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## **APRIL 2025 DAIRY NEWSLETTER**

### **Spring Turnout Checklist:**

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#### **1. Optimize the Environment: Keep Cattle Comfortable & Productive**

- **Fly Control:** Start early with a fly tag in ear, pour-ons, and oilers to reduce fly populations that can affect gain and spread infections like pinkeye.
  - **Rotation:** If possible, regular rotation can help to keep grasses low and reduce scratching of calves eyes, reduce worm burdens, and prolong the grazing season.
  - **Water Access:** Check water sources for access and function. Growing calves need 20-50 litres per day and lactating cows 40-60 litres. Reproduction, immunity and gain can all be affected by limited access to water.
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#### **2. Don't Skimp on Minerals**

- **Lactation & Conception:** Balanced mineral supplementation supports milk production and improves conception rates.
  - **Grass Tetany Prevention:** Lush pasture can be high in potassium and crude protein, lowering magnesium in the blood. Combined with the demands of lactation, this can result in a cow down from electrolyte imbalance.
  - **Other benefits:** Maintaining free choice mineral access year round can help to maximize immunity of all animals, prevent fetal deformities, and help cows to clean.
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### 3. Assess Body Condition & Foot Health

- Body Condition Score (BCS): Target a BCS of 3 out of 5 for cows at turnout. Cows at 3 BCS breed up to 30 days sooner than cows at 2 BCS.
  - Hoof Care: Inspect feet for overgrowth, injuries, or infections. Trim if needed to avoid lameness. Lameness untreated reduces heat expression and increases culling risk. Don't forget the bull!
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### 4. Tackle Parasites: Plan Ahead for Worm Control

- Deworming Strategy: Using strategic deworming based on fecal egg counts rather than routine treatments to reduce resistance. Blanket deworming should only be used for animals under 16 months of age. You should not have to treat your average healthy cow.
  - Fecal Egg Counts: Fecal egg counts can help to determine if a deworming program is working, or if one is needed in the first place. Wait 3-6 weeks after animals are turned out on pasture, collect a composite fecal sample from the patties of 10 high risk animals. Clinic technicians can perform an analysis to determine what eggs are present and in what amount.
  - Products: Our current recommendation is Longrange for the calves and yearlings 4-6 weeks after turnout. This will have an initial effect, a secondary effect 100 days later, and will help with flies. Whichever product is used, do not under dose.
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### 5. Vaccination: Protect Herd Health Early

- Cows: Administer a modified-live vaccine (MLV) one month pre-breeding to protect against reproductive diseases.
- Heifers or cows that have not had an MLV vaccine before: These animals must be vaccinated twice, at least 30 days apart, ideally starting 60 days before breeding.
- Calves: Vaccinate with MLV and a clostridial vaccine before turnout to protect against blackleg, tetanus, hemorrhagic bowel and respiratory diseases. The clostridial vaccine should ideally be boosted 3-4 weeks after the initial series.
- Additional coverage: Lepto or Mannheimia coverage may be beneficial depending on herd history or exposure risks. These are included in several available MLV vaccines.
- Killed vaccine: If vaccination status is unknown or cows have gone more than 12 months since the last MLV booster, a killed vaccine will be safe for use in pregnant animals and should be boosted 3-4 weeks later