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Trace mineral trial continues to deliver compelling data to support its efficacy

Seven livestock producers are currently competing in the Multimin Performance Ready Challenge, designed to test the livestock benefits of Multimin, an injection used to top up trace minerals in sheep and cattle prior to high demand periods. Led by animal health company Virbac Australia, the 12-month program will highlight the effects of the mineral injection, delivering real results by real producers.

The challengers are competing to be crowned the Multimin Challenger King or Queen – and it will be the public who will ultimately decide the winner when voting opens online in April. The winner will be announced in May 2019 and awarded an ‘experience of lifetime’ prize, specifically tailored to their farming system.

The latest challenger to reveal their results is Victorian challenger Renee Murfett, who together with husband Alister operates two dairy farms in Framlingham, Victoria. Their 145-hectare “Springlea” property has 220 Friesian Red Dairy milking cows, while their second 183-hectare farm “Merton Park” has 250 Friesian Red Dairy cows.

Renee’s goal has been to increase the immunity, health and productivity of her calves. With five heifers previously lost due to broken legs, Renee’s stock were believed to have suboptimal levels of trace minerals – making Multimin’s animal health program a great opportunity to see the impact of the trace mineral supplement on livestock health and performance.

As part of the trial, 210 animals (105 treated and 105 untreated ‘control’ animals) were used to assess improvements in immunity, indicated by a reduction in disease and with the potential for improved growth. The treated group were given Multimin 4 in 1 trace mineral injection for cattle at 1mL/ 50kg at birth, and again at weaning (around 12 weeks of age), and data was collected relating to incidence of scours or disease, presence of illness or death, growth rate and general health.

Renee observed some marked differences between the two groups at key stages of development. “The first signs appeared very early on,” she reports. “At just four days of age, we found that only the non-treated calves developed scours. Then by day seven, we began to see visual improvements in the Multimin-treated calves, which had darker, shinier coats compared to the non-treated animals.”

Renee’s mentor Dr Susan Swaney explains the significance of that finding. “The coat is an indicator of how well the skin and other physical barriers are. These being the first line of defence, animals with healthy skin and mucous membranes are less likely to be invaded by disease,” she explains. “Improved immune function means improved future productivity, and this type of program while calves are undergoing a growth phase and developing muscle, cartilage and bone will ensure they’re given the best possible start to life.”

Renee also observed that when calves were transitioned onto hard feed, stock from both groups developed scouring – but while some of the control animals went off their feed for two to three days, the Multimin-treated animals continued to feed well.

As Susan explains, “we know the importance of the trace minerals in Multimin in the development of all stages of the immune system. Optimisation of trace elements at critical time points can provide better disease protection and in some cases improved weight gains, to give young animals the best beginning at what is a critical time in development.”

To find out more about how Multimin can improve your livestock performance, contact your local Virbac representative on 1800 242 100.

Farmers can also follow the trials at www.multiminchallenge.com

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Photo caption:

1. Renee Murfett with mentor Dr Susan Swaney
2. Renee’s Multimin treated calves