



YOUR ANIMALS. OUR EXPERTISE.

AORANGI VETERINARY SERVICES

GERALDINE | TIMARU | FAIRLIE

Dairy Newsletter

Laying the Foundation for a Productive Spring

As the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, it's easy to see winter as a time to slow down. But in reality, the work you do now plays a critical role in setting your herd up for success in spring. Managing winter feed wisely, keeping on top of lice control, strategic drenching, and regular body condition scoring are all key tools to help maintain animal health and productivity through the colder months. With the right approach, winter can be a season of preparation - not just survival.

Winter feeding: Transitioning to crop with confidence

With careful transition, strategic supplementation, and regular monitoring, winter cropping can deliver

excellent outcomes while maintaining animal health and performance.

Transition is key

The lead-up to winter is the time to ensure your herd is well-prepared for the shift. Gradual transition, typically over 10–14 days, is essential for allowing the rumen to adjust to the new feed type. Rushing this process can result in acidosis, reduced intakes, or poor utilisation of the crop. Begin by offering small amounts post-grazing, slowly increasing over time, while maintaining access to pasture, hay or silage.

Energy vs. nutrients

Winter crops provide good energy density, but they are often lacking in key nutrients, especially protein, fibre,

Winter 2025

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and minerals like calcium, magnesium, sodium, and selenium. If these gaps aren't filled, cows can lose condition, compromise immune function, or fail to cycle well in spring.

Mineral supplementation should be tailored to your crop type and existing soil levels so talk to your vet to develop a plan that supports health and productivity through the winter.

Know the risks

Some crops, especially brassicas, carry toxic risks when not managed correctly. Nitrate toxicity, photosensitisation, and SMCO poisoning (causing haemolytic anaemia) are a few of the potential issues, depending on the crop type, weather, and growing conditions.

Key signs to watch for include:

- Sudden drop in appetite or milk production
- Reluctance to move, red or brown urine



Wearables

Smart farming in cold weather: Why winter is the ideal time to lean into wearables

As winter sets in, it's not just your team that feels the chill, your cows do too. With shorter days, increased time indoors, and changes in feed and behaviour, the winter season brings a unique set of challenges to managing dairy herds. That's where wearables can really prove their value.

5 ways wearables add value in winter:

1. Early illness detection – Sudden weather changes or feed transitions can stress cows. Wearables alert you to drops in rumination, activity, or temperature, helping you intervene before problems escalate.
2. Efficient heat detection indoors – With less cow movement and reduced visual observation, reliable heat detection from wearables helps you maintain reproductive performance through the off-season.
3. Better nutrition feedback – As winter feed strategies change, tracking cow activity and rumination helps ensure you're delivering what your herd needs.
4. Lameness monitoring – Slippery surfaces and muddy conditions increase lameness risk. Wearables can help flag changes in walking behaviour before it becomes a herd-wide issue.
5. Labour efficiency – Fewer daylight hours and tougher weather can put pressure on staff time. Wearables streamline herd checks, prioritising which animals need attention.

Ready to get more out of the colder months? Talk to us about how wearables can help you stay ahead of health, reproduction, and feeding challenges this winter.

- Swelling under the jaw, or sunburn-like lesions on white skin
- Increased respiratory rate or muscle tremors

Prompt action can prevent serious outcomes. If you notice any of these signs, remove affected cows from crop and contact us straight away.

Strategic drenching

While internal parasite pressure is typically lower in winter, set-stocking or long crop rotations can still pose a risk. Strategic drenching, especially for younger or lighter cows, remains important - talk to your vet about integrating this with trace element support (particularly selenium and B12).

Lice control

Lice populations build slowly through winter and are often underestimated. We regularly see herds where a slow drop-off in condition, or cows not quite hitting BCS targets is partly driven by lice stress. Even mild infestations can reduce appetite, cause constant irritation, and lead to heat and energy loss. In winter systems where close contact is unavoidable, lice spread easily and can undo months of good feeding.

Now's the time to act: If you haven't treated for lice post-dry off, a pour-on treatment in mid- to late-winter can help reset the clock before calving. For cows already treated earlier in the dry period, consider a follow-up if you're seeing signs like:

- Scratching or rubbing on fences
- Patches of hair loss (especially on neck and withers)
- Restlessness, twitchy skin, or general agitation

Ask us about product options and duration of cover.

Body condition score (BCS): Pre-calving gains matter

Monitoring **body condition score (BCS)** closely during the winter is vital. The dry period is your best (and often only) window to safely regain condition before calving. Aim to assess condition at drying off, pre-wintering, mid-winter, and again before transition to spring feed. Under-conditioned cows at calving can struggle with production, cycling, and metabolic health, while over-conditioned cows are at higher risk for calving difficulties.

By now, cows should be tracking toward their target condition for calving - ideally BCS 5.0 for MA cows and 5.5 for heifers. Gaining condition during lactation is tough, so this is your window to set them up right.

Use the quieter weeks to do another BCS assessment - especially for lighter cows, late calvers, or mixed mobs that may need separating for preferential feeding.

If you'd like support reviewing your lice control, mineral supplementation, or BCS targets heading into winter, the Aorangi Vets team is here to help you finish winter strong.

