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Newsletter July 2017

Mastitis Control Plan: Working to reduce mastitis in your herd

With the recent drive for selective dry cow therapy as well as higher welfare standards across the dairy industry, there has been much debate about the control of mastitis. As well as a welfare and health concern, **mastitis is an expensive problem to have**; but its incidence and therefore cost, can be reduced with the AHDB Mastitis Control Plan offered by FarmVets SouthWest.



Single cases of mastitis can alone cost in excess of £250-300 when you consider the economic losses from decreased production, cell count penalties and dumped milk, as well as the obvious treatment costs. It'll come as no surprise that exact costs will vary considerably between farms simply because **the underlying cause will be different for every farm**. Determining the most likely cause or causes is central to controlling the % cases of mastitis.

The AHDB Mastitis Control Plan is a full, bespoke plan which will allow us to:

- Measure and assess all your cattle housing
- Observe and assess milking routine
- Ask a series of questions relevant to all aspects of mastitis on your farm

Using this information, and all of your mastitis data (clinical cases and cell count data), FVSW will diagnose the primary cause of mastitis and produce a **targeted plan specific to your farm**. This plan will prioritise changes on your farm that will have the **biggest impact on reducing mastitis in your cows**.

For more information, or to book your plan, contact your local FVSW office.

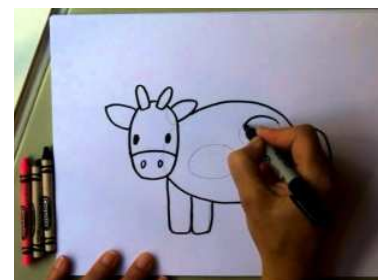
Honiton Show: Kids' Competition

In preparation for this year's Honiton show we are running a kids' art competition.

Draw, paint or colour a picture of your favourite farmyard scene. **Why not sketch one of our vets in action on your farm?!** Please hand in all entries to your local office and they will be displayed on our stand at Honiton show. Our favourite will also win a prize, no age limit.

Please visit us at Stand 130 Avenue B on Thursday, 3rd August

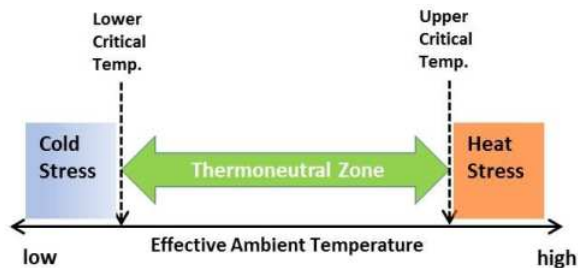
Please note that the Yarcombe office will not be open until 11:00 on Thursday, 3rd.



A second *heatwave* forecast: Consider the impact heat stress can have on your farm

With another possible heatwave forecast for July/August it seems appropriate to discuss the effects heat can have and how we can limit its impact on your stock. With changing climates it seems highly likely that this may become a recurring problem in the UK farming industry.

Both cattle and sheep are homoeothermic animals, meaning they need to maintain a constant core temperature regardless of external influence. With the normally predictable UK weather we often give more consideration to animals keeping warm in cold winter temperatures (e.g. calf pneumonia prevention) and overlook hot weather. However, with temperatures reaching 30°C+ in the past couple of weeks some of you may have experienced the negative impacts of higher ambient temperatures; such as a reduced milk yield for those of you that are dairy farmers. **The upper temperature of the thermoneutral zone for cattle is 25°C, anywhere above this and energy will need to be utilised to keep cool.** The further we move away from this upper critical temperature the more likely heat stress becomes. It's worth mentioning that relative humidity will influence its impact, in 90% humidity heat stress can be exhibited in temperatures as low as 22°C.



Animals suffering from heat stress will become lethargic and will often bow their heads. **They will stand tightly packed together panting in an attempt to increase heat dispersion.** Feed intakes will be significantly reduced, meaning animals will be at greater risk of secondary nutritional complications such as ruminal acidosis, as well as negatively affected performance. If severe enough, heat stress can also cause an animal to abort.



Obviously we cannot influence the weather; *even though many of us wish we could!* **Instead we need to employ practical measures to limit heat exposure such as plenty of shade and ventilation** (whether that be natural or mechanical ventilation). Temporarily moving panels from housing is a good way to increase summer ventilation without negatively affecting housing during the winter. For the time being there is too low a risk to warrant sprinkler systems in the UK, but **hosing down stock in severe heat should be considered.** As always, sufficient drinking water must also be available, water consumption can increase by more than 20% (exceeding 100L/day).



Arla, Muller and especially Dairy Crest are some of the milk buyers who are keen for their suppliers to complete the "Milksure" course. Should you need us, we are trained providers of the Milksure course.

What is it? The MilkSure initiative is for British dairy farmers. Its mission is to safeguard the production of wholesome milk which is free of veterinary medicine residues. MilkSure is led by DairyUK and has been developed in conjunction with BCVA (the British Cattle Veterinary Association).

MilkSure is a training course for British dairy farmers and their employees. Training is provided by vets for their own clients. The course covers all the technical and practical aspects necessary to safeguard residue free milk.



Should you want to register for a course please leave your details with any of our offices.