

WINGHAM & VALLEY VETS

Newsletter

April 2017

Volume I

Cattle Lameness in Wet Weather

The protracted spell of wet weather has resulted in a significant increase in lame cows in the district. The majority of cows are affected by sole abscesses and impaction and separation of the white line causing painful white line disease. Footrot is also prevalent as moisture softens the skin between the claws making it more susceptible

Lame cows have a significant financial impact on a dairy, not only due to treatment costs, but also through reduced milk production, depressed fertility and milk withholding periods. Each lameness case costs on average \$200-\$500 – and will cost even more if the cow remains lame for an extended period.

We are seeing very high numbers of lame cows in the Manning Valley, due to the protracted spell of very wet weather. This results in softening of the hoof and therefore less resistance to penetrating and impaction injury.

to bacterial invasion. Footrot bacteria survive longer and multiply where there is a lot of environmental moisture.



Figure 1: White line disease – appearance before treatment

During periods of wet weather, stockmanship is even more important to protect vulnerable hooves. Hurrying cows encourages them to not look where they are placing their feet and their hooves are also more likely to twist and turn – a major cause of white line disease (see pictures). We recommend that you avoid: overusing the backing gate, overcrowding in the yard,

Cases of the Month

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Lame cows

Vagal Indigestion

Free Gas Bloat

Eye Cancers

Abortion outbreak

Fog Fever

Grass Awn Foreign Bodies

Rat Bait Toxicity

Run Dates

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Krambach: every Tuesday

Oxley Island: Thurs 27th April

Cooperook, Lansdowne &

Taree: Thurs 20th April

To book a job, please call us by 5pm the day before the run.

Emergencies will be accommodated.

6557 0000

Upcoming Events

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We are hoping to conduct an on-farm lameness workshop for local farmers in the near future – 'like' our Facebook page to keep updated with what's going on!

using an overzealous working dog and rushing the cows into the yard and out of the dairy. A quick (temporary) wet-weather fix for poor cattle tracks can be topping them with a thick layer (>300mm) of soft material such as sawdust or woodchips, fencing off severely damaged tracks and placing rubber mats down where cows are most prone to turning sharply.



Figure 2: Severe white line disease - after under-run sole has been removed

Many cases of lameness can be effectively treated without the need for antibiotics = more milk in the vat

Our new director with a passion for the local dairy industry

Michael joined Wingham and Valley Vets as a Director in 2016, having gained a wealth of mixed practice experience in Tasmania in a large, predominantly dairy practice and later in the Hunter Valley. Michael is an Australian Cattle Vets accredited pregnancy tester and he currently undertakes all of our bull testing. Although he enjoys all aspects of mixed practice, he is particularly interested in Dairy Medicine, Cattle Lameness and Herd Health. Michael is passionate about the dairy industry in the Manning Valley and keen to provide a first class service to local dairy farmers. You can be confident that Michael will take the time to listen to your concerns and will do his very best to provide you with profitable solutions for your dairy business. He firmly believes that the local veterinarian can provide



more than just an emergency service and that the right vet can be a valuable resource to farmers, implementing herd health strategies that actually save money and pay dividends in the future. Due to our high large animal caseload and to provide savings to farmers, Michael has started regular runs to different districts (see page 1). Michael also loves fishing and playing tennis as well as helping his wife to raise their two daughters, Eleanor and Susannah.

Calving – what's normal?



2-4 weeks prior to birth: udder development and mucus discharge from the vulva

Labour stage 1: 24-48 hours prior to calving a cow will be restless, agitated and distance herself from the herd. The cervix will slowly open and at the end of this stage the water bag will be visible at the vulva.

Labour stage 2: the calf is pushed through the water bag, then the head, chest and hips are delivered.

