates the industry target goal of 78% (of which two farms have currently achieved this).



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*Introducing*

**Mikaela Crawford BVSc**  
**VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate**

I grew up in Northland so I have ventured quite far from home! I spent a lot of time on a beef farm as a kid which ignited my passion for veterinary medicine and cattle. I am passionate about reproduction and nutrition in the dairy industry, as well as calf health.

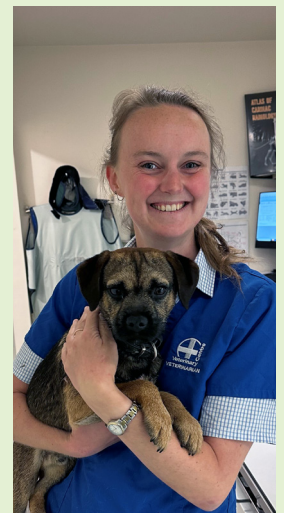
Outside of work I am keen to have a go at the Frisbee Golf course here in Waimate after playing Ultimate Frisbee competitively for 3 years up in Palmerston North. You might also catch me playing tennis and netball! Scenic walks are also a common occurrence for me on the weekends.



**Catherine Nelson BVSc**  
**VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru**

I was born in Coventry, England and moved with my family to sunny Blenheim in 2007. Despite being away from the UK for 15 years, I still have the residual accent and addiction to tea. Outside of work, I can usually be found hiking, riding horses, swimming, at the gym, listening to music or spinning a yarn with friends and family.

In the dairy industry, I have a particular interest in lameness and reproduction, but I’m very excited to get stuck into all aspects of the job.



# TeatCHECK – the cow’s early warning system!



**Ryan Luckman BVSc (Dist) MANZCVS (Epidemiology) – VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate**

In last month’s newsletter we outlined TeatCHECK, a service where our tech team scores teats, teat spraying, and other mastitis risk factors to preemptively find farms that may benefit from making some changes (NOW) to help ensure the cows are dried off at the end of the season in the best teat condition possible.

## What have we found so far?

### Teat Condition:

A lot of farms have had significant amounts of teat end damage. This is worrying when you consider that there are still four more months of milking, during a period of reducing milk volumes which only tends to increase the risk factors for teat end damage. To date only 9/34 farms have been above the target line, with the bottom 9 farms having 30-50% of teats showing signs of damage.

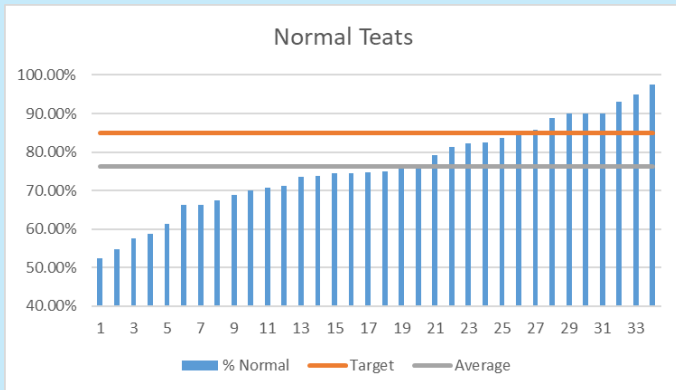
- Insufficient pressure in automatic teat sprayers (+ incorrect angling/ sensors)
- Untrimmed tails
- Staff awareness / training (including cupping technique, teatspray technique etc)

One of the interesting findings has been that some low cell count herds are still starting to see significant amounts of teat end damage. Currently they aren’t seeing increases in cell count or mastitis, BUT they have typically had excellent teat spray coverage, good tail/ udder hygiene, and low mastitis pressure within the herd. They therefore have a very low mastitis bug challenge at the moment so the damage isn’t causing clinical issues. HOWEVER, we are concerned that if the trend continues that they may put themselves at risk in Spring when the challenge markedly increases.

### How do you sign up?

We will be in touch with all farms in the next 2 months to find out if you would like to sign up for a TeatCHECK visit, however if you want to find out your score ASAP then please get in touch. We will be charging \$165 (incl) + travel per farm, which will include the visit itself, a comprehensive report, and some practice wide benchmarking. As discussed some farms may require a further visit from one of our trained mastitis advisors if we need to help diagnose the underlying cause of teat issues – note this would be a separate offering/charge.

