



Newsletter June 2021

Tackling Lameness

Eoghan McAlonan

At the practice we have been focusing on improving the mobility of our dairy herds. We offered free mobility scores over the winter as a way of determining the current state of play on our farms. Nationally 36.8% of the dairy herd are estimated to be lame on any one day (Barker *et al.*, 2010); a sobering thought. It is heartening to see that of the farms we score, levels of lameness are much lower, with many recording **less than 10% lame cows**. Eliot has been leading our work with mobility in the practice. He is a “Mobility Mentor” and advocates the **AHDB Healthy Feet Programme** which works with farmers to appraise and improve lameness on our farms. This involves a team approach involving farm staff, foot-trimmers and the Vet to uncover which types of lameness are predominating on the farm and then making a few changes to reduce the incidence of those problems. This is a fantastic programme delivering real results using a practical approach. Eliot is keen to work proactively with any farm wanting to improve in this area (eliot.hedley@thefarmvets.co.uk).

Mobility scoring

Perhaps the first step is a mobility score? 4 of our Vets are Register of Mobility Scorers (ROMS) mobility scorers. On bigger units, regular mobility scoring can be a useful way to detect lame cows so we can instigate treatment sooner. Mobility scoring is competitively priced at £27/hr for a ROMS Vet scorer, (2 hour minimum).

Foot trimming

Having a system of regular foot trimming is vital. The practice uses Phil Jones, a NACFT—Category A accredited trimmer. He attends farms regularly and as well as trimming the lame cows he carries out pre-dry trims and 100-days-in-milk inspections. This way he can correct problems and foot imbalances before the cow goes lame. In between visits from the foot-trimmer, it is imperative that someone on the farm is skilled and confident in foot trimming to tackle new cases as soon as they appear, so they don't have to wait for the next foot-trimming session. Early treatment is more effective than delayed treatment. Most cases of lameness can be treated successfully with a corrective trim, a block and a pain killing injection (Metacam or Ketofen). To that end David Taylor is holding a **practical foot trimming course** in July. This 2-day course will instil in you the confidence to tackle cases alone, knowing you are using best practice. To book a place contact the office.

Foot-bathing

Poor foot-bathing is worse than no foot-bathing as in some cases poor practice can mean the footbath spreads disease instead of preventing it! Get the Vet to appraise your foot bath next time they are on farm.

Did you know?

It is important to disinfect knives between cows as Treponemes (the bugs behind digital dermatitis) can survive on hoof knives. The bugs are unlikely to survive for longer times though, making spread between farms less likely. 1% FAM 30 is effective against treponemes.

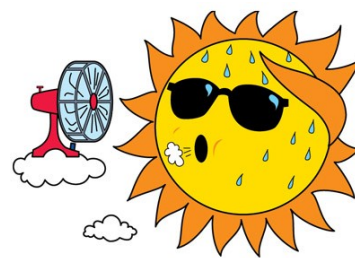


Management of Heat Stress in Cattle

Cormac White

Clinical signs?

- Fertility problems; heat undetectable (shorter, no bulling signs), no proper cycle.
- Udder issues; mastitis cases up.
- Milk fat content down, Protein content down.
- Panting ++, intake down.
- Rumination down.
- Immune system down.



When?

- Relative humidity temperature index > 75 beginning of heat stress for dairy cattle.
- 24° C in stormy/wet conditions.
- 29° C in dry conditions.
- Particularly obvious in cows with underlying problems (chronic pneumonia, lungworm).

Management

General:

- Mechanical ventilation with fans, misting (limit excessive temperature in the building).
- Ensure a sufficient supply of water (quantity, quality).
- Distribution of the diet in the evening or feed twice a day (limit the extra heat of the rumen and the peaks of fermentation).
- Add water to the ration (limit the sorting after drying of the ration).
- Increase the Cation Anion balance (limit acidosis problems).

Acute cases:

- Move the cow to the shade, hose with fresh water.
- Treat underlying problems.
- Drench with Pump Selekt Restore sachets.

Hoist

In the past we have been able to lend our practice hoist out to clients on occasion. Unfortunately our insurance company has told us this is no longer legal, so we can no longer facilitate this service.

Aborting ewes/weak lambs

Annually, through the FlockCheck scheme, MSD Animal Health **subsidise the laboratory fees** to test ewes for exposure to toxoplasmosis and EAE. **Six to eight blood samples will be taken from unvaccinated ewes that have either aborted, are barren or have produced weakly lambs.** Subsidised blood testing is only available until 30th June 2021 so take advantage of it now! There will be a charge for a visit and time to take blood samples.

APHA 6-monthly testing

From the 1st July 2021, APHA will be introducing 6-monthly whole herd testing. This means that if you have a whole herd test from 1st July 2021 then your next test will be 6 months from this date. Some herds will be eligible to remain on annual testing if they have become CHECS TB Accredited or have not had a TB breakdown in the last 6 years.

Medicines Course

As you are aware Red Tractor requires Farm staff to have undergone a Medicines Training Course. In our continuing effort to support our farmers we will be running a **Medicines course on Wednesday 7th July at Sedgemoor Auction Centre at 2pm.** This will cover all material relevant to these recommendations/regulations. The course is £40 to each farm. Please ring any of our offices to book your place.

Mobility Scoring

A reminder that we offer RoMS accredited mobility scoring for our farms that are wishing to reduce lameness in their herds. We only charge £54 for the first 2 hours and then £27/hour thereafter (non-inclusive of VAT). We have been met with very good feedback so far so wish to continue getting new farms involved!

Cool Bags

We had a stock of dozens of cool bags, now we have none. Please can you return the cool bags or we will have none to give out with your vaccines.