



**Daleside**  
Veterinary Group

# FARM NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022



## Guy bike ride

From the 9th of May Guy will be cycling across the Trans Cambrian Way over three days. It is a 100 mile off road route with about 3250m of elevation, crossing Mid Wales from the English border to the West Wales coast. Guy has chosen to support The DPJ Foundation, which is a Welsh mental health charity to support those in agriculture and rural communities with mental health problems.

There are three main strands to their service: support through specific local counselling, awareness through social media discussing mental health, and mental health awareness training.

You can donate at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/guy-tomlinson1](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/guy-tomlinson1) any donations would be greatly appreciated. Good luck Guy!

## Fertility

Fertility is a fundamental part of farming, from dairy to suckler cows, its importance cannot be underestimated. With the increasing use of AI, heat detection is vital. Heat detection errors can be divided into two types; Missing cows that are on heat and misidentifying cows on heat when they are not.

### Missing cows that are on heat

The main effect will be fewer cows being submitted for service when they should be, and intervals between heats will be longer than the standard 18-24 days.

### Misidentifying cows on heat when they are not

The most definitive sign that a cow is in heat is standing to be mounted, however, in certain situations this can be misleading, in collecting yards or cubicles cows may simply not have anyway to move away

### Signs suggestive of cow being on heat

Attempting to mount other cows

- Mounting head-to-head (rare but cows are usually in heat if they do this)
- Restless behaviour
- Bellowing when isolated
- Small increase in body temperature
- Poor milk let-down
- Clear mucus discharge from the vulva - 'bulling string' (mucus discharge with blood suggests heat 48 hours ago)

However, in the modern dairy cow heat detection is becoming increasingly difficult. The average duration of oestrus is around 8 hours where traditionally it was always accepted to be 12 hours. Additionally, oestrus intensity has also decreased, this may be due to smaller number of cows on heat at any one time due to all-year round calving and the reluctance to show these behaviours in cubicle housing.



## Heat detection aids

Simply observing cow behaviour may not be sufficient to get a good pregnancy rate and may result in a poor submission rate. The table below summarises the most used heat detection aids.

System	Advantages	Disadvantages
Tail paint / chalk	Cheap, easy to apply	Experience required to identify rubs from mounting. Reapplication necessary at least weekly
Heat mount detectors	Relatively cheap Less skill required than tail paint	Knocks can activate detector Can be lost, particularly in cubicles or in fields with low trees
Teaser bulls	Accurate and sensitive	Cost of bull maintenance Safety Venereal disease
Milk progesterone	Accurate and sensitive - low progesterone indicates oestrus Early identification of abnormal cows	Multiple tests needed Staff training required Viable once automatic monitoring developed
Activity monitors	Accurate and sensitive Automatic recording	Expensive Requires compatible computer system Staff training required

## Red tractor Husbandry management procedures

A lot of our clients are member of the Red tractor Farm assurance schemes. The use of additional pain relief in addition to local anaesthetic is a requirement for a lot of routine procedures carried out on farm. The best pain relief in addition to local anaesthetic is an anti-inflammatory injection such as Metacam. Please read the table below to ensure that you are complying with these requirements.

### CATTLE

PROCEURE/METHOD		CONDITIONS OF USE			
		Animal age	Operator	Anaesthetic	Analgesic
Castration	Elastration/Rubber ring	1 <sup>st</sup> week of life only	Competent stock person		
	Clamp/bloodless	Up to 2 months	Competent stock person		With
	Other method	Up to 2 months	Competent stock person	With	With
	When animal is over 2 months of age	Over 2 months	Vet only	With	With
Disbudding	Chemical cauterisation	1st week of life only	Competent stock person		With
	Other method than above e.g. hot iron	Up to 2 months	Competent stock person	With	With
Dehorning	Cutting/sawing horn ( <b>must</b> not be used routinely)	Up to 5 months	Competent stock person	With	With
		Over 5 months	Vet only		
Removal of Supernumerary Teats	Using clean, sharp scissors	Up to 3 months	Competent stock person	With	With
		Over 3 months	Vet only		

Routine tail docking of cattle is not permitted.

## Barren ewe checks

Barren ewe check funding is still available, with all lab costs covered. If you are concerned about the performance of your flock over this lambing season, then specific testing could be beneficial. Barren or aborting ewes can be blood tested to evaluate if there is an infectious cause. Luckily vaccines for Enzootic Abortion and Toxoplasmosis are highly effective at managing the impact of these infectious diseases. Please speak to one of the vets if this is something of concern for you.

