New resources for dairy vets

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Introduction
Veterinarians, both private and public, provide important services to support and educate dairy farmers to improve their farm profit and adopt industry recommended practices. The Animal Health & Fertility program team at Dairy Australia has been working on a range of new training and extension resources from that will make the job of servicing your dairy clients easier. Here is a brief introduction to the courses, manuals and tools now available to you.

Milk quality
Processors are increasing the quality standards of raw milk in terms of cell count, bacterial contamination and freedom from antibiotics and other chemical residues. To assist dairy vets and factory field officers to provide effective advice to farmers about these issues, we have launched the Countdown Milk Quality (MQ) training course. The first Countdown MQ course commenced in late February and will run over 6 months via a blended delivery model and Dairy Australia intend to run another in November 2017.

Drying off is a critical on-farm control point for mastitis. Dairy Australia has developed a Dry Off Consult tool for use by vets with their clients prior to drying off. This online tool helps identify on-farm risks and targets cows that should be culled or require antibiotic dry cow treatment. Pilots of the tool with dairy discussion groups have shown large gaps in practical knowledge about drying off cows. A new Drying Off discussion group module is also available to vets to help farmers plan their drying off and see the recommended techniques on farm. The Countdown Farm Guidelines are now supported by the Countdown Shed Guides, visual guides to common mastitis management practices, and a series of short online videos.

Fertility management
Many farmers are still struggling to maintain an acceptable calving pattern and empty rate. The Repro Right adviser training has been very successful in building a network of over 50 consultants to work one-on-one with farmers to improve herd fertility. Repro Right will be run again in November 2017. The second edition of the “InCalf Book” will be available soon and the Fertility Focus Report is being upgraded to improve its usability and relevance to year round calving systems.

Animal health & welfare
Lameness is one of the most common animal welfare and productivity issues in dairy herds. The Healthy Hooves project has produced valuable tools to educate your clients about lameness management: high quality videos, a lameness prevention and treatment manual, a guide to the Australian lameness scoring system and a cost of lameness calculator.

Improving calf management across the dairy industry has the potential to increase herd productivity and fertility and address important animal health and welfare risks. The “Rearing Healthy Calves” manual has been updated in 2017 to reflect advances in calf nutrition and health and is available free to dairy vets.
Down cow management is another issue that requires a proactive approach from vets. Based on recent research by Dr Phil Poulton, Dairy Australia has made a suite of online videos showing all aspects of down cow management and a supporting fact sheet.

Another world first initiative is Dairy Australia’s accredited training in “Euthanasia of Livestock”. Courses are being rolled out nationally so contact your Dairy Australia Regional Development Program for more information.

With so much on offer and more to come, I encourage you to subscribe to receive regular email updates from our key projects www.dairyaustralia.com.au/subscribe. I am also happy to provide further information on any of our program resources kdavis@dairyaustralia.com.au.

References