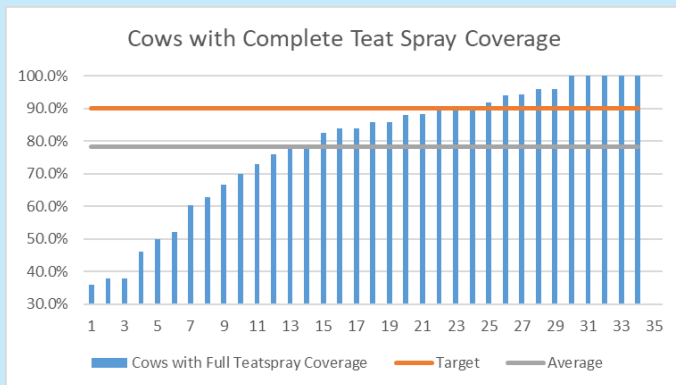
As part of this benchmarking project we are hoping to get at least 100 farms enrolled this Autumn. This will give us a true sense of the state of teat condition within the practice, plus give us some real clarity on what is achievable (and what is unacceptable). So if you’re keen to CHECK your Teats then get in touch with the clinic!



### Teat Spray Coverage:

On some farms as few as 35% of cows were getting adequate teat spray on all 4 teats. Only 5/34 farms had a system that was getting “every teat, every milking”. Given that we know correct teat spraying will reduce mastitis by 50%, there are a lot of cows being put at unnecessary risk! These farms were a mix of manual and automatic teat sprayers.

There were also a lot of issues with teat spray mixing, often due to unclear instructions for staff who were mixing at incorrect rates.



### Got a problem, what can you do?

For farms with major issues we recommend a follow-up visit to investigate any risk factors that may be affecting teat health. Here we can work through a plan specific to your farm to help make changes that should minimise the impact on the teats over the remainder of the season. We are still working through some visits, but to date some of the common findings have been:

- High vacuum pressure
- ACR settings keeping cups on too long (haven’t been adjusted for stage of season)
- Milking routine (especially in herringbones)
- Faulty gauges



**Johne's News**

**Andrew Muir BVSc BSc (Hons)**  
VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

- Everyone is in the thick of pregnancy testing at the moment. When you know what the reproductive performance of the herd is, it can be a time to consider testing for Johne’s. It is impossible to give an exact number that will go positive the first time you test for it. However experience shows about 3-5% of the herd will go positive at the first test, with outliers above and below depending on the amount of infection in the herd. Talk with your prime vet if you are considering it.
- If you have already tested this season.
  - Don’t forget to blood test the suspects.
  - If you are looking to get some culls away soon put the high positive and positive Johne’s cows to the top of your culling list. Even if they are looking healthy, they are just pushing out more bacteria onto the farm the longer they stay around.

- If you have find a cow with clinical Johne’s (watery bubbly scour, bottle jaw, weight loss) get her tested and removed from the farm straight away. If you are waiting for a petfood company to come and collect her, ensure she isn’t put near calf paddocks.



# Milk Persistence – Flattening the Curve

Con Ten Cate BVSc – VETERINARY CENTRE Oamaru

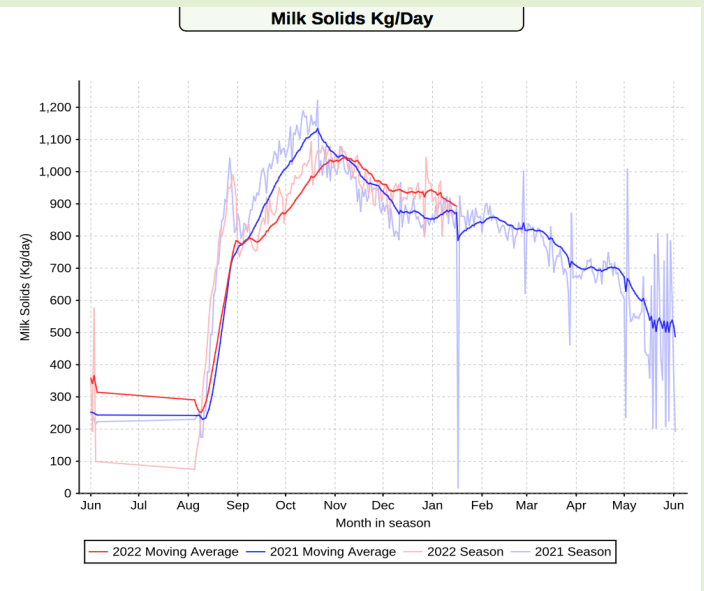
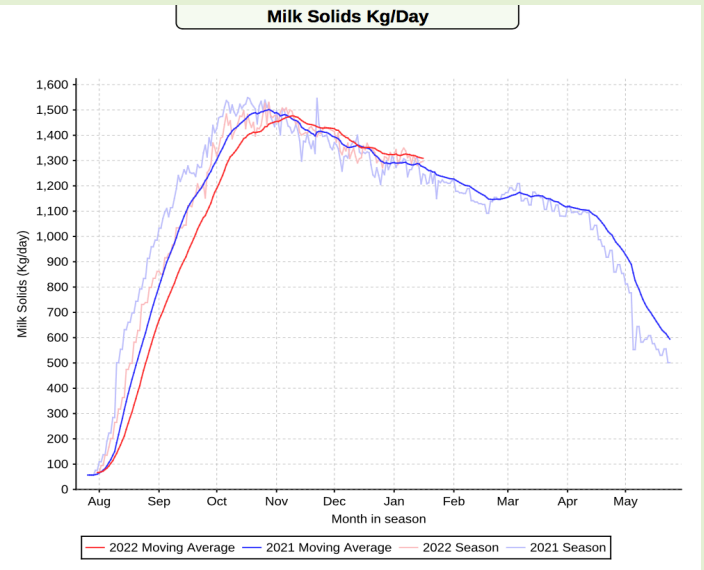


