



Coombefield Veterinary Hospital Farm Newsletter July 2016



HEAT STRESS IN COWS

We are all looking forward to nice warm summer days, with lots of sun and the occasional rain shower to keep the grass green and help the maize to grow.

What about the cows? Do they enjoy the warm days as much as us?

There is lots of evidence showing cows suffer from Heat Stress much quicker than us. This is a well-known problem in warmer countries, but can easily occur in the UK. Long before a human would start to feel uncomfortable and start to struggle to work in the heat and humidity, the cows have been suffering the effects of Heat Stress for some time.

There are lots of effects and signs of Heat Stress. Visual signs like reduced milk yield, increased cell count, increased respiratory rate, decreased feed intake and decreased rumination. Less obvious signs include impaired rumen function and balance, reduced udder health, lower immunity, reduced pregnancy rate (average 5% drop during Heat Stress), and increased risk of uterine disease and lameness.

Heat stress is measured using a combination of temperature and humidity. In the UK heat stress will usually start at temperatures around 20 centigrade due to the high humidity that is normal in the UK.

So, how do we keep cows cool? Cows are not good at sweating, so their main cooling mechanism is panting. Their body temperature will increase, especially when they are lying down. When it has reached a critical point (38.9°C), the cow will need to stand up to be able to pant and reduce its body temperature. The cow will lie down for shorter periods of time, increasing the pressure on the feet.

It is therefore important to minimise heat build-up when the cow is lying down and enhance the cooling down when the cow is standing. The collecting yard is a critical area, cows are forced to stand and it is important to allow them to cool before being milked and returning to their housing. When the yard is too small, bunching actually makes things worse. Fans that are positioned in the wrong position can also recirculate hot humid air. This will increase the Heat Stress.

What do we need to do to reduce Heat Stress?

Ideally, sheds should be ventilated naturally as this is not only cost effective, but also sustainable. However, a number of factors can make this difficult to achieve. Prevailing winds, building positioning, stocking rates and the variability of these factors lead to even the perfect shed being less than perfect at certain times.

Understanding cow flow, optimising holding areas, providing plentiful water supply, providing shaded areas, installing fans and/or sprinklers and providing cool lying areas are all factors that need to be looked at when investigating the impact of Heat Stress on your farm.

Heat Stress is an underestimated problem on UK dairy farms, taking time to understand its implications and investigating potential solutions for your farm will undoubtedly help your cows.

Still time for grazing season protection from roundworms and lungworm

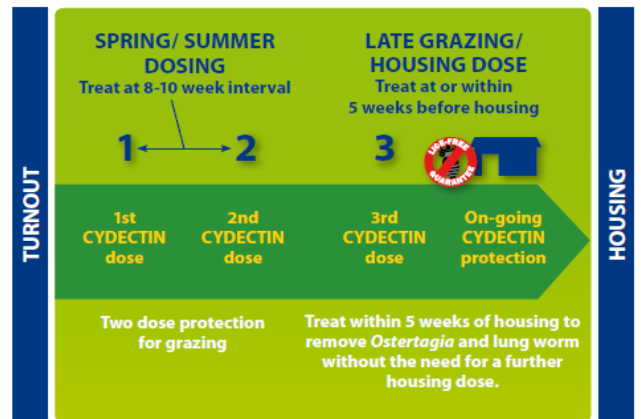
Whether rearing beef cattle or dairy heifers, maximum weight gain during the low cost grazing season is clearly vital in the current financial climate, according to Zoetis vet Dave Armstrong. "So preventing performance losses due to roundworm burdens, or worse still deaths later in the season due to lungworm, are clearly sensible priorities," he suggests.

By now, many first and second year grazing cattle will already have received season-long worm control treatments, either as a 10% moxidectin injection at the base of the ear or Autoworm pulse-release bolus.

For cattle turned out with neither of these treatments, protection for the rest of the grazing season is still possible using a persistent pour-on wormer such as CYDECTIN 0.5% Pour On for Cattle.

"This treatment gives reliable protection at pasture against roundworms and lungworm with an eight to 10 week dosing interval," Dave explains. "So one treatment now, another in about two month's time, then one up to five weeks pre-housing can provide a worm control protocol through to turnout 2017." (see graph).

The intervals between treatments allow exposure to worm larvae for stimulation of natural immunity, then the next treatment kills them off before they have a detrimental impact on the animal. The way worm larvae come into contact with moxidectin means they can stimulate natural immunity before being killed.



Two other important advantages of this pour on are its rainfastness and low impact on dung-dwelling insects. For advice regarding your cattle worming choices and responsible use of wormer, please contact us at the practice.



WIN TWO TICKETS TO HONITON SHOW

This year Coombefield are running a photography competition

The topic for the photographs are
"Your Animals"

There are two categories to enter, humorous and portrait
The best entries will be shown at Honiton Show

Please email your photos to farm@axvets.co.uk
Please send contact details with your photographs.

Closing date for entries – Monday 18th July 2016



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FARM DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

If you would like to speak to a Farm vet or arrange a visit, please call **01297 630515**

Medicines can be requested via email or by telephone

Email: farm@axvets.co.uk