

PRACTICE NEWS

Position Vacant!

We are looking for a new secretary for the office.

Our lovely Holly is leaving us in December and we need someone that can start as soon as possible.

The hours are 9am to 2pm Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Please contact Evan or the office if you are interested.

**Merry Christmas
and a Happy
New Year from
Norcal Vets!**



HOW WELL DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR COWS?

Cattle see, smell and hear the world differently to humans. It's important to remember this when setting up facilities and during handling operations!

Smell - Cattle have a good sense of smell and will sniff at new or strange objects and surroundings within the handling system. The prevailing wind should be taken into consideration when siting handling facilities, as it may carry unusual smells, making handling more difficult.

Hearing - Cattle hear sounds at similar or higher frequencies than us, and dislike sudden loud noises.

Vision - Cattle see the world differently to us and this affects the way they behave in the handling situation and how effectively they can be moved through the handling facility.

As grazing animals, cattle spend a large part of their day with their heads down eating. As a result they have evolved with eyes at the side of the head, which gives them an overall wide range of vision - useful to constantly keep a look out!

But most of the time they only detect movement, rather than detail. To see anything clearly, and perceive depth, it needs to be in front of them.



This is why they put their heads down to look at things and usually turn to face a handler. They also have a 'blind spot' directly behind them, as well as a small area right in front of the face, where they cannot see at all.

Understanding why cattle behave the way they do, can truly make handling them much less stressful - for you and the cow.

Speak to one of the vets to find out more.

LAMENESS - CAN YOU AFFORD TO IGNORE IT?

Did you know that one of the costliest problems in cattle rearing is lameness? It's taking its toll on reproduction, production and animal welfare in both dairy and beef herds.



Beside improving nutrition, housing and carrying out frequent mobility scoring, you can take a big step forward in preventing lameness by introducing a periodical protocol of foot trimming of the entire herd at least once a year. Give the practice a ring for more information.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INJECTION TECHNIQUES

Poor injection techniques can have serious consequences. Of course, the route of the injection determines the speed of uptake by the body and hence how quickly it works. However, there are many other points to consider when giving an injection, some of which have economic, as well as practical, implications:

- Cost of the cut of meat being injected – don't put injections in expensive cuts of meat, especially long acting preparations. All injections cause bruising, especially intra-muscular injection and hence reduce carcass quality for some time.
- Access to the site of injection – safety comes first, so choosing the site of injection may be dictated by where you can get to safely. Hands should never be placed between the crush and the animal.
- Medicine being used – some medicines are significantly more damaging than others e.g. Long acting oxytetracyclines and other long acting preparations will cause damage to meat cuts for years.
- Age of the animal – this will determine where you are likely to find muscle and when the animal is likely to go to slaughter.
- Think of meat withdrawal times – these are specific to the route of injection. If you give a medicine only licensed by intravenous injection (e.g. Flunixin) in the muscle, you are using it off licence and the withdrawal period increases to 28 days for meat, and to 7 days for milk.
- The same issue arises if you increase the dose rate of the medicine you give, or if you use the medicine in combination with any other medicine with which it is not licensed.



If unsure, please speak to one of our vets, who will be happy to advise.

SALT POISONING IN PIGS

Salt poisoning is common in all ages of pig and is nearly always related to a shortage of water. Signs, which show within 24-48 hours, include initial inappetance, followed by nervous signs – fits, preceded by nose twitching, apparent blindness and wandering, head pressing.

If animals are found dead, then diagnosis can be confirmed by histopathology of brain tissue at post mortem. However, whilst animals alive, diagnosis is often based on the response to treatment, which consists of oral, rectal or abdominal rehydration; steroids may also be prescribed.

Unfortunately, the response to treatment is often poor, so make sure you check water levels at least once per day, to prevent the condition arising in the first place.



FEEDING CATTLE

If animals are not fed ad lib, all cattle must be able to feed simultaneously, otherwise 'shy feeders' (e.g. young, sick and elderly animals) will do poorly.

So, to ensure that you are getting the most from the feed you put out it is essential that there is no wastage and it is important to check that a proportion of food is not pushed away out of reach by animals as they feed or that it doesn't fall beyond reach through gaps between troughs.

The table below shows the minimum recommended trough space per animal:

Weight kg	~age mths	Min trough space in m/head
200	7	0.4
300	12	0.5
400	16	0.55
500	20	0.6
600	26	0.65
700	26+	0.7

If you are feeding ad lib, the feed face can be smaller but there must be constant access and that really does mean 24 hours per day!

And it is essential that the diet cannot be sorted and 'tasty' bits removed first, otherwise the later feeds will again do poorly as a result of not having access to a complete diet.

You should also consider feed shelter, as diets are worked out on dry matter intake. Therefore, if feed is open to the elements, animals will take in more water with the feed making them feel full and reducing the amount of the nutrient rich portions of the diet they eat.

Give us a ring for more advice!