The milk curve is a graphic illustration of milk production of our cows during lactation. It can be split into three phases. The increasing phase, maintenance phase and decreasing phase. The decreasing phase is commonly known as lactation or milk persistence. A steep decrease indicates poor persistence, and a flat decrease indicates good persistence.

Several factors play a role in lactation persistence, and every year we see slightly different trends across our region. Overall, North Otago tends to have better milk persistence than the national average, with a 7% drop in milk production from peak to 31st December compared to 10%. Animal health, genetics, herd management and on farm developments like irrigation affect the persistence on a farm level, but at a regional level, changes in the weather tend to have the biggest impact.

This season, several of our farms had a lower and later peak production, with improved milk persistence compared to the 21/22 season. This later and lower peak is not too surprising with the slow spring we had, and warmer temperatures only coming through in late October, delaying the peak. These warmer temperatures combined with the higher rainfall we had in November helped the cows to hold milk production after the peak, improving the persistence compared with last season.

See InfoVet graphs (right side) of a couple farms in our region comparing the 21/22 (blue line) and 22/23 (red line) seasons showing this trend. As always, there is a lot of variability between farms and not all farms follow this trend.

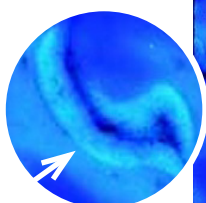


## Polioencephalomalacia

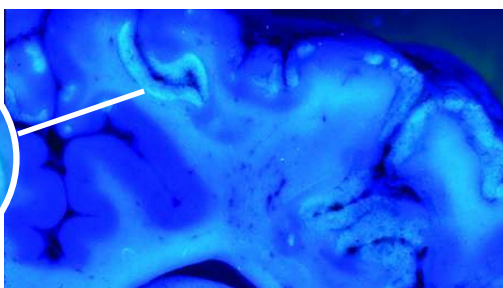
We are once again seeing several cases of P.E. (polioencephalomalacia), a nervous disease seen primarily in calves and younger stock. P.E. is caused by a lack of vitamin B1 (not to be confused with a cobalt deficiency, which is associated with a vitamin B12 deficiency). P.E is thought to be nutritionally induced, when there is a sudden change in diet from starchy, higher DM diet, to a lush, low fibre diet. A high dietary sulphur intake, especially with brassicas, has also been incriminated as a cause of P.E.

Calves with P.E. appear blind, may walk aimlessly, appear wobbly, have muscle tremors and head press. If calves are treated early in the disease process with a series of vitamin B1 injections, survival rates are good. In an outbreak situation we have had good success, by prophylactically treating the remaining, unaffected calves, in the group with an oral vitamin B1 drench. This has proved a very cost effective preventative measure.

The brain of a calf with PE, fluoresces under a UV light.



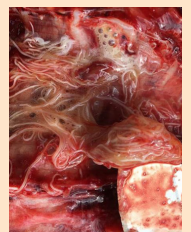
Fluorescence



## Reminders in February

### Lung worm

We saw numerous cases of lung worm outbreaks in January. Lungworm typically affects younger stock but we have had environmental conditions (earlier in season) that promoted larval survival on pasture. This season older animals have been affected as well. Lungworm is sensitive to most drenches - contact your Blue Cross Vet for advice.



