

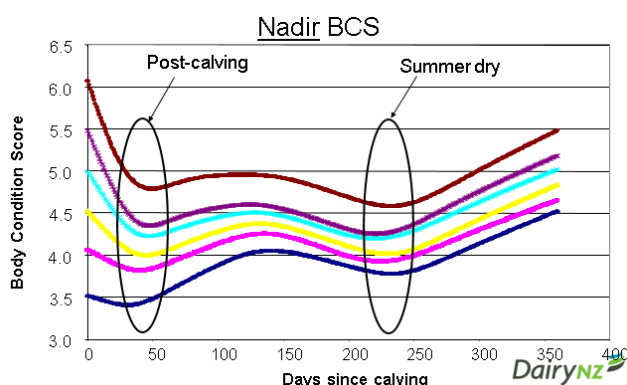
Autumn Health Management

Rachel Numan, Vetora

Body condition scoring

One of the cheapest and most effective tools you have.

- Targets at calving – BCS of 5.5 for first and second calvers, 5 for mature cows.
- Not being at an ideal BCS at calving impacts on fertility and production.
- Key times to BCS the herd – end of mating, late lactation, just before PSC, 2 weeks before PSM.



- To condition score your herd, select at least 70 cows randomly e.g. tag number ends in an even number.
- Calculate the percentage of the herd above or below target, as well as the average. You do not want more than 15% of the herd above or below target at calving. Get an idea of how broad the spread is at this stage to determine what measures need to be taken.

TYPE IN PLANNED START OF CALVING:				10-Jul	
Mature Mixed Age Cows = Target 5.0 at calving					
BCS in Autumn	Increase in BCS needed by PSC	Number of days needed to put on BCS	Last dry-off date for BCS if PSC is:	Last dry-off date for BCS if late calving after 6w from:	Last dry-off date for BCS if late calving after 9w from:
3	2	120	10-Jul	21-Aug	11-Sep
3.5	1.5	100	12-Mar	23-Apr	14-May
4	1	80	01-Apr	13-May	03-Jun
4.5	0.5	60	21-Apr	02-Jun	23-Jun
5	0	42	11-May	22-Jun	13-Jul
5	0	42	29-May	10-Jul	31-Jul
R3 Young Cows = Target 5.5 at calving					
BCS in Autumn	Increase in BCS needed by PSC	Number of days needed to put on BCS	Last dry-off date for BCS if PSC is:	Last dry-off date for BCS if late calving after 6w from:	Last dry-off date for BCS if late calving after 9w from:
3	2.5	140	10-Jul	21-Aug	11-Sep
3.5	2	120	20-Feb	03-Apr	24-Apr
4	1.5	100	12-Mar	23-Apr	14-May
4	1.5	100	01-Apr	13-May	03-Jun
4.5	1	80	21-Apr	02-Jun	23-Jun
5	0.5	60	11-May	22-Jun	13-Jul

Trace minerals

Copper

- Required for bone strength, milk production, reproduction.
- Broken humerus syndrome.
- If you have decreased PKE feeding– test herd.
- Copper overdose can be fatal – always test before supplementing.
- Do not give copper injections within 6 weeks prior to mating – can effect fertility.
- MUST be tested on liver – bloods are not accurate. Ten samples.

Cobalt/B12

- Required for energy metabolism, fibre digestion and immunity.
- Important year round (via inline dispenser or injection), but especially leading into calving and mating.
- Good appetite stimulant for freshly calved cows.
- Test blood or liver. Five samples.

Selenium

- Particularly important for immunity (RFM's, mastitis) and production.
- Check levels prior to supplementing – can overdose and cause toxicity.
- Test blood or liver. Five samples.

Testing

Test in autumn to ensure stores are adequate for winter/spring.

- **Cull cow livers:** easier, less representative of whole herd i.e. poor producers, older cows, empties. Do give an idea.
- **Liver biopsies:** require vet visit. Very low risk of complications, more representative samples.

Dry cow treatment + internal teat-sealants

By 2020, the use of blanket (whole herd) dry cow treatment will no longer be allowed.

Dry-cow antibiotics

Treat *current* subclinical infections. Duration of action in the udder depends on product. Not using dry-cow only represents a missed opportunity to clear an infection (i.e. staph).

Internal teat sealants

Prevents *future* infections by preventing bacteria from travelling up the teat canal. VERY important if you have a high case rate of dry period or calving mastitis. No restriction on use.

Selective dry cow treatment options

- SmartSAMM – use dry cow antibiotics on all cows with a SCC above 150,000 (or heifers above 120,000) on any herd test that season.
- One herd test, up to 80 days out from dry off.
- Rapid mastitis test (RMT) herd prior to dry-off ('trace' result = SCC of about 150,000 in that ¼)

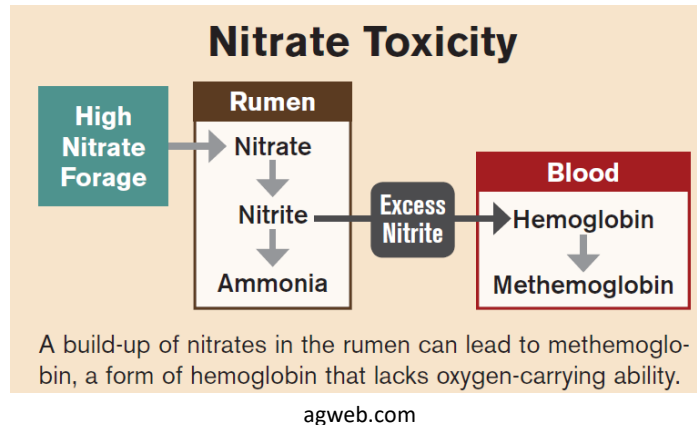
Notes about dry off this year

- If teat sealing only – hygiene is incredibly important. Show the team this clip before getting started: <http://dairywellness.co.nz/dry-cow-therapy/best-practice-administration.html>
- Administer dry cow + teat sealants as close to the last milking as possible.
- Be wary about warming teat sealants.
- **Walk** cows between paddocks for 10 days after administration to avoid product getting squirted out of heavy, baggy udders as they run.

Talk to your vet about the best option for your farm.

Nitrate poisoning

What happens:



Risk factors

- New grass, annuals (young plants).
- Cool, overcast or foggy days.
- Nitrogen application (10-14 days post).
- Plant stress (drought, insect damage, frost, nutrient deficiency).
- Stock going onto high risk pastures hungry.
- Stock staying on high risk pastures too long.

Signs in cattle

- Usually seen 3-5 hours after being on the high risk pasture (but can be 1-24 hours later).
- “Drunk” – staggering, trembling, down.
- Check vulva/inside of eyelid. Will look muddy brown.
- **Call the vet immediately, move herd calmly off pasture and give hay.**

Prevention and control

- Test suspect pasture before feeding (on-farm kits available from vet).
- Restrict grazing during high risk periods to late morning/early afternoon, and for no longer than 1 hour.
- Making silage from high risk pastures reduces nitrate concentration – making hay does not. Still test before feeding.
- Ensure cows going onto high risk pastures are not hungry. Feeding high carbohydrate supplement reduces risk.
- Cows can adapt to moderately high nitrate feeds to a certain degree, but this takes time.