



FranklinVets UPDate

APRIL 2025



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Fair weather planning

As I write this, the sun is shining, the grass is green (and growing!), the milk price looks good for next season, and cow prices are strong. While we've had a dry

summer, things look good for the coming season.

It's important to enjoy the good times, but we all know that the wind, rain and mud will come, and there will be times when the pressure comes on in the next few months.

Now is a great time to plan ahead and to do everything you can in advance to minimise the stresses that will come, whether it be the busyness of mating and feeding out for the autumn calving herds or calving cows and feeding calves for the spring calvers.

We all know that prevention (the fence at the top of the cliff) is where we need to focus time and spending rather than treatment (the ambulance at the bottom). However, this is not just about animal welfare and money but also about time and efficiency. For example, ensuring you have your transition cow diet

and minerals right saves a lot of time treating and nursing downer cows. Teat sealing heifers, rotavirus vaccinating cows, and organising our techs to help you with teat seal insertion will all save you time when you can least afford it.

For our autumn calvers, having a good plan as we head into mating will help maintain

a good calving spread into next season and maximise production through those premium months.

Hopefully, you enjoy our newsletter. Our vets would love to sit down and help you plan ahead for the coming season, so please don't be shy about getting in touch!

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SAVE THE DATE

Our vet run training courses for farm workers are back. These include a 2-hour classroom session with extensive notes and lunch, followed by a 2-hour practical session on a nearby farm.

DATES THIS YEAR:

Spring First Aid – Wed, 25th June

Premating – Wed, 17th September

Lameness – Wed, 22nd October.

Venues and more information to come.



DR DAVID HAWKINS
BVSc
Veterinary Consultant,
Te Kauwhata

Getting the most out of wearable technology

Over the past six months, Franklin Vets has established Amplify, a wearable technology focus within the business to help farmers get the most out of wearable technology. Our early activity has focussed on 14 farms engaged with the Data Live system that supports the Allflex collar technology. This Data Live group, facilitated by veterinary consultant David Hawkins, seeks insight into cow behaviour and performance that enables change in management to improve outcomes. Some recent insights include:

1. Heat stress:

Cows show heat stress for

prolonged periods when overnight temperatures stay mild to warm. During periods when daytime temperatures were consistently over 25 °C, cows showed long periods of heat stress when overnight temperatures were mild to warm, but very little heat stress when overnight temperatures were cooler. Developing strategies to cool cows in the evening could offset the risk of heat stress the following day, limiting negative impacts on production and health.

2. Substitution of pasture:

Understanding when supplementation will cause pasture substitution is essential for getting the most out of

your supplements and managing pastures. It is too early to make hard guidelines yet, but milking cows in the group ruminating over 580 mins were generally limited by fibre intakes, and further supplementation to correct poor production or performance resulted in feed wastage or substitution.

3. Shape of your herd's rumination curve:


This should be as close as possible to a straight line with a slight dip at calving. This means that for 475 to 500 kg cows, dry cow diets should be managed to keep rumination at >90% (>430 to 450 minutes) of the lactating herd in early

to mid-lactation (480 to 500 minutes).

While we have started with the Data Live Focus group, we are expanding our scope of activity over the next few months. If you would like to be part of driving farm returns from wearables, please get in touch with David Hawkins for more information.


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SOPHIE HAMILTON
Vet Tech Co-ordinator



Post-teatseal aftercare

On the day:

Cows and heifers that have been treated with Teatseal must be quietly walked to a clean and dry paddock. Running animals out of the shed and down the tracks will cause their udders to sway, which may dislodge the Teatseal plug.

During the dry period/pre-calving:

Observe treated animals in their paddock daily for at least two weeks after the Teatseal is inserted. Do not bring dry cows back onto the yard or through the shed,

as this will encourage them to let their milk down. Look out for signs of clinical mastitis and contact your vet if you have any concerns.

At calving:

At the first milking, manually strip each quarter 10-12 times. If, after the first few strips, there is no more Teatseal, continue stripping as there is usually more. Ensure you are stripping from the top of the teat, removing all product from the teat canal. It is normal for some quarters to have less

Teatseal due to calf sucking.

Ensure you and the farm team know the difference between Teatseal residues and mastitis for accurate identification and treatment. Teatseal is waxy, bright white, and can be rolled into a ball, unlike mastitis clots.

Teatseal has an 8-milking withhold period after calving. (NIL meat withhold) If using Teatseal in combination with dry cow antibiotics, ensure the antibiotic withholding period is adhered to.

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The art of drying off

Preparing for drying off requires careful management of the cow's diet to switch off milk production while maintaining health and condition and minimising mastitis. Below is a timeline guide to assist in preparing cows for drying off.

One week before drying off:

For cows producing more than 12 litres per day (1 kgMS), steps should be taken to reduce production to less than 12 litres.

- Gradually remove all protein concentrates (e.g. PKE, DDG, canola meal) at least one week before drying off
- Remove energy concentrates (e.g. meal, kibbled maize)
- Increase fibre intake, such as by feeding silage or low-quality pasture, to slow nutrient absorption while keeping cows feeling full

- Remove lime flour and salt from the diet
- It is not necessary to change the milking frequency.

Three days before drying off:

- Feed low-quality pasture
- Continue to high fibre intake to keep rumen fill by feeding poor quality silage or hay
- Ensure water is continuously available
- It is not necessary to change the milking frequency.

Day of drying off:

- Avoid drying off in bad weather
- Dry off in small groups
- Allocate clean paddocks away from the cow shed
- Ensure water is continuously available.

One to three days after drying off:

- Offer poorer quality pasture and silage to maintain rumen fill
- Avoid transport for 10–14 days post-dry off
- Monitor daily for mastitis without bringing cows back into the shed
- Continue to ensure water is available.

One week after drying off:

- From four days after drying off, start introducing winter feed, ensuring sufficient protein, energy and fibre for condition gain and rumen fill
- Bring cows back into the cow shed from 10 days after drying off to check for mastitis and teat spray.

For advice specific to your farm, contact your veterinarian.



DR DAVID HAWKINS
BVSc
Veterinary Consultant,
Te Kauwhata

Balancing the herd's ration

With the end of a long summer upon us, we are seeing the country greening up, but it will be a few more rains before we see pasture jumping out of the ground. When pasture does start to grow, it will be of good quality. In the meantime, autumn cows are calving, spring cows are nearing the end of their lactation, and dry stock are

trying to put on weight.

We are at that time of the year when the ration required by different stock classes varies enormously, and yet farms are often constrained by the forages on hand, pasture silage and maize silage. Each stock class gets the same type of supplement. With a bit of luck, one of the classes gets the right balance of nutrients

in their diet to meet their performance targets. The other two classes, if not all three, are usually lacking.

Balancing the ratio of your various stock classes is important now. This means getting the right balance between protein, energy, starch, fibre, mineral and dry matter content. Cows trying to milk through until June will

benefit from protein and starch, those ending their lactation from fibre and correct energy density, and those climbing to peak from energy and protein. Time spent balancing the ration of your herd now is well worth it to help them meet their specific targets over the next few months. Call your local Franklin Vets clinic to book this now.