
APRIL 2021 DAIRY NEWSLETTER

Key Take Homes:

- Ask your herd vet about heifer inventory calculations specific to your farm.
- New animal skidder available for rent from KVC to safely move down cows.
- Vitamaster discontinued, but Vitamin B12 an appropriate replacement in ketosis protocols. New product may be coming soon!

Heifer Replacement Calculation

Heifer rearing costs are a significant expense on every dairy operation. Increasingly, sexed semen and beef on dairy crosses are being utilized across the dairy industry. This has led to the question of “How many replacements do I actually need?”. Many experts have come up with a wide variety of methods to calculate this answer and some can be quite complicated. How do you know if a specific recommendation fits for your farm?

So many different herd specific factors can influence youngstock inventory and projected replacement numbers. The Kirkton Vet Clinic group is well-versed in utilizing data to examine your herd inventory retrospectively and make specific recommendations of how many replacements you will require in the future. Do not hesitate to ask your herd vet about heifer inventory management so you can be sure your heifer replacement numbers are dialed in to be as efficient as possible.

New Tool for Down Cow Management

Every farm is eventually confronted with a down cow who needs to be moved. Hip lifters are NOT an appropriate device to move down cows and although tractor or skid



steer buckets can be utilized it is difficult to get cows into them safely. There are also circumstances where the cow cannot be accessed by a tractor or skid steer. The use of stone boats can be helpful, but they can be difficult to maneuver and are not common on most farms.

To help solve this problem, Kirkton Vet Clinic has invested in an animal skidder typically used by moose hunters. It is a heavy duty, thick plastic device that can be easily maneuvered beneath a down cow to safely skid her out of a barn or onto a deep pack. Afterwards, it can be washed off and returned to the Kirkton Vet Clinic. We also offer hip lifters or an Upsi Daisy lifter rental for down cow management. Do not hesitate to call Kirkton to enquire about renting any of these products. We will also advocate for them on your farm if we tend to a down cow that may require some of these specialized tools.

The most important thing to remember with down cows is that time is a critical factor and if she is in a location with poor footing or insufficient padding beneath her, it is likely to cause further injury. Please consider managing down cows with the tools listed above to give them the best chance of recovery.

Vitamaster Discontinued

Vitamaster (and all equivalent products) been discontinued by their manufacturers. The main vitamin in Vitamaster being utilized for ketosis treatment support is B12. We carry a vitamin B12 only product that can be substituted for Vitamaster in ketosis treatment protocols. The dose is 0.3cc IM Vitamin B12 daily. A Canadian pharmaceutical company we work closely with are busy developing a Vitamaster replacement. We are hopeful this replacement product will be available to you soon.