

FarmVets

SOUTHWEST



www.thefarmvets.co.uk

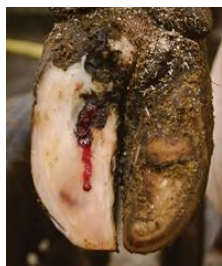
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Newsletter September 2012

PREVENT SOLAR ULCERS—PUT YOUR FEET UP



Mechanical factors have a major impact on the incidence of solar ulcers. Standing time is of great importance and should be reduced to a minimum. Cows may stand for a long time if the space they have to lie down in is uncomfortable. Cows waiting in the collecting area to be milked is also another area where they could be standing on their feet for a long time.

To make sure that your cows feet get enough time to rest you should ensure that your cubicle system fits your cows' needs. There should be at least 10% more cubicles as cows, the cubicles should be the right size and have comfortable bedding. Well bedded and well ventilated loose housing is another very good system, provided it is not overstocked.



In large herds some cows can be seen standing for several hours in the collecting yard before being milked. Cows in smaller herds with smaller parlours can also spend a long time waiting to be milked. If cows have to wait for more than an hour it will have a detrimental impact on their feet.

When milking think about splitting your herd into groups before bringing them into the collecting area. Rubber flooring in the collecting area and the parlour will help to prevent lameness. Less time spent in the collecting yard will also mean more time for cows to eat, lie down and ruminate and... produce more milk!



Are your suckler cows in calf?

Don't forget to check that your suckler herd is in calf.....

Book us in to PD them, so we know the bull has done his work, and to give you an idea of when they are going to calve.



Closamectin

POUR ON

SEPTEMBER OFFER



We are offering 6 litres of Closamectin with a £60 cash back voucher whilst stock lasts.

Please call any of our branches to take advantage of this special offer

Care of the Newborn Calf

It is always a relief to get a live calf from a difficult calving but the calf is still highly vulnerable. Calving difficulties (dystocia) are associated not only with stillborn calves but also with an increased likelihood of infectious disease in early life. Even calves that experience relatively mild dystocia may be quite badly affected. Calves may be suffering with acidosis due to breathing difficulties or due to a build-up of lactic acid (the stuff that makes your muscles burn when you exercise). This can damage the brain and other major organs and has also been associated with reduced absorption of antibodies from colostrum. There are some simple tips to ensure that these calves live and thrive.

Clear the airway

When the umbilical cord is broken the calf has to breathe to get oxygen. A piece of straw in the nose or pouring cold water on the calf's head can stimulate respiration. A healthy calf should be breathing within 30 seconds of birth. **DO NOT HANG CALVES OVER GATES.** Yes, we all do it but what actually happens is that thick fluid comes from the stomach not the lungs. This is only to be expected since the calf's lungs are not inflated before birth and so cannot hold any fluid. The calf can be placed flat on a straw bale with its head dangling over the side to clear any mucous in the nose/throat.

Dry the calf off

Licking by the dam will dry the calf and stimulate breathing but if the dam cannot or is slow to lick the calf then rub vigorously with a dry towel so that the hair fluffs up from nose to tail. Don't be shy, the key word is "vigorously". Do not slap or hit the calf but do get it sat up on its chest not flat out. A dry calf can regulate its own temperature far better than a wet one.

Give colostrum

Once the calf is breathing well give 4 litres of colostrum (10% of bodyweight). This not only provides antibodies but fat and protein for energy and hormones that stimulate gut development. Giving birth is (I have been informed by my wife) traumatic but we often don't consider the traumatic effect on the newborn, especially calves. Broken ribs are far more common than we realise. By following simple guidelines it is possible to reduce neo-natal losses and also increase future health and wellbeing of the calf. Colostrum is far more than just antibodies but that subject is for another newsletter!



Eoghan McAlonan

ON OUR ROUNDS.....

The "summer" has continued to impact on nearly every aspect of cow health. Those lucky enough to always keep the cows in may have managed to avoid immediate problems, but poor quality of silages and low crop harvests will lead to problems sooner or later.

Mastitis is rampant on farms that do turn the cows out. Many clients have contacted us due to rising cell counts and numbers of clinical cases. In our labs we have cultured a lot of strep uberis from the samples taken. This bug is often associated with pasture and it's no surprise to see lots of it this year when cows are "camping" in favoured areas of pasture to avoid the inclement weather. Extended courses of tubes (6 days) will be beneficial to avoid cases becoming "cow adapted" and leading to cell count problems. However, this is "off-licence" so speak to us first. Pre-dipping as well as using a proper barrier post dip should also help tackle this form of mastitis.

Remember to make use of our mastitis labs; considering a case of mastitis may cost £150-£180 the cost of ten samples at £4 each is a no brainer! Sample every case before treatment, freeze it and send it to us when necessary.