

FARM NEWS

Issue 77 | Aug 2021 www.drovefarmvets.co.uk

STAFF NEWS

Happy Retirement Anne!

We would like to wish Anne Chambers a long and happy retirement. Anne has been a highly valued member of our Farm Office team for many years, however with more grandchildren on the way, she has decided that the time is right to quietly step away from the office job and to spend some quality time with her family. All the best Anne and thank you very much for all your hard work over the years, you will be missed!



Goodbye Stefan & Lindsay

Our TB Tester Stefan has decided to return home to see friends and family in Romania. Thanks for your hard work over the last year in some very difficult circumstances and good luck for your future! Have a safe trip home.

Lindsay Rumming has also recently left her split Farm Office and Vet Tech role; however she will still be popping in periodically to assist Pete as his embryo transfer technician. Lindsay won't be short of things to occupy her time, with her Oxford Down Sheep, Liddiard Turkeys and the Pop-Up Farm Shop all keeping her busy. Thank you Lindsay.

Welcome back Toni Stevens

We are very pleased to welcome Toni Stevens back to join the Farm Office Team after a gap of over 10 years! Toni will be a familiar face to many and will be helping to fill the void left by the departures of Anne and Lindsay, by taking up a full time Farm Reception role, with additional responsibility for Stock Control. It is good to have you back on the team!



Drove Vet Tech Service

Dan & Violeta have started to take on the vacated Vet Tech responsibilities, alongside their TB testing roles. This will enable them to further develop their clinical skills and also allows for the Vet Tech role to be expanded to include larger dehornings and surgical castrates, which were previously not able to be performed as part of the Vet Tech role.

ROMS Accredited Mobility Scoring

Congratulations to Dan & Violeta who have recently completed their ROMS approved mobility scoring training course in order to achieve ROMS accredited status. As part of the Vet Tech service, Dan & Violeta will now be able to conduct independent ROMS approved mobility scoring for Red Tractor or Milk Buyer purposes, alongside Chris & Alex who are also both ROMS accredited. Please contact the farm office to discuss mobility scoring your herd.

Training Courses

As Covid restrictions are lifting we are aiming to re-start delivery of face to face training courses as we head into the early autumn. There are currently plans underway to run courses in **youngstock husbandry, practical foot-trimming and DIY AI**. If you are interested in attending any of these courses please register your interest with the Farm

Office, so that we can let you know full course details as soon as dates are finalised.

Safe use of Veterinary Medicines –

Our Farm Assurance compliant medicines training course was successfully transferred into an online learning module last year during the Covid lockdowns. This format has proved popular, as it allows the learning module to be covered at a time convenient to you, whilst also allowing multiple users on the same farm to complete the training together prior to the end of course assessment. If you are interested in completing the medicines course, please contact the Farm Office and speak to Emily, who co-ordinates the medicines training.

TB Testing Changes Covid 19 – Youngstock Exemption

The temporary Covid-19 exemption from TB testing calves under 180 days of age where social distancing measures could not safely be adhered to has now ended. Therefore the normal standard testing rules apply again, meaning that for the majority of TB test types all calves over 42 days of age will now need to be tested.

6 Monthly TB Testing

As you will all be aware, APHA have now implemented an increased TB testing

frequency from 1st July 2021 as the next part of its TB Eradication Strategy. As such, all farms in the High Risk Area (HRA) of England are now subject to 6 monthly whole herd tests (WHT). This is being phased in gradually, meaning that as herds complete their annual WHT in the coming year, the subsequent testing window will then be scheduled for 6 months later. The testing window for your 6 monthly WHT will still be 60 days - the same as previously. Due to the potential difficulties that the switch to 6 monthly WHT may cause, APHA will permit a one-off change to your next testing window, where farms can request to bring their next testing window forwards (not back). If you wish to amend your next TB testing window please liaise with Michelle in the Farm Office to ensure that we are able to accommodate your test being moved forward to an earlier date.

Alongside the change to 6M WHT in the HRA, there is likely to be a reduction in the number of contiguous and tracer tests issued by APHA. Due to the higher frequency of 6M surveillance testing, contiguous tests (neighbouring a new TB breakdown) should only now be required in exceptional circumstances. APHA will also actively try to schedule tracer tests to coincide with a farm's 6M WHT wherever possible. There will be no change to Approved Finishing Units (AFUs) surveillance policy, meaning they will remain on rolling 90 day WHT. ■

New Forest Eye

We are again seeing a significant number of cases of New Forest Eye this summer. Head and nuisance flies can spread the highly contagious disease, caused by the bacterium *Moraxella bovis*, which can spread rapidly in the summer months. The lesions affecting the eye, often corneal ulcers, can be very painful, affecting the animal's vision and therefore their feeding and performance. You may also notice severe conjunctivitis and tear staining. Other potential differential diagnoses for this disease include foreign bodies, e.g. grass awns, and so if you are unsure then

please consult your Vet. Prompt treatment is advised as this will help to reduce spread of disease within the group and should prevent deep corneal ulcers from occurring which can lead to perforation of the eye. Topical ophthalmic ointment can be applied directly into the eye, this may need repeating daily until the infection has resolved, or alternatively a sub-conjunctival injection of antibiotic +/- an



Advanced case of New Forest showing corneal ulceration

anti-inflammatory into the upper eyelid can be performed. Regular application of a suitable topical fly repellent will help reduce fly numbers and the potential for disease spread. Please consult us at the farm office if you have any questions regarding treatment choices or techniques & always seek veterinary advice if the response to initial treatment is poor.

