



Heat Stress

Whilst the cows seem to be tolerating the heat this last month with yields and dry matter intakes staying fairly steady there have been some incredibly hot days and some fairly impressive rain outbursts. Even in herds with excellent shed environments with fans and water misters, we are definitely seeing a drop in oestrus demonstration and the rise in cows presented for missed heats. This will no doubt come forward in to August and September as poor conception rates and early foetal loss. As we cannot change the weather we can only continue to ensure water is free flowing and clean and the cows are in the best environment possible to reduce the production impacts.

FLIES...

Another unwelcome result of the warm and wet weather is the flies. New forest eye, fly strike and fly worrying have all been a significant problem over the last month. Control of flies is a difficult issue. Control of the environment is as important as on the animals. Whilst pour-on products are more commonly used there are ear tags also on the market (Electron). These can be very useful for those units suffering with New Forest Eye disease. Fly sprays for buildings are also a useful option that acts to attract and kill flies once applied to cattle sheds. Twenty One Fly Spray/Killer reportedly lasts for 12 weeks so would see most farms through to the end of the fly season and can be used alongside cow treatments.



New Forest Eye Disease (NFD)

The major cattle disease spread by the massive hatch of flies is New Forest Eye Disease. It is a bacterial infection of the outer layer of the cornea producing a painful and aggressive ulcer. This is first seen as small crater on the cornea surface but can easily go undetected. The more obvious clinical signs are:

- Tear production that attracts yet more flies
- Partial closing of the eye due to pain and seeking out shade to get out of the bright sunlight which exacerbates the pain
- A White/cloudy spot across the surface of the eye

Treatment is straightforward and very effective if done in the early stages of the disease:

- Topical ophthalmic ointments
Usually 2 treatments 48 hours apart are needed (Opticlox eye ointment)
- NSAID (anti-inflammatory product such as Metacam or Ketofen dependent on milk withdrawal requirement) injection to reduce pain and tear production
- Injecting antibiotics into the eyelid margin space is very effective but it requires one of the farm veterinary team to do it
- Vet only injection antibiotics are also an option for cases at grazing

The most important aspect of all eye diseases is that the healing process looks worse before it looks better. A normal cornea is clear and has no blood vessels so for healing to occur blood capillaries have to grow in from the edge of the cornea and this makes the surface of the eye look angry and bright red. It can be seen as a red ring (see picture).

Eventually these vessels start to regress and form a ring around a central white scar. As long as the following is seen then the eye is healing:

- Tear production reduces or ceases
- The eye opens up fully
- You can see the healing process



Healing Eye with Red Blood Vessel Migration

If treatment is delayed then the eye may never heal fully and leave the animal with varying degrees of visual impairment or the need for an eye removal. Any rapid swelling/craters need to be assessed as they can be from injuries or cancerous growths not just NFD.

On Farm Medicine Disposal – Dairy, Beef and Sheep Units

It is the last month to get a discounted bottle and sharps bin. **ALL LIVESTOCK PREMISES MUST HAVE A YELLOW SHARPS BIN AND GRIFF BIN** to dispose of used needles and the bin for medicine bottles. These are always available from the practice and the cost of purchase includes returning the container to us for licensed disposal.



**Buy a 27 Kg Bottle Bin and a 6 Litre sharps bin for just £60 +VAT
Ring the Office today to order your summer deal!**

Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme (CPSG)

For those farms keen to develop or desperate for that latest piece of technology, the second round of RDPE funding for the CPSG is open for applications until September. This grant is available to all farms in England for between 3 and 12 thousand pounds. The grant is aimed at part funding equipment that sits in one of four different categories to benefit farms: technical efficiency, animal health and welfare, resource efficiency or nutrient management. Some of the items that we think may be of use are cattle and sheep handling systems and accessories, milking prep brushes, badger proof troughs, automated foot baths, heat detection aids, weigh bars, livestock cameras, pasture plate meters and many more items that improve efficiency and maximise labour saving. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-productivity-scheme> to see the full list of available items and to apply. Make sure you don't miss the deadline for applications – 3rd September 2019.

Meetings

Dairy Clarifide Plus Meeting

An opportunity to learn about harnessing genetic potential for farms with pure bred Holstein, Jersey or Brown Swiss herds.

Tuesday 20th August 2019

Speak to us about joining this event

Meetings

Dairy KPI Meeting

Dry cow and Antibiotic Update

**Thursday 8th August 2019
NB Not the usual Wednesday**

**11 - 2pm at Quedgeley
Lunch will be provided**