



THE
WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP



Happy New Year...we hope!

After the huge trauma and challenge that last year was, we had high hopes for a much better start to the new year. However, with another lockdown phase initiated and the Brexit transition underway, all we can do is tackle the obstacle of each day as it arises and tentatively plan for the future, whilst always being prepared to change tack at a moment's notice.

Amongst this, some of our vets are also involved in the ongoing Avian Influenza (H5N8) outbreak and surveillance across the south west – those of you with small flocks will be somewhat fed up with housing your birds by now but continued protection of your poultry from wild bird interaction is vital. This week

has seen a decline in new H5N8 outbreaks so hopefully the housing restriction will be over soon. With the new phase of Covid-19 restrictions for us being not dissimilar to those for our poultry, we are extremely positive about the recent vaccination efforts. As we head into the new year, we must unfortunately continue with social distancing and face coverings where necessary to keep everyone as safe as we can especially considering the new, more infective strains emerging. As a profession that has studied, implemented, and seen the success of herd vaccination policies across the species in our care, we are very hopeful indeed that it brings a light at the end of the tunnel for our species too. We would of course, suggest the use of multidose guns to speed up the process!

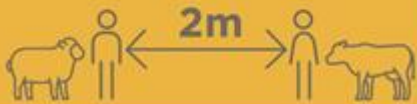
We are really grateful for the continued social distancing, support and patience that you have shown us through this extremely difficult time to keep everyone safe and our agricultural industry thriving. Thank you!

STOP

We are all working
in a critical food
production industry.

Help us all to keep safe
by maintaining a 2m gap
at all times.

vetPartners



Care of the Down Cow – TLC

Whilst a Down or Downer Cow is hopefully a very infrequent case on farms, due to the wide range of initial causes and the subsequent condition of Downer Cow Syndrome they can be extremely frustrating and difficult to manage. Here we will look at some tools to improve the chance of recovery.

What is a Down Cow? Any cow unable to stand for 24 hrs after the initial cause has been treated. This can be initially because of:

- Milk fever or Hypocalcaemia
- Nerve Damage – from calving or bulling injury
- Lameness, other injuries and fractures
- Toxic E. coli mastitis

What is Downer Cow Syndrome?

When a cow is down for a period, her own body weight puts pressure on her muscles. This reduces the lymphatic and venous drainage from these areas, but the arterial blood flow continues resulting in a massive build-up of pressure in these muscle groups. This can cause ischaemic muscle necrosis or tissue death often known as compartment syndrome. The speed and severity of the damage depends on the surface the animal is on, duration of the compression and which areas are taking most of the load due to position such as bones or muscle. For example, if treated for milk fever within 6 hours, only 2% of cows develop compartment syndrome whereas the failure to stand in cows treated between 7 to 12 hours

jumps up to 50%. So, what measures and protocols can be established to reduce the chance of cows developing compartment syndrome and give them the best chance of standing again?

Once we have established and treated the initial reason the cow is down then it is TLC – for the purposes of this article – **Turn, Lift, Comfort**

Turn

Cows will need moving over to their opposite leg every 1-2 hours – this can be helped with the use of a bale to keep her propped to that side.

Lift

Cows should be lifted three to four times a day to promote blood flow and assess the limbs and udder. Lift cows for short periods of time, around 5 minutes to promote feeling in the legs but also never leave a cow 'hanging'. Specialist water tanks can also be used with warm water to support cows as well as hip hoists and daisy lifters.



Comfort

Comfort is arguably the most important factor in success with down cows but often the most overlooked.

Bedding – Deep straw bedding that is topped up frequently is best for comfort and hygiene. Move the cow to fresh straw every time she is lifted to reduce compression and prevent secondary mastitis. Cows on sparse bedding are far more likely to get compartment syndrome due to increased compression.

Food – Fresh food that is accessible is really important, especially if you have a cow that is shuffling around the pen between lifts. Pen separately to carefully monitor feed intake and prevent others pinching it.

Water – As with food a fresh supply is important to maintain hydration. Avoid placing it directly in front of the cow as this is in her lunging space. If cows aren't drinking, then pump twice daily with warm water.

Udder – If the cow in question is milking or freshly calved then it is important to milk her at least every 12 hours. This reduces the mastitis risk but also prevents udder oedema and pain that may delay her getting up. Follow your exact parlour routine of teat preparation and post dip using a mobile milking machine.

Anti-Inflammatories – Anti-inflammatory (NSAID) treatment will reduce swelling and pain associated with downer cow syndrome and any initial injury improving the prognosis of the cow standing again.

Get a vet to check down cases that are not progressing as expected or if you are not sure why she went down in the first place. It is key to establish if the cow has a good prognosis for getting up by diagnosing the initial cause and treating it, but then it is all down to case management using the T-L-C protocol to avoid a down cow getting downer cow syndrome.

Red Tractor – Consultation

A large proportion of our farms are Red Tractor Certified either for dairy, beef or lamb or a combination. Every 3 to 4 years the standards against which farms are certified are reviewed to ensure they fall in line with current welfare standards, emerging consumer trends and industry initiatives for example the Responsible Use Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) Guidelines on antibiotic use. November 2021 will see the next standards update to include:



- Widen antibiotic review to all medicines
- BVD initiative change from recommended to standard
- Medicine hub for monitoring medicine usage

Members, consumers, licensees, and stakeholders are all invited to take part in the consultation to review the nature of the standards and feedback on the next set of amendments. As many of you are Red Tractor members, it is important that the standards also reflect the aims and targets that you deem important for animal welfare and management from a farm level perspective. As such we would encourage you to complete the review found at <https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/red-tractor-review-2021> by 5th March.