

CATTLE NEWS – JULY 2019

EMERGENCY SLAUGHTER

We have recently had a few queries regarding emergency slaughter and whether certain cases fit this picture. Cases suitable for emergency slaughter are defined as;

‘An otherwise **healthy animal** that has suffered an **accident** (e.g. injury or damage) for which **no treatment** has been given.’

Animals which do not have a normal temperature, are suffering from ongoing conditions, under medicine withdrawals or have received any treatments are not suitable for on farm emergency slaughter.

Carcases have to reach a slaughterhouse within two hours of death so please arrange this prior to the visit. If you have any further questions regarding on farm slaughter please phone the office for discussion.



HEAT STRESS IN CATTLE

Cows maintain a constant body temperature of around 38.6°C and are very sensitive to fluctuations in their environment. The optimum ambient temperature for a dairy cow ranges from minus 15°C to 25°C. Factors such as humidity, wind speed and air temperature affects their ability to keep cool and stay within this range.



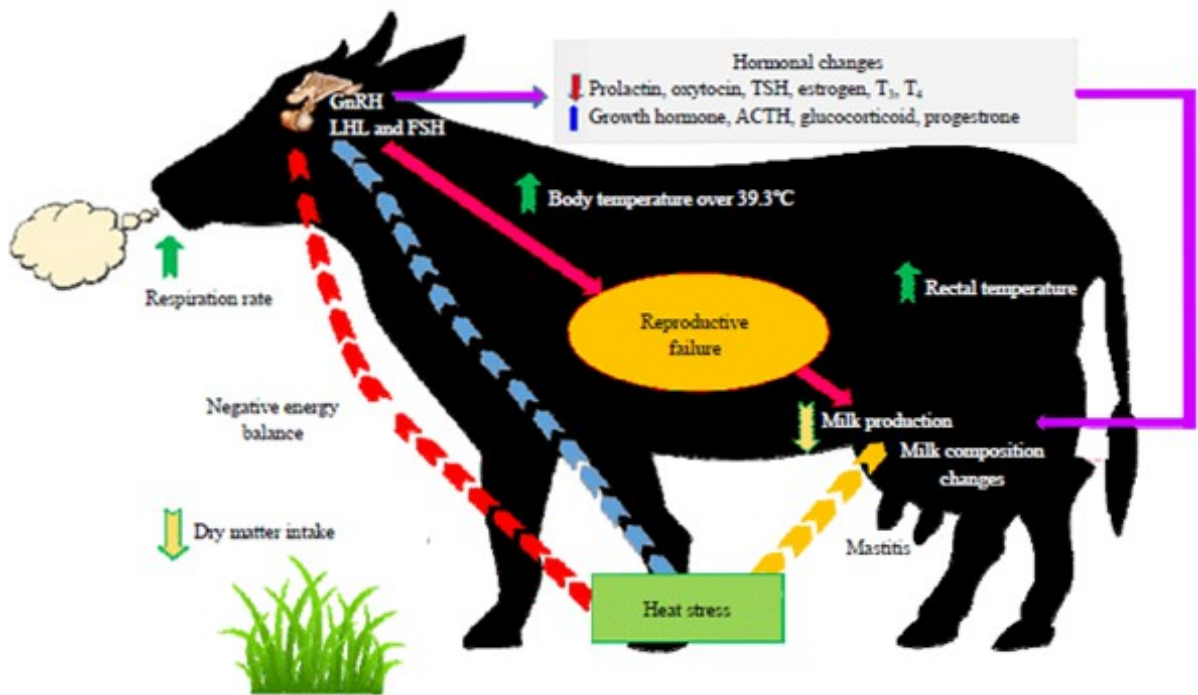
Cows have 2 main control strategies to keep cool:

1. **Increase heat loss:** cows may increase breathing rate, pant and drool as well as sweat to try and cool down by evaporation of water, thus making dehydration a serious issue when temperatures are increased.
2. **Limit heat produced:** the majority of heat produced comes from rumen fermentation, therefore to combat this the cow will reduce feed intakes and rumination will decrease.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STRESS IN COWS

Increased temperatures can result in a lot of problems for our dairy cows! Recognising the symptoms and responding as quickly as possible is the best way to limit production losses and maintain cow welfare.

- **Poor fertility** essential to limit heat stress effects on reproduction.
- Significantly decreased conception rates as cows are less active to exhibit bulling behaviour and the hormonal pathways associated with oestrous are reduced.
- All processes from follicle development to embryo implantation are highly sensitive to increased temperatures.
- Efficient cooling can help cows maintain a normal temperature so providing areas of shade outdoors and good ventilation in buildings is
- **Decreased milk production**
- High yielding cows are more sensitive to temperature changes so most at risk of this symptom.
- A milking cow will require ~100 litres each day to keep up



with milk production and normal losses through faeces, urine and sweat so dehydration can negatively impact yield and production.

- Ensure adequate flow rates to troughs to ensure these never run dry and make water easily accessible.
-
- **Reduced dry matter intake**
- Can lead to negative energy balance causing increased level of ketosis, displaced abomasums and retained cleansings.
- Rumen fermentation produces a lot of heat, particularly digestion of forages, so cows become selective when feeding.
- If selective feeding is prolonged it can lead to acidosis - consider buffer

feeding some of the ration in the evening when cooler and cows are more likely to eat

-
-
- **Outbreaks of mastitis**
- Increased cortisol (stress hormone) can lead to depressed immunity in our cows and lower the cows' natural defences against mastitis bacteria.
- Conditions of high temperatures and high humidity are favourable for bacteria to grow and spread.
 - Avoid overcrowding and reduce stocking density to allow cows more space; avoiding stressful conditions and providing a cleaner environment to help reduce the risk of mastitis.