### Pink Eye

The practice is seeing an increasing number of cases of Pinkeye. This is a contagious disease of calves spread primarily by close contact with infected animals and by flies. Vaccination with Piliguard (A8192 RVM) can be a cost effective control method although vaccination must be given prior to disease occurring. In the affected animals topical ointments or sub-conjunctival injections with appropriate antibiotics are usually effective in curing the affected animals.





**Hamish Newton BVSc, PhD**  
Oamaru Veterinary Centre

# UdderNEWS



## Please record your clinical mastitis cases

The rules are getting more restrictive about being able to use whole herd antibiotic dry cow therapy (DCT). Most of you are steadily transitioning away from whole herd antibiotic DCT and are comfortable with it. However some herds will still require whole herd antibiotic DCT but there are criteria that the Vet Council are expecting us as the authorising vets to have met, to authorise the usage of whole herd antibiotic DCT. Two of the five criteria are based on the incidence rate of clinical mastitis (number of cases per 100 cows). One of these measures is the amount of dry period mastitis – this is traditionally very poorly recorded – if you did have some please record it into MINDA. Even if you are not considering using whole herd antibiotic DCT please get your mastitis records entered in MINDA as this data is also valuable for making decisions at the individual cow level.

To make the best decisions regarding a cow at drying off for selective DCT (is she a high or low risk of having an infection?) we do need data. Herd test data is the best, and the addition of her treatment history (clinical mastitis records) is likely to make a difference to an individual cow. Interestingly the proportion of cows correctly classified does not seem to have altered much (in some papers that have looked at the best decision-making rules) whether mastitis data is included or excluded, but these results are at a population level not for an individual cow. An individual cow is either infected or clean, not 70% infected, so please enter your mastitis data.



## Staph aureus testing

While talking about herd testing remember there is the option of selecting cows to be tested to see if they are carrying Staph aureus using the milk samples already collected at herd testing time. With this test you can select cows to be tested. One approach is to test all your potential culls. If a potential cull cow is negative for Staph she is more likely to stay than a positive cow, if you can't cull every cow you want.

## ECLIPSE

Pour-On for Cattle

Ideal for use in R1 and R2 stock where Cooperia & Ostertagia control is necessary.

Actives:

- Abamectin
- Levamisole

Dose Rate  
1ml/20kg

120kg Calf Dose (excl GST)  
**\$1.36**

5 Litre  
**\$1299.00**  
Incl GST

## ECLIPSE E

Injection with B<sub>12</sub> and Se

Treat parasites as well as selenium and cobalt deficiency in one injection

Actives:

- Eprinomectin
- Levamisole

Dose Rate  
1ml/35kg

120kg Calf Dose (excl GST)  
**\$1.90**

500mL  
**\$319.00**  
Incl GST

# Heifer Mating – A Success Story in the Making

**Jess McKenzie BVSc(Dist.) – VETERINARY CENTRE Waimate**

For the past 6 years, I have looked after the R1 & R2 heifers from a small dairy farm in the Marlborough region. 50 are sent down to Waimate for grazing each year, arriving as R1's in December and leaving as R2's ready to calve the following June.

At the start of this journey, we were getting average reproduction results to a heifer CIDR Cosynch programme followed up with bulls. The first couple of years, we were only achieving a 53% conception rate (CR) to the CIDR with 4-5% empty after a 9 week mating – which was a little disappointing.

Changes were made – we concentrated on consistent feeding, especially throughout dry summers watching feed quality issues as well as adequate winter feeding which had historically been an issue.

From here, things got better – growth rates were more consistent and heifers were not falling behind during winter. We were achieving target weights by mating however were still only achieving 58% CR to the CIDR and 3-4% empty.

When everything else was going right, we then shifted the focus to ensuring that these heifers were on a rising plane of nutrition in the 4-6 weeks prior to mating – **this is when the real gains were made**. For the last two years we have made this a priority and achieved 63% CR to CIDR and 2% empty last year, and a stunning result this year with **73% CR to CIDR and 0% empty**.

We were lucky with the rain this July/Aug and managed to maintain growth rates of 700g/day by opening breaks up in the wet – when a lot of others could not. These heifers were on oats/grass + baleage diet over winter with plenty of feed available. No two seasons

are quite the same - each one is different with what it throws at you and this one has been no exception!

Consistent and adequate feeding throughout the year is always important with youngstock. However, ensuring that heifers are on a rising plane of nutrition in the lead up to mating should also be a priority. There have been some variable results with conception rates to heifer CIDR programmes the last few years, with many not achieving what these young animals should be capable of (60%+) despite being reasonably well grown. It is a big investment in both time and money, so consider heifer nutrition in the lead up to mating a focus next year – it has worked well for us!

