Bega & Cobargo
VETERINARY HOSPITALS

Bega
02 6492 1837
Monday to Friday 8.30 – 5.30pm
Saturday 9-12pm
Cobargo
02 6493 6442
Monday to Friday: 9 – 5pm
Alternate Saturdays 9-12pm
After-hours
02 6492 1837

When to AI?

Peter Alexander

We are often asked by farmers when should they AI their cows for the best chance of success.

For many years, advisers were recommending inseminating the milking after cows were noticed on heat—i.e. "see them on for the first time in the morning, AI that afternoon/see them on for the first time in the afternoon, AI them the next morning". In recent years advice in some quarters has changed to inseminating at the time they are first noted on heat.

So what should farmers do? Particularly as AI conception rates seem to be in free fall in most dairy areas of Australia. Anyone getting over 50% pregnant per mating is well above the current national average .

Before attempting to answer this question, it is useful to remind ourselves how cows tick:

- Oestrus cycle length ranges from 18-24 days
- Oestrus (on heat) period ranges from 4-24 hrs, with an average of around 15 hours.

What's particularly interesting is that ovulation occurs around 30 hrs from the onset of oestrus. That is, the egg pops out *after* oestrus activity has ceased.

This wide range of oestrus behaviour times partly explains why so many cow's heats are missed by the AI brigade.

For example, in the dead of Winter with milking finishing at 4-5pm and starting again at 6am — we have 13 hrs of darkness. It then follows that cows with heat durations of less than 12hrs (and cycling at night) will *never* be seen to have a standing heat. This is then a really good argument for the use of more reliable heat detector systems.

The best way to seriously attempt to answer the question of timing is to look at the information that is available out there and then farmers can make up their own mind.

We are very fortunate to have excellent data collected nationally a few years ago by the "In Calf " project (5 local farms were involved in this study).

My reading of the below tables would seem to indicate that the answer is that it does not make a great deal of difference.

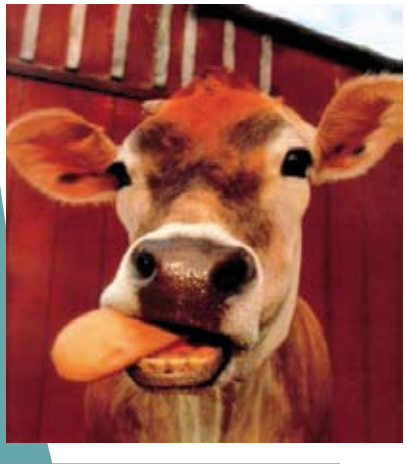
You can AI when you first see the cows on heat or you can pencil them in for the next milking.

You can also go to once a day AI if you can handle (or your arm can handle) more cows to do at once.

A Word of caution:

Of course, these stats have been recorded on farms with good heat detection and good record keeping. For those people who still don't take heat detection seriously I'd be recommending to AI cows when you first see them on. If you don't religiously note heat times down and you first see a cow on in the afternoon but she actually came on just after milking the night before, waiting a further 6 hrs might not be conducive to good pregnancy rates.

For farmers seeing this data and moving to once daily AI, I recommend a second straw of semen to cows exhibiting strong oestrus 24hrs after the first insemination.



Effects of AI Timing on Conception Rates

AI Timing **Seen on heat:**	**Inseminated:**	**No. of inseminations**	**Conception Rate**
This morning	This morning	4,359	45%
This morning	This afternoon	6,024	43%
Yesterday	This morning	4,072	43%
Yesterday	This afternoon	135	37%

Conception Rates in Herds Performing AI Once Daily and Twice Daily

AI frequency	**No. of Herds**	**First insemination conception rate**
Once daily	69	48%
Twice daily	99	50%

Summer 2008

Tick Paralaysis – Early Treatment For Best Results

The Australian Paralysis Tick is a well known enemy to domestic animals on the east coast of Australia .

Envenomation causes paralysis, breathing difficulty, heart abnormalities and ultimately death.

Recently, Bega Vet Hospital participated in the 2008 Merial Tick Survey – which monitors tick prevention used by owners and treatments used by Vets. Over the period of the study (November –January) we treated an average of 1 tick affected patient per day , with variable severity and mostly positive outcomes.

Through this study and some 30+ years experience treating the problem we have made some crucial points to note which will maximise the chance your pet's survival if poisoned:

Use a tick control product and routinely search your pet.

Remove and destroy offending tick/s ASAP.

Keep your pet cool and calm.

Do not feed/water your pet if you suspect tick paralysis - their swallowing mechanism is also paralysed and they may get contaminated lungs.

Present your pet to us as soon as you notice any signs of paralysis (usually starts with a wobbly back-end). Early treatment is most successful – the anti-toxin works on toxin that is yet to affect the animal, the longer they are left, the worse their chance of survival.

Be on the lookout for these other Summer nasties:

⇒ ***Snake Bite***

⇒ ***Snail Bait and***

⇒ ***Rat Bait Poisoning***

New Clinic Update

Building has commenced at the North Bega site. Currently the external brickwork is being done, but there's plenty more work to do! We can't wait to get into our "new digs" however we don't expect to be in until the second half of 2009. Stay tuned!

Ig G Testing for Foals

Foals rely on receiving immunoglobulins (IgG) from the mare's colostrum in the first 6-12 hours of birth to protect them from bacterial infections such as pneumonia and joint-ill.

We now have GAMMA-CHECK : a rapid, reliable and affordable way to test foal's IgG levels at 24 hours of age. With such early detection, deficient foals can be easily treated with colostrum if available, or via plasma transfusions.

Both GAMMA-CHECK and frozen plasma are available at Bega and Cobargo Vet Hospitals.

Desexing a dog in Wiluna, WA (approx. 1000km northwest of Perth). Surgeries were performed in a local prison cell – part of a 2007 dog population control effort in remote WA.

Staff Profile: Dr Emily Darmody

Emily joined in the practice in January 2008, after completing her studies at Murdoch University, WA. Although she had worked as a nurse in a variety of vet clinics, Bega is her first position as a Veterinarian.

Apart from being passionate about location of Bega —enjoying skiing, scuba diving, open water swimming and camping in her spare time, Em also has a strong interest in a variety of veterinary fields. Particularly, management of production animal diseases and inside the clinic, surgery is her favorite discipline.

As the new graduate of the Veterinary group, Em has enjoyed and appreciated the support of both the staff and the clients of the practice.

"Bega is a great place to start your career—so much support, you are never on your own. Its thanks to this that I have continued to build on the skills and knowledge I first gained at uni, plus I am really enjoying my work!"