From Ground to Growth: Key reminders for a healthy start

- **Act early:** If progress stalls—don't wait too long before checking or calling for help.
- **Colostrum counts:** Quality, quantity, and quickly—ideally 10% of bodyweight (or 4l) in the first 2 hours.
- **Keep gear clean and close:** Gloves, lube, ropes, and antiseptic at the ready.

Calf rearing

- **Navel care, hygiene, and warmth** are your best defenses against early illness.

- **Scours prevention** starts with clean pens, dry bedding, and strong colostrum intake.
- **Ask us about calf vaccines** if you haven't reviewed your plan recently.

Disbudding

- **Book early:** We recommend disbudding between 2–6 weeks for minimal stress and good healing.
- We offer **sedation and pain relief** for the best outcome.

Help Us Keep Plastic Out of Landfill – Join Our Teatseal Recycling Effort

Aorangi Vets is proud to be part of the Zoetis Teatseal recycling programme – an initiative that's making a real difference in reducing on-farm plastic waste.

Since launching in 2020, the programme has recycled around 64,000 kilograms of plastic – that's over 8.3 million Teatseal tubes – and turned them into durable Futurepost products like fence posts.

With your continued support, we can grow those numbers even further, helping to protect our land, waterways, and oceans from unnecessary plastic waste.

1. Simply return your empty Teatseal tubes (including caps) to your local Aorangi vets clinic

Note - only Teatseal branded tubes can be recycled due to unknown plastics used in other products and they cannot have any contamination of other materials (e.g. gloves, teatwipes, or antibiotic dry cow therapy).

2. Teatseal buckets can also be recycled as a part of this programme

3. Collect your recycling certificate

Thanks to the great effort of our clients last season, Aorangi Vets ranked #4 in New Zealand and #3 in the South Island for the quantity of Teatseal tubes recycled – a fantastic result we can all be proud of.

Let's keep it up this season – every tube counts!



AORANGI VETERINARY SERVICES

FREE Delivery OR Click & Collect

SPRING ONLINE ORDERING!

Simply scan the QR code to visit our online order portal

SPRING savings

Purchase a box of 12 and save 5%*

SPRING savings

Purchase 300 capsules and save 10%*

SPRING savings

Save 5%*

Available for online order

RVM Prescription Only

MULTIMIN EVOLUTION, Selovin-5, INTRACILLIN, Prolact B12 2000 PLUS SUPPLEMENT, PENCLOX 1200, Orb, Mamyzin, SEPALURE, Virbac Revive, Enerject, Albiotic, CLAVULOX L.C.

Order your Spring supplies online today!

Offers end 31st October 2025. *Terms and conditions apply

The advertisement features a collection of various veterinary products including boxes of antibiotics, supplements, and syringes. Three circular callouts highlight 'Spring savings' offers. A central 'RVM Prescription Only' logo is prominently displayed. The background is a dark green gradient with a white banner at the top containing the Aorangi Veterinary Services logo and a QR code.

Make the Most of Your RVM Appointment

It's that time of year again - RVM consultations are due, and many of you will already have yours booked. But rather than seeing it as just another annual task, we encourage you to treat it as a valuable opportunity to get ahead with your herd health planning.

This appointment isn't just about renewing access to restricted veterinary medicines, it's a chance to pause, reflect, and make sure your animal health strategies are still working as well as they should.

During your RVM consult, we can:

- Review current treatments and adjust them based on what's actually happening in your herd
- Talk through any changes in your system, herd structure, or goals
- Offer practical, tailored advice to improve outcomes next season

These consults give you direct access to our team's knowledge and experience, offering a chance to ask questions, refine plans, and make confident, informed decisions.

If you haven't booked yours yet, now's a good time. We're

here to help you get real value from the process and set your team and your herd up for a strong year ahead.



Meet Lauren Collins – Supporting Dairy Farmers With Practical, Evidence — Based Advice



As a mixed animal vet, Lauren Collins works across a range of farming systems, but this season, she's been particularly focused on supporting our dairy clients with practical, tailored advice around milking management and herd health.

Lauren takes a proactive approach to working with local dairy farmers, helping them fine-tune their systems to support both animal welfare and production goals. "At this time of year, it's all about setting herds up for success through the dry period and into calving," she says. "That means looking closely at body condition, dry-off timing, and any issues that might be affecting production or udder health."

Recently, Lauren's been helping farmers with selective dry cow therapy planning - using milk quality data and clinical history to make sound, evidence-based decisions around treatment. "We're moving away from blanket treatments, and that's a good thing," she explains. "With good records and a strategic approach, we can protect udder health, reduce antibiotic use, and still get great results."

Lauren's calm, practical manner and solid knowledge make her a trusted advisor for many farms, especially when it comes to getting the details right.

"It's rewarding work," she says. "Being able to offer advice that's grounded in data and backed by experience means you're really helping farmers make decisions with confidence, and for the right reasons."

Lauren's strong communication, consistent follow-up, and genuine care for the farming community make her a familiar and valued face on dairies across the region. Whether she's reviewing herd records or rolling up her sleeves, Lauren brings the same dependable, people-first approach to every visit.

TIMARU

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HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.30am - 6.00pm
Sat 10.00am - 11.30am

GERALDINE

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HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.00am - 5.30pm
Sat 9.00am - 12.00pm

FAIRLIE

72 Main Street, Fairlie
Ph. 03 685 8407 (24 hours)

HOURS

Mon-Fri 8.00am - 5.00pm

Visit our website at - www.aorangivet.co.nz



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SERVICES