

Winter 2020  
**NEWSLETTER**



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Welcome to the new look Browns Newsletter. The format has been changed so that we can upload the newsletter to our new Facebook site. Last newsletter is already on our new Facebook page to look at for the clients who haven't received it in an account.

The new Browns Facebook page is called "Staying connected with Browns Stockfeed" All you need to do is click on the join button and Haley will approve your request so that you can post questions and join in any discussions. This page has been created to allow our clients a forum to ask questions, get to know one another and create farmer networks to help each other through tough times. Each week Matt James and Chris Lawton have a live feed to discuss relevant topics that fit with the current season and are happy for members to suggest topics they would like to talk about.



Group by Browns Stockfeed

**Staying Connected with Browns Stockfeed** >  
PRIVATE GROUP · 63 MEMBERS

## New additions to our range of products

As it looks as if this Winter may be a wet one, we have decided to add organic zinc into our Springer mix as a standard inclusion. This is because it takes about 3-4 weeks to harden the feet and if the herd are lead fed for at least 2 weeks prior to calving it will give you a head start on assisting to harden the feet and reduce the incidence of lame cows. Then organic zinc can also be cheaply added to the milker ration to continue your good work. The spin off bonus is that organic zinc also helps with mastitis and if it does turn wet then calving areas could be very muddy indeed.

We have not included Biotin as it takes much longer to help with hoof growth and no short term benefit will be seen in 2 weeks with Biotin whereas Organic zinc will work faster and give a better response.



It can be difficult to keep cows sound if they have less than ideal hoof conformation- shallow heels and long toes throw the weight back onto the heels resulting in bruising etc. Deep heels and more upright feet appear to cope better with Gippslands wet winters.

The ligament sling in shallow feet is lower too so that doesn't help and if the cows are a bit light in condition the "digital cushion" in the foot is less fatty as the cow overall has less body fat so this makes underlying bony structures prone to deep bruising. So good body condition in fresh cows is important!

Hoof cracks require a combination of good levels of Copper and Zinc as Copper is involved in hoof health too! So don't take your dairy premix out to save a few \$ as it can cost you more in lame cows in the longer term.



## And... a new loose lick with organic zinc too!

We have also developed a new weatherproof salt based loose lick with added organic Zinc. This is because many people do not use an anionic mix for the heifers coming in (as they don't get milk fever) and just feed a few kgs of the bail feed to heifers. Putting out a loose lick with organic zinc to free choice means that heifers that are at risk of soft sore feet will also be protected. This can also be fed to the bulls so that they are up to the task at joining time as bulls generally miss out on any vitamins and minerals all year. Zinc also assist sperm health so that is another bonus (as does vitamin E ) which is also included in the loose lick .Price is about \$48 a 25 kg bag inc GST so at 50-100 grams per head it is a cheap efficient way to get important minerals into your stock. PS Can also be used for first joining heifers too out on mainly pasture.



## Dry matter intakes in early lactation are critical for better conception rates

- Maximising the amount fed to fresh cows (Dry matter intake or DMI, ) is critical to reducing body condition loss in early lactation.
- When dry matter intake is low- dietary nutrients do not meet the cows energy intake required for milk production and ability to cycle earlier and get in calf.
- If there is not enough quality dry matter in the fresh cows ration, she will break down body fat tissue and use this as fuel to meet her energy demands.
- Result - ketosis, weight loss, poor appetite (which means she eats even less) and this all leads to slower return to cycling and longer interval to re breed.
- Higher dry matter intakes mean less negative energy balance, and luteinising hormone pulses increase earlier, leading to earlier return to cycle and more likelihood of the pregnancy holding.
  - Luteinising hormone pulses will not increase until the "energy nadir" is passed i.e. she is losing less weight today than she was yesterday!
  - LH pulses need to occur hourly to support follicle maturation and eventual ovulation and the cow needs to be in positive energy balance for this to occur.
  - Many people believe it is normal for cows to lose up to a condition score after calving.
  - Not true - with a well-balanced ration and plenty of it offered to fresh cows there is no need for them to lose weight in early lactation.
- Research at the University of Florida showed that cows with the greatest DMI were those that not only produced more milk, but they ovulated earlier than their herd mates that consumed less, produced less and lost more weight.
- Don't let them go hungry!
- Good genetic merit cows will still produce milk if energy is limiting - but body condition and reproduction will suffer and that costs \$ in the longer term.
- Other factors to slower re breeding include uterine infections, or fluid in the uterus which can prevent Prostaglandin release and this leads to longer interval to recycle after calving.
- So herd health is important too- reducing retained afterbirth and difficult calving's reduces the chance of these factors delaying return to cycling after calving.
- Diseases, negative energy balance, and other health disorders can affect follicle growth and the quality of the eggs that develop inside the follicle and reduced fertility can be the result of these issues.
- A good lead feed program followed by plenty of feed offered after calving will assist your herd to produce more milk, reduce vet costs and increase the chances of earlier conception in freshly calved cows.

**Please discuss with your Browns nutritionist the options available to assist - from feed testing your forage, to balancing the ration or adding products like yeast to increase DMI in fresh cows and a suitable lead feeding program to ensure cows come into the herd ready to eat, milk and breed.**

# Useful products for this seasons calving

Winter 2020

**Troughs** - 8m long and ideal for lead feeding and heifers later on. 8m long x 1m wide with hot wire poles are \$2,000.00 inc gst and 8m x 600mm wide with no poles are \$1,800.00 inc gst. Available from the store.



**Shavings/straw mix** in round bales 3.5 metres \$260.00 inc GST. Also available are rice hulls with some shaving mixed through in wool pack size for \$69.00 inc GST. Ideal for topping up pens.



Here is an example of one of our clients beautiful calf sheds, clean and well ventilated and all internal structures can be removed at the end of the season for a complete clean out. Photo courtesy of Wendy Whelan at Toora.



## Hay Report

Most of the country is experiencing very little demand for hay. Straw is in abundance with no real movement across the country and we are seeing significant price reductions for cereal straw. Pricing for cereal hay and vetch hay have remained relatively steady the past couple of weeks. We have seen some small price reductions for good quality shedded hay, but not as significant as the price reduction for straw. If you require any cereal hay, straw or vetch for the winter & spring period contact the office for pricing and availability.

Director, Cameron Brown



## Grain Report

It has been the best start to the growing season in Victoria for many years. Conditions look to remain good with the Bureau of Meteorology forecasting a wetter than average winter for a large percentage of the grain growing areas.

After recent falls in barley prices due to the Chinese tariffs announcement, barley prices are now steadying. Wheat markets are weakening slightly as larger supply of cheaper barley has encouraged some demand to move away from wheat to barley.

New crop wheat and barley pricing is attractive for anyone looking to lock in contracts for 2021.

Director, Chris Brown



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**'Meals on Wheels for your Farm'**

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