



STOP PRESS – It's Too Hot!

As true Brits there is nothing we like more than complaining about the weather. In winter it's too cold and wet and now we aren't so keen on this heat either – you may have noticed some particularly overheating cows and vets of late. Paul recently returned from a fertility conference where temperature was on the agenda. A cow's comfort zone is between 5°C and 25°C with moderate humidity so these last few days have well exceeded this upper limit. Having a short window of heat stress has long lasting effects on cow fertility and is worse when it's only for short times. In heat stress cows increase their heat loss (panting, sweating, surface evaporation) and reduce their dry matter intake - they use up to 20% more energy and taking in between 10 and 30% less energy – this equates to lower energy levels. Eggs being developed under low energy are of poorer quality and so fertility is reduced for up to 100 days after the period of heat stress in individual cows. Keeping cows cool is a must so where possible get fans on, provide shade to grazing cattle and ensure water is in good supply. Our colleagues in hotter climates are geared up to handle extremes of temperature much better (see photo) and if weather trends are set to continue like this then perhaps we ought to look to them for how to manage future ventilation and sprinkler systems.

Selective Dry Cow Therapy (SDCT)

We have discussed in previous newsletters the growing pressure both nationally and internationally to reduce the use of antibiotics in farm animals. Increasing human antibiotic resistance has been the main driver despite inconclusive evidence to support this.

However, the blanket use of antibiotics in cows at drying off needs to be reconsidered. It is likely the pressure from Milk buyers for voluntary control will increase and for many of you within the practice it is now a mandatory requirement of your milk contract.

There are two separate issues to be considered – Reducing the use of certain types of modern antibiotics (often those specifically important in human medicine) and not using any antibiotics at all when drying off.

Obviously, if we are able to succeed with the latter, both accurately and safely then significant savings on drug costs are possible.

The simple theory is that dry cow antibiotics eliminate any subclinical infection present at drying off. If no subclinical infection exists then no antibiotic is required. In fact trials have shown

an increase in coliform mastitis when antibiotics and sealants were used in cows free from infection. The selection of cows suitable for SDCT needs to be made on an individual basis and we encourage you to discuss this with one of us to structure a farm specific protocol.

However, there are minimum herd level criteria to assess whether a herd is suitable for consideration of SDCT.

1. Average herd cell count < 200,000
2. < 25% herd greater than 200,000
3. Individual cow somatic cell count measurements
4. Accurate mastitis records

If your herd does not fulfil these requirements then we perhaps need to ask why and address these issues.

We will be running a practice meeting on this topic later in the summer. Details of meeting to follow.

Dairy Think Tank Discussion Group

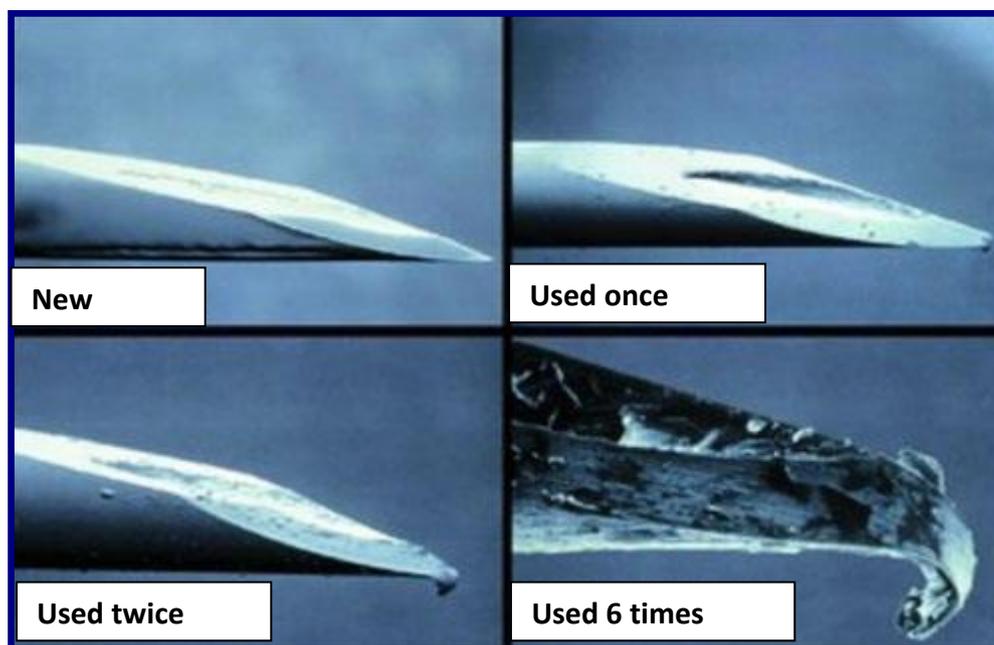
June saw the inaugural meeting of a brand new dairy discussion group very kindly hosted by Mike and Gill Abbatt of Langley Hill Farm in Winchcombe. We had an excellent turnout from our clients and there were some new faces which added greatly to the afternoon discussions. We introduced the concept of The Dairy

Think Tank, which is a collaboration of four dairy farmers from within the practice and The Wood Vet Group. We intend to create knowledge sharing focus group for local farmers and to provide strong links to industry leaders and national specialists. The aim is to maximise animal health and farm profitability through demonstrations, discussions and presentations.

We thoroughly discussed the system at Langley Hill Farm and not just the great view. The challenges of calf rearing here provided much discussion around colostrum management and feeding, with the Dairy Co representatives quoting recent data that a calf should receive 10% of it's bodyweight in the first 2 hours after birth! We agreed that at least 10% ASAP before 6 hours after birth is key. Calf coats work well at this level (900 feet) above sea level. As an organic farm the issues around antibiotic dry cow therapy are very much at the forefront as with others in the group. Emphasis is on strict hygiene at milking as part of a mastitis control programme and with Somatic Cell Counts of 170,000 rolling average, it appears to be working. Dry Cow Therapy is used depending upon consecutive high cell counts but teat sealant is used in all. Huge success using Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory treatments (i.e. Flunixin, Findayne) as a first line treatment to cows showing hot, painful and redness in affected udders was reported by many there. Using a plate meter to assess available dry matter on the pasture was demonstrated and the aim of grazing over 1500 Kg/DM/Ha discussed. We had an informative and enthusiastic introduction into the Brown Swiss breed by Jenni Hobbs. Mike uses them here as a first cross on the Holstein. Whilst their yield is around 850 litres less than the Holsteins, their longevity, temperament and good feet are desirable traits. The feedback from this first meeting was very useful and promising with many ideas for future topics and format. Please join us at the next meeting!

Reminders – New Needles

Please get plenty of needles with new drug orders as you can see from the microscopic picture what happens over use. Not only is overuse painful and increases the risk of needles breaking off but dirt can easily stick to these needles meaning needle site infection/abscesses are very likely.



Reminders

The 520056 number is no longer in use!

Just another reminder that the numbers to ring are:

Large animal: 01452 543 999

Small animal: 01452 543 990

Invitation

We would like to invite all clients and friends of The Wood Veterinary Group to join us for a drink and hog roast to mark Chris' official retirement from the practice

Friday 31st July 2015

Frocester Cricket Club

7.30pm onwards