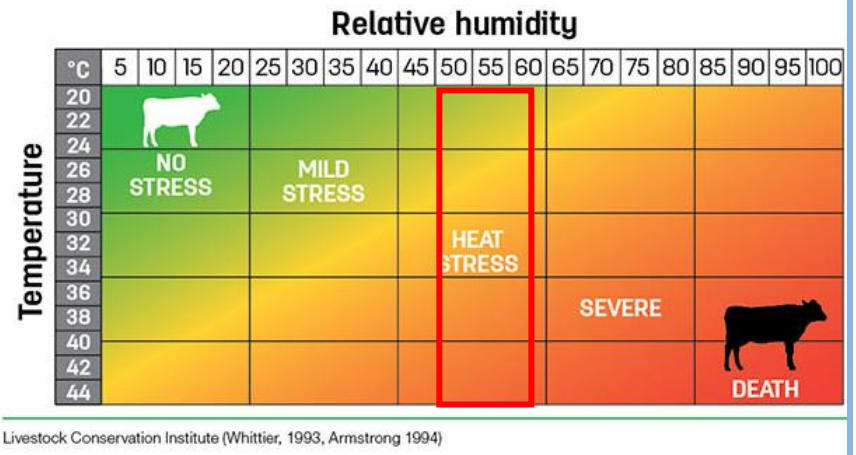
THE WOOD VETERINARY GROUP

FARM NEWSLETTER JULY 2022

Heat Stress

Every year we experience spells of very hot weather. This year has already been a mixed bag of hot spells and then cool and wet weather again. Our buildings and daily routine are not really suited to these different extremes in weather. Unfortunately, it is this unsettled weather that seems to provide the biggest challenge for our livestock whether housed or grazing. Those of you with newer cattle sheds with very high pitches and little or no sides will notice how much better the cows perform compared to older, less ventilated sheds. **Generally a cow's comfort zone is 5 to 20°C with UK humidity around 50-55%, but they are very happy down to minus 5°C. Heat stress occurs when temperatures rise over 20 °C)!**



Livestock Conservation Institute (Whittier, 1993, Armstrong 1994)

Calf sheds can be the most difficult to keep cool. Dehydration in calves will occur rapidly especially with scour or pneumonia.

Cows in late pregnancy and early lactation are most at risk due to the additional heat from the metabolic processes of production – this makes these groups a priority.

Short periods of high heat and humidity impacts cow performance because:

- Cows panting with tongues out and sweating **use up to 20% more energy**
- To keep cool, **standing times increase** in preference to lying down. They also crowd areas with more breeze (which actually lifts temperature but it's hard to explain this to cows!).
- Increased ration sorting and reduced DMI can **drop yields by 10% to 30%.**
- Depressed/no signs of oestrus and **lower conception rate** – Heat stress will compromise egg quality. These sub fertile eggs are then ovulated over the following 100 days, which will impact fertility performance well after the temperature has dropped. This is true for beef and dairy cattle alike.
- **Cases of mastitis rise** due to crowding under shaded areas in fields or in sheds.

What can we do?:

- Increase air movement in sheds: install fans and increase ventilation by opening solid doors and lift blