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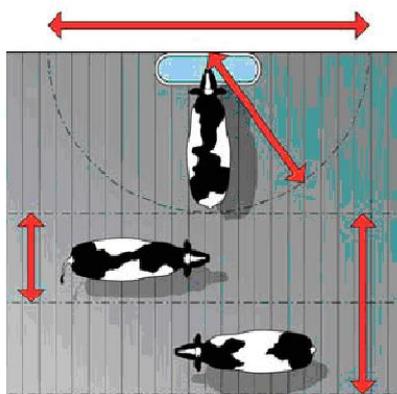
Water Provision for Dairy Cows

With warmer weather on the way, it is more important than ever to make sure that adequate water is available for dairy cows. Consumption is usually around 3 - 4 litres of water per litre of milk produced, but can be up to 5 litres for high yielding cows in warm ambient temperatures. This means that it is common for cows to need to drink over 150 litres a day. Extra water points may be needed in hot weather.

Feed provision is often monitored in great detail, while water provision can be overlooked. In fact, water is crucial to milk production, temperature regulation and many other body functions. Any restriction in water supply, or providing water of bad quality, will cause an immediate drop in milk yield.

Water quality: Water must be clean and fresh. Drinking from streams is not encouraged because contaminated water can transmit disease.

- Clean troughs regularly, every day if possible. Use a brush to prevent bacteria building up.
- Consider tipping troughs as these allow easier cleaning.
- It is possible to test water samples to evaluate quality.



Water access: Building designs must allow good access and cow flow around water troughs. Cows tend to drink after milking, and because they are sociable animals, many will drink together at the same time. Allow for 10-15% of the herd to drink at once. Minimum suggested requirements are:

- 10cm drinking space per cow in the herd
- At least 2 water troughs per group (to prevent bully cows restricting access)
- Flow rate of 10 litres per minute
- Passages with water troughs should be at least 3.6m wide to allow cows to walk past.

Parasitic Gastroenteritis in Cattle (Gut Worms)

Identify the risk:

1. All grazing cattle are exposed to gut worms, and can suffer production losses. Younger cattle are most at risk of disease until they acquire immunity (this can take up to 2 grazing seasons to develop).
2. The highest risk pastures will be those that have been grazed by young stock within the last 6 months. Low risk pastures are newly planted leys following a cereal/ root crop.
3. As the grazing season progresses, larval worms accumulate on pasture. The risk of disease is highest from July onwards when the infective stages are at the highest number on the pasture.
4. If (young) cattle are not treated with an effective anthelmintic at housing they are at risk of disease in the late winter.

Treat appropriately:

5. Anthelmintic treatments should be targeted at individuals or groups at appropriate times. Use of diagnostic tests, and monitoring growth and performance, can help to decide on the best time for treatment.
6. Anthelmintics can also be used strategically to reduce the build-up of worms on the pasture. These treatments are generally focussed on young stock during the first 2 months of grazing.
7. Treatment (with appropriate products) at housing reduces the risk of disease during the winter.

Avoid resistance:

8. Administer anthelmintics correctly – follow the instructions on the label, and weigh cattle if possible to avoid under- or over-dosing. Check that dosing equipment is working properly.
9. Anthelmintic resistance has already been detected in the *Cooperia* genus of worms. So far this has not caused significant problems but we should aim to prevent further resistance occurring by using the drugs responsibly.
10. To minimise the development of resistance: avoid treating too many cattle too often; use the correct dosage; and treat at appropriate times.

We offer **Faecal Egg Counts (FEC)** that can be performed in our in-house lab. This involves taking dung samples and measuring the concentration of worm eggs. The results provide an indication of the level of pasture contamination, and therefore the likely risk of disease over the next weeks. FEC should be used along with growth rates, pasture history, animal age and time of year, to help with decision making in parasite control.

New reduced price for Faecal Egg Counts:

now £7.91 + VAT

Other parasitology: Fluke flotation £8.27 + VAT

Lungworm £23.75 + VAT

Please contact us for specific advice about parasite control on your farm.



