



Daleside
Veterinary Group

FARM NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019

AHDB HerdAdvance Scheme

HerdAdvance aims to help Welsh dairy farmers lift herd profitability and performance by improving disease prevention and control.

Farmers can apply to receive financial and technical support through the HerdAdvance project to improve their herd health management and disease control. Please contact the practice to register your interest as soon as possible.

The Scheme Includes:

- Free herd health plan review
- Free biosecurity plan review
- Free animal health action plan
- Financial and technical assistance to tackle a range of animal health issues
- Semen vouchers available for breeding decisions, based on Herd Genetic Reports
- Genomic testing
- Greater on-farm efficiency and profitability
- Preventing production losses
- Reducing antibiotic usage

August Show Schedule

We will be attending both the Oswestry and Flint + Denbigh shows this month, please do come along for a drink and a chat



FARM 2019 SHOWS

Come and find us



3RD AUGUST
Oswestry Show



15TH AUGUST
Flint and Denbigh Show

New Large Animal Receptionist

We are pleased to announce that Allison Woodfine has joined the practice as a new Large Animal Receptionist on a part time basis, we are sure you will all give her a warm welcome and hope she settles in well.



Heat Stress in Dairy Cows

There is increasing evidence that even the relatively low temperatures experienced during the UK summer can lead to depressed feed intakes, lower milk yields, reduced fertility and increased risk of mastitis.

The comfort zone for a dairy cow is wide, varying from around -15°C to +25°C. Minus 15°C is called the Lower Critical Temperature (LCT) and 25°C the Upper Critical Temperature (UCT). At temperatures below the -15°C the cow will increase her dry matter intake to keep warm or convert feed to heat rather than produce milk. At temperatures above 25°C, cows have two main control strategies to maintain their thermal balance:

1. Increasing heat dispersion - in particular evaporation, by increasing blood flow to the skin, panting, drooling etc. These activities increase the maintenance energy needs of the animal by an estimated 20% at 35°C. This means that part of the cow's production energy will be re-directed to thermal regulation.

2. Limiting heat production - by reducing all activity and changing the feeding pattern. As the majority of heat production in dairy cows is essentially due to rumen fermentations the cow will reduce her intake by 10-30%. She will also be selective in what she will eat - namely less roughages. The latter increase rumen activity and therefore heat production. Also, rumination, which produces heat, decreases dramatically.

The most visible symptoms of heat stress tend to be elevated breathing rates in a significant proportion of the herd. The first step in improving conditions for heat-stressed cows is to identify means of improving air flow and ventilation in buildings replacing doors with gates, or taking out alternate boards on spaced boarding are obvious suggestions. As a last resort, fans can be installed where other improvements cannot be made. This is

particularly important in the collecting yard where cows are standing for longer periods of time, so even just starting with assessing your collecting area could make a difference. Drinking water supply is another essential area in which conditions can be improved for heat-stressed cows; water intakes can increase by up to 10-20% in hot weather, particularly in high-yielders, which are more prone to suffering the effects of heat stress. Overcrowding should be avoided and cows allowed larger than normal space requirements by reducing stocking densities in buildings, if possible.

It may also be wise to buffer feed cows either earlier in the morning or later in the evening when temperatures are lower. Rations should be balanced so that the ingredients most likely to degrade due to the heat are fed as efficiently as possible or replaced by other more suitable products. The mineral content of rations should also be reviewed so that the minerals lost in sweat in hot weather are replaced.





Summer Mastitis

British summer weather may be unpredictable but summer mastitis certainly isn't.

It is a disease that changes little over the years, affecting the same farms year after year and often just certain fields within those holdings. Very few mastitis affected quarters will recover, so any treatment is purely salvage and the main goal should be to avoid the disease, or at least minimise its incidence. The basics are simple - it occurs in summer, it is spread by flies and it affects dry cows, heifers or young calves. It is an acute disease of the non-lactating mammary gland and is mainly caused by the bacterium *Trueperella pyogenes*. Other organisms can increase its severity and allow infection to establish more readily.

Farmers should look out for:

An animal standing apart from the others, often lame, dull, anorexic and with a significantly raised temperature.

Teats become swollen and there are often large numbers of flies feeding around them.

Disease progresses until the whole udder is swollen, hard and producing foul-smelling, thick, yellow secretions, often tinged with blood. Left untreated, abortion or death can follow.

