



Murray Grey Newsbrief

From Council

Seasons seem to move much quicker these days, autumn is already with us and one may ask if we've really had enough summer. I think on the whole summer has been fairly kind with good quantities of supplements stored away for winter. However some areas are feeling the effect of a dry February.

With autumn's arrival you may be reflecting on your 2013 calf drop, appraising the decisions you made with the herd sire(s) you chose to take your herd forward. Were you happy with the decision you made? If not, then perhaps now is a good time to give serious thought to your herd sire(s) for next spring's mating program.

We are in the final two months of the year prior to the upcoming AGM in May. Your council has met on four occasions in the past nine months with much discussion on a number of topics, some of which have been Communication, Promotion, Marketing and Registration costs. Of particular note was the decision to instigate an 'Online Sale' for registered in calf females.

In December a questionnaire was sent to all members seeking their thoughts and comments

on a number of topics. Although the returns of the questionnaire was a poor 37% your Council wishes to thank all those members who took the time to give Council their thoughts. There was some very good positive input that will aid Council in better decision making. A summary of the results of the questionnaire may be viewed on the website.

Your Council has seen to a website upgrade that included the creation of a Facebook page to enhance modern ways of communicating with members and potential customers. You are encouraged to make use of the facility.

Members will have received a copy of 'New Zealand Murray Grey Progress' with this newsletter. Once again thanks must go to the contributors and advertisers, as well as a special acknowledgement to Sue Clarke for the compilation of this edition.

Enjoy the read.

Neill Burke
Councillor

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Murray Grey AGM

The Murray Grey AGM will be held during AgInnovation on Monday **12th May at 3.30pm** in the Boardroom, **PBBNZ, 75 South Street, Feilding.**

Questionnaire Summary

There was a 37% response to the questionnaire

COMMUNICATION

- **Are you satisfied with the communication you get from the Murray Grey Council?**
YES = 57%, No = 27%, No Comment = 5%
- **How often do you visit the web site?**
Weekly = 23%, Monthly = 55%, Sometimes = 18%, No Comment = 4%.
- **There is now a Facebook page. Have you visited it?**
Yes = 38%, No = 42%.
- **Might you be interested in setting up a business Facebook page?**
Yes = 30%, No = 61%, No Comment = 9%.

NZ Murray Grey in Calf
Registered Female on line sale
run by PGG Wrightson

April 30th 6 – 8pm

**INTENTIONS TO PARTICIPATE TO
Mervyn Mitchell by March 31st
15 Carlow Place, Cromwell,
Ph 03 445 4546 M. 027 672 4282
Email: mitchmj@farmside.co.nz**

This will be operated by
**PGG Wrightson online Helmsman Auction 6 – 8pm
Wednesday 30th April 2014**

A PGG Wrightson representative will inspect animals prior to sale.

TB Free and Neg BVD test required.

This is a great opportunity for breeders to showcase good female progeny and a tremendous opportunity for purchasers to obtain genetics.

We trust this sale will develop into something special.

The Spread of Theileria in North Island

Theileria orientalis ikeda is a blood borne parasite that is transferred from infected cattle to naive cattle by ticks.

We have recently had 5 cows affected. This was unexpected as we have never had a problem with ticks on our cattle. One died and the others are slowly recovering. The source of the infection has a number of scenarios. Maybe from healthy looking, tick free cattle bought in from areas already affected by *Theileria*, maybe from a neighbouring farm, maybe from infected ticks carried onto the property by hares, dogs or even birds.

Theileria damages the red blood cells causing anaemia.

What to look for

Animals that lag behind when mobs are being shifted, ones that can only walk short distances before sitting down and ones that have difficulty walking up slopes. Cows also have less milk than usual so look for slack udders. To check females for anaemia look at the colour of the vulva. It should be pink and not tending towards a creamy white.

What to do

Don't move animals more than necessary. Wean calves off affected dams. Give good quality feed and water and restrict the distance an animal can move away from the water. Vitamin B12 injections may help.

The implications

Cattle you buy from areas that have a viable tick population are a risk e.g. Northland, Waikato, Taranaki and parts of the East Coast. You can treat them for ticks but only a blood test will tell you if they are carrying *Theileria*. If you are in such an area then cattle you sell can be carrying the parasite even if they look healthy. This is a problem for us as we sell most of our bulls to dairy farmers who of course will want to delay contact with *Theileria* for as long as they can.

What can you do

You can manage the tick population e.g. treat cattle in Spring (say Aug/Sept) and in Summer (say Jan/Feb) or at any time the tick population is known to be high. You can test animals for the presence of *Theileria* (Ikeda strain). I believe this can be done as a batch test for up to 20 animals for around \$50 lab fees plus your vet charges. Individual animals can be done for the same price. Keep your grass levels similar to that practised by a dairy farmer. You can graze with sheep in front of cattle. There is a lot of information appearing on websites (e.g. Franklin Vets) and in Dairy Board literature (e.g. Technical Series Issue 20). There is an article in the latest Progress Magazine.

Conclusion

We expect the spread of *Theileria* to continue until most properties are affected. Over time herds will develop immunity to this strain and we will no longer have a problem.

Wayne Allerby