Note – supply of Orbenin Eye Ointment tubes (& other equivalents) is intermittent at present. ■

Heat Stress in the Dairy Cow

Although the good old British Summer is once again being its usual temperamental self this year, we have seen a number of issues with heat stress when the sun comes out and the temperature rises. As a result, managing heat stress is once again a topical subject.

The ideal ambient temperature for a dairy cow is between 4°C and 23°C. At temperatures above 23°C, cows must use energy to cool themselves through sweating and by increasing their respiratory rate. As the ambient temperature increases, atmospheric humidity increases and air movement decreases, making it more difficult for a cow to cool herself adequately.

Milking cows are more prone to heat stress than dry cows or beef cattle due to their high metabolic rate, high feed intakes and milk output. A high yielding herd which has been out at grass during a hot humid day may well have to walk a long distance back to the parlour for milking at the hottest part of the day. These cows will then be expected to stand close together in a hot collecting yard where there is often no drinking water and little ventilation.

In badly affected individual animals, the body temp will often rise dramatically to between 41 and 43°C. There will be an associated increase in the heart rate of these animals' due to vasodilatation and an increase also in the respiratory rate due to a direct effect on the respiratory centre.

There will be a degree of dehydration and a drop in milk yield. If left untreated, many of these animals will recover uneventfully as day time temperatures fall. However, in some badly affected cattle, heat stress will progress to serious levels where there is a risk of collapse, convulsions and death. Careful differentiation of heat stress cases must be made from infectious causes of pyrexia, although they may occur simultaneously where one may exacerbate the other.

As well as losing water through increased sweating, there is also an excessive loss of certain minerals. During hot weather, Potassium, Sodium and Magnesium are all required at higher than usual rates. This should be considered when examining any dairy cows which have collapsed at an unusual stage of lactation

during a particularly hot spell.

Treatment by cooling the affected animal by spraying with cold water is usually very successful and this will be helped by removing the cow to a shaded building with good ventilation. Access to fresh cool drinking water is essential. Intravenous fluids are also very effective in reducing a high body temperature.

Acute heat stress in an individual cow may not be too difficult to spot, diagnose and treat. However, during a long spell of hot weather, heat stress can have a more widespread effect on the herd in general. When day time temperatures reach 30°C, dry matter intakes may fall significantly and milk production losses of over 5 litres/cow/day can occur.

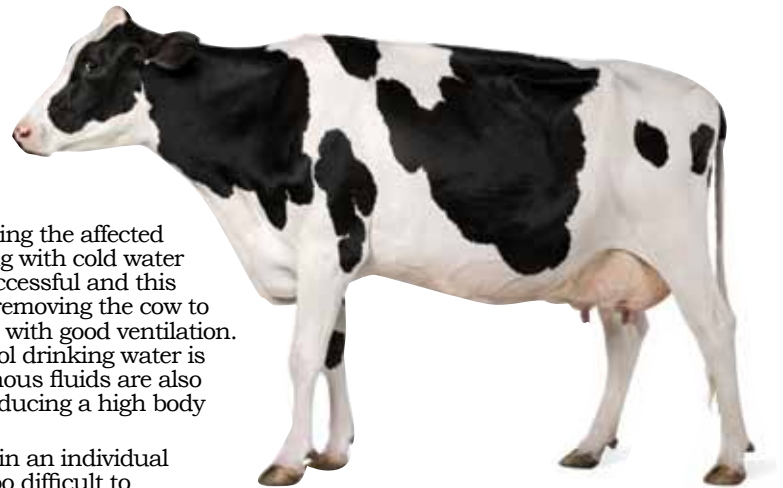
Heat stressed cattle eat less frequently and mainly during cooler periods of the day. This has the effect of creating 'slug' feeding and increases the risk of acidosis. Heat stressed cattle which have an elevated respiratory rate already have a reduced rumen buffering due to lower saliva production and a lower bicarbonate level in the saliva. Lameness incidence in the herd can often increase several weeks after a period of heat stress due to this acidosis.

Cattle may require an extra 25 litres drinking water on a hot summer day and some research work has shown that cows need to consume twice as much water as normal for every Kilo of dry matter feed intake.

The effect of heat stress on fertility can also be dramatic. As well as showing less activity during oestrus, heat stressed cattle will have reduced follicular activity and there may well be a significant increase in early embryonic death between 4 and 6 weeks of gestation.

During periods of hot humid weather it is necessary to consider several factors in an attempt to reduce heat stress in dairy cattle:

- Should/could cattle be kept indoors during the day?
- Do these cattle have adequate access to fresh drinking water and can the water supply cope with periods of excessive drinking?



- Do the milking cows have a long way to walk in an afternoon for milking and can this be reduced?
- Can the time spent in the collecting yards be reduced or can water sprinklers and fans be fitted to assist cooling?
- Is it possible to increase the feeding frequency to reduce slug feeding occurring?
- Do these cows look acidotic and might it be worth testing a few rumen pH samples?

Fortunately for dairy farmers and vets in the UK, heat stress is not something they have to worry about very often. However, because of this, the effects of high daytime temperatures and humidity on dairy cows will often be overlooked. Do not underestimate the effects that recent high temperatures may have on your herd & please give some thought to some of the points raised above to see if you can make any simple changes to try & help reduce the effect of the summer heat on your dairy herd. ■

FFF&B Ploughing Match & Country Show 2021

Covid rules permitting, we will again be taking a trade stand at the FFF&B Ploughing Match this year, so please come along and say hello to the team, we look forward to seeing you there!

Saturday 25th September at Manor Farm, Hatford.