Outside the fly season and in milking cows, less typical cases will also occur. It is possible to find a heifer 'blind' in one quarter, having suffered no obvious disease. Efforts to open the teat canal will prove useless and it is highly likely that many of these cases will be due to summer mastitis.

Treatment

Very few affected quarters will recover and

treatment is aimed at saving the animal and recovering as much as possible. That means saving the animal's life, saving the pregnancy, producing a viable calf or at least a cow that can milk to some extent on the remaining quarters. Treatment involves antibiotics to combat infection and anti-inflammatories to counter the swelling and reduce temperature. Getting antibiotics to where they are needed is a challenge, as large amounts of pus and dead tissue are present, hence the importance of anti-inflammatory drugs. *Trueperella* is sensitive to penicillin, but in some ways this is academic, as the antibiotic struggles to penetrate the damaged udder. Cases are best approached as if dealing with an abscess. It's essential that as much material as possible is removed by frequent stripping, but while the organism is common in the environment, stripping can be a source of further infection. Strippings should be discarded safely and not on to the ground. Occasionally, the udder may completely slough off in a similar way to gangrenous mastitis. There may also be occasions where it is necessary to split the teat lengthways to drain the udder of infection or the teat may be removed completely.

Prevention

The keys to prevention are antibiotic cover, fly control, prevention of teat lesions, teat sealants and removal of susceptible animals from susceptible fields.

Antibiotic cover

Intramammary dry cow antibiotics significantly help to reduce disease. Dry cow antibiotics may not be active for sufficient time and repeat infusion may be needed after 3 to 4 weeks - even with long-acting preparations. Repeating treatment may cause a serious problem if there is an insufficiently long dry period to be able to re-infuse after four weeks and still calve outside the withdrawal period. In this instance shorter acting formulations should be considered. Good aseptic technique is essential when re-infusing



Summer Mastitis

dry cow tubes, otherwise a severe mastitis incident can occur. If considering repeat infusion please consult the practice. In high risk areas consideration can be given to antibiotic tubing of heifers - seek our advice prior to performing this.

Teat skin lesions

It is important to check teats regularly. Good teat condition will reduce or eliminate infection particularly as the initial source of summer mastitis is usually by infection tracking into the teat-end from a sore harbouring the organism. Ensure any affected animals are treated and preferably kept away from the rest of the herd. Additional fly protection can also be given to these animals.

Teat seals

Stockholm tar used to be popular, but its messy to apply and needs repeating regularly. Taping teats is laborious and difficult to do properly. The new silicone teat sealants have revolutionised this form of management as they are easy to apply and last for the whole dry period.

Fly control

The head fly, *Hydrotoea irritans* also carries the bacteria causing summer mastitis, but it is probably only a secondary factor after something else has started the outbreak e.g. an animal with an infected teat sore. This fly's eggs over-winter in sandy soils and emerge in June or July. There is only one generation of adult flies active in July, August and September. High winds and heavy rains inhibit fly activity. Controlling flies on cattle is best done using pour-ons or impregnated fly tags. Unfortunately, these give little protection to the udder area and it is worth giving a half dose of a liquid product spread with a gloved hand over the whole udder surface.

To minimise risks, it is important to:

- Identify and isolate cases early
- Watch out for teat lesions
- Control flies on cattle (especially around teats)
- Avoid areas with large fly populations.
- Where possible, avoid pastures with sandy soils, tree cover and water



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Upcoming Workshops

These daytime workshops will help to increase your knowledge on two very important topics currently facing the dairy industry. By attending these workshops, you will receive a LANTRA Awards certificate of attendance and Farming Connect CPD record. Attendance is free and lunch will be provided, places are limited to 20 people per workshop, so book your places early!

2nd October Reducing Mastitis in Dairy Cows

As well as affecting production and profitability, mastitis has a major welfare impact; next to lameness it is probably the disease with most effect on cow well-being. Yet of the three major dairy herd problems, i.e. mastitis, fertility and lameness, mastitis is the disease that you can have the most impact on if you implement a well-planned control programme. This workshop will focus on tackling both contagious and environmental mastitis as well as drying off protocols on farm.

4th December Tackling Lameness in Dairy Cows

Learn about the infectious and non-infectious types of lameness in dairy cows. The focus will be on awareness of the different causes of the various types of lameness and how they can require very different approaches for control. Treatment protocols will be discussed, along with preventative measures to improve cow health, welfare and productivity.