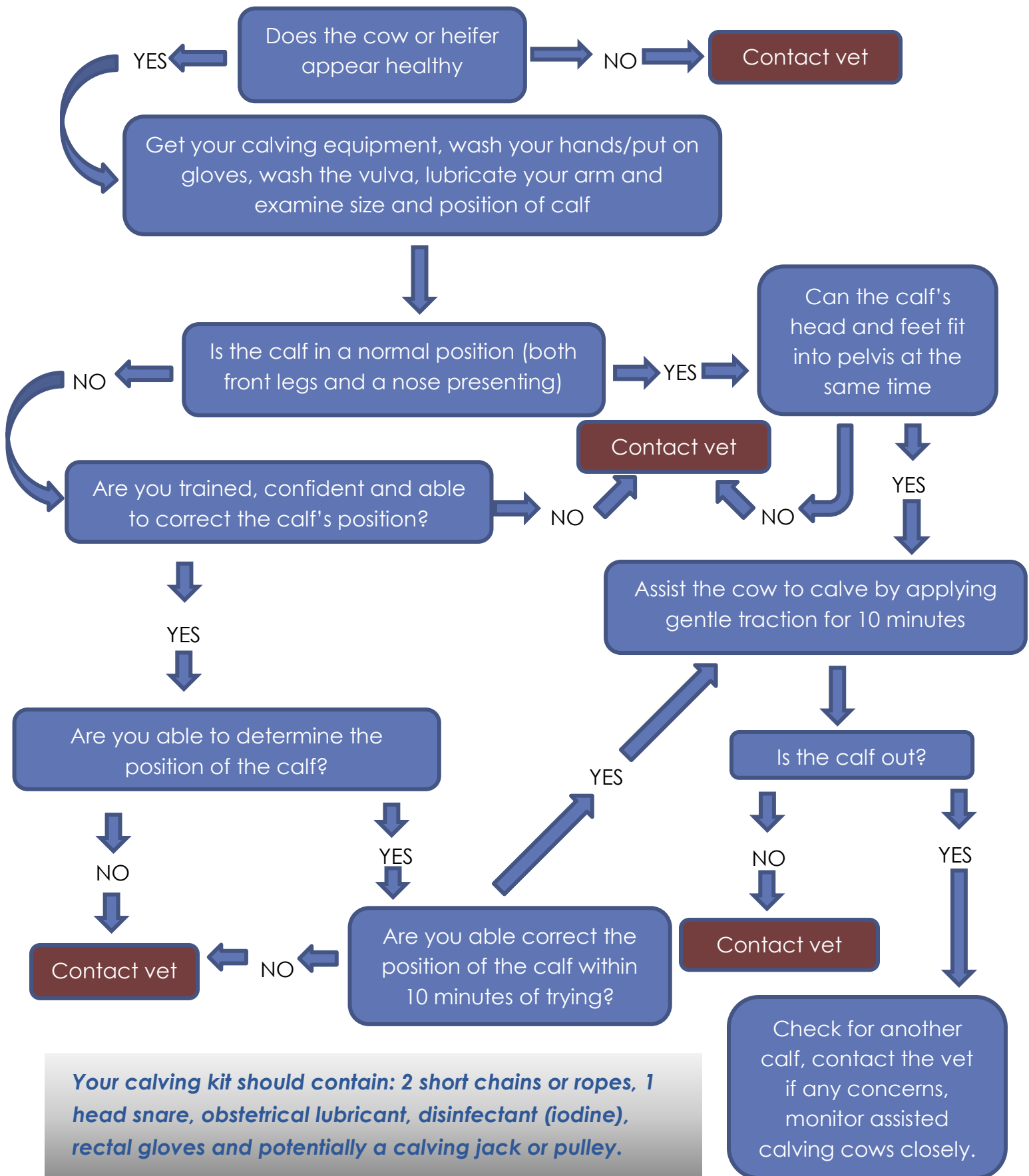
Labour stage 3: the afterbirth (placenta) is expelled after the calf is born – this can take 2-3 days. Consult your vet if the placenta is still retained after 48 hours.

When to intervene?

- If a cow or heifer is agitated or straining for more than 4 hours without a visible water bag
- If the water bag has been visible for over 2 hours without a calf being delivered.
- If a cow in late pregnancy appears depressed or unwell

See our handy calving decisions flow chart on the next page!

ON-FARM CALVING PROCEDURE



Your calving kit should contain: 2 short chains or ropes, 1 head snare, obstetrical lubricant, disinfectant (iodine), rectal gloves and potentially a calving jack or pulley.

Bull Testing

We are now offering a comprehensive Bull Breeding Soundness Exam (BBSE)

A sub-fertile herd bull has a major economic impact on producers. We recommend producers have their bulls tested prior to sale or purchase and/or prior to joining with the herd each year. The five components of bull fertility in the BBSE are:

1. Scrotum – Scrotal circumference and testes shape. The normal ranges depend on breed and age of the bull.



2. General physical exam and reproductive tract examination

– Assessing for evidence of sub-fertility or infertility. This examination will identify bulls which are structurally unsound in the legs, feet and sheath.

3. Semen – Crush-side assessment indicates that the semen is within normal range for motility, sperm mass and percent progressively motile.

4. Morphology – Semen can be submitted to a laboratory for examination using high power magnification. Evaluating



morphology can reveal problems with the sperm that may impact on its ability to fertilise the egg and produce an embryo.

5. Servicing – The bull can serve normally as demonstrated in a standard test with no evidence of fertility limiting defects.

Producers should be aware that a bull with unknown fertility can affect herd reproductive performance and profitability well into the next decade.

Since bull health and comfort are paramount, we use a top quality Pulsator IV electroejaculator to obtain samples. For more information please call 6557 0000.

Equine & Cattle Services



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