

AgriHealth veterinary newsletter content – spring 2019

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Infected udders hit a sore spot

- ***Pain relief for mastitis helps recovery, reproduction and longevity***

They may be too tiny to see without a microscope, but the bacteria that cause mastitis can (literally) be a huge pain at this time of the year.

These microscopic bugs have no respect for your bank account, your workload, nor your cows. While they often turn their toes up in the face of appropriate veterinary treatment, they rarely leave gracefully.

Antibiotics kill the infection, but these drugs don't immediately kill common effects of mastitis – swelling, heat, inflammation, fever, loss of appetite, depression and lethargy.

Almost all of these symptoms are associated with pain and reduced productivity. Even though cows have naturally evolved over hundreds of years to mask signs of pain from potential predators, the udder is sensitive at the best of times.

When one or more quarters is inflamed as a result of mastitis, that sensitivity becomes heightened. Your normally stoic cow acts restless at milking, kicks the cups off, won't lie down in the paddock to chew her cud, and walks awkwardly to avoid banging her udder with her hind legs.

We know udder pain can persist after the mastitis is initially treated. That means delayed cow recovery, lost production, potential problems at mating time and even a shortened life span.

In fact, there's plenty of good data that shows using pain relief as part of mastitis treatment benefits in-calf rates, through earlier conception; and cow longevity, through significantly reduced culling.

That's why we recommend an injectable non-steroidal pain killer such as KetoMax 15% or Melovem30 for cows with mastitis, in addition to the prescribed antibiotic therapy.

It's like a chain reaction – the simple act of minimising the pain of mastitis infection leads to a compounding sequence of positive outcomes.

The faster sick cows start feeling better, the sooner they are back with their herd-mates, eating properly, milking to potential, cycling well and having a long, healthy lactation.

That's good for your bottom line, both now and next season. It's also good for animal welfare, and for keeping our industry socially sustainable in today's global market.

Call the clinic today to find out more about using pain relief to speed the recovery from mastitis and get your girls back to their best with minimal down time this spring.