New Teat Sealant: Ceparlock

We know that the vast majority of our dairy farmers use a teat sealant at the end of a lactation to prevent new infections from occurring during the dry period. Some have been using these tubes exclusively (without an antibiotic preparation) to great effect, especially when close attention has been paid to the dry cow environment. There is a new product which has just been introduced onto the market called Ceparlock.



Ceparlock vs Orbeseal: You will probably have seen in the farming press that MSD are advertising a New Teat Sealant called Ceparlock. MSD are the manufacturers of Cepravin DC tubes, and with the introduction of Ceparlock they hope to provide a complete dry cow therapy regime which will “cure” chronic infections and prevent new ones occurring during the dry period. There are added “marketing bonuses” with this tube in that it has two nozzle lengths and also comes with larger teat wipes. We have negotiated an initial price of £1.10 per tube (which is slightly cheaper than the Orbeseal) hence making its use more attractive.

So where does this leave Orbeseal? Not all teat sealants are the same and there is usually a reason why one product is cheaper than another. This will usually be due to the ingredients of that tube. Granted, the constituents are very similar but Zoetis, manufacturers of Orbeseal, have suggested that the inclusion of *colloidal silica dioxide* makes their product more flexible and hence results in a better protective barrier.

So which product is better? I'm afraid that we have two companies with strong opinions that their product is better than the other and, unfortunately, there is no comparative trial data, to hand, to demonstrate greater efficacy of either product. What we, as a Practice, can say is that having used Orbeseal over the last number of years we know how effective it has been and hence it may come back to the old adage “if it ain't broken, don't fix it”. What we would say is that **a teat sealant, correctly applied at the end of a lactation, will significantly help in the prevention of new infections developing during the dry period.** However, as mentioned above, there are numerous factors which will play a significant role in the health of an udder during this period. Please discuss dry cow therapy with us to make sure that we are maximising udder health at the start of the next lactation.

Fly Strike in Sheep

Fly strike is usually seen between May and September. Female flies are attracted by the odour of decomposing matter such as a soiled, sweaty fleece or wounds. Eggs are laid which hatch after 12 hours, then after 3 days the larvae drop off. The smell attracts other flies to lay eggs there.

Look out for the signs of discoloured wool and agitation.

Prevention of fly strike involves:

- shearing as early as possible
- applying a topical product such as Klik or Crovect
- preventing scours

Contact us to order your Klik or Crovect and keep fly strike at bay this summer.



Silage Dry Matter Analysis



Accurate analysis of silage dry matter (DM) is an important step in ensuring that the diet supplied is meeting the nutritional demands of our cows.

For example, imagine we have a ration which aims to provide 13kg of DM from forage in a 50:50 grass:maize silage mix. The results of analysis are that the grass silage is 25% DM, and the maize silage is 40% DM. However, if the *actual* grass silage DM is 20% and the maize silage is 35%, then we will have a shortfall of 16% DM from silages.

On the worked example; for a 50:50 mix for 13kg DM we would need to provide 6.5kg DM of each type of silage.

Grass silage analyses at 25% DM = we provide 26kg fresh weight per head.

Maize silage analyses at 40% DM = we provide 16.26kg fresh weight per head.

However, if the *actual* analysis is

Grass silage at 20% DM, by feeding 26kg per head we will only be supplying 5.2kg DM.

Maize silage at 35% DM, by feeding 16.25kg per head we will only be supplying 5.7kg DM.

Total DM of silages = 10.9kg

This would obviously present an imbalance in the ration nutrients supplied. This could result in

- Lack of energy: hence poor fertility, weight loss and reduction in body condition.
- Lack of fibre (from reduced grass intake): resulting in reduce butterfats and an increased risk of acidosis.

We have tested quite a number of silages during the last few months to find that there has been quite a disparity between NIR analysis and our method of physically drying the silage sample and determining the dry matter. Having given these results to the nutritionists involved on the farm, we have been able to rectify a few potential nutritional imbalances with rations suggested.

The cost of our dry matter analysis is £10.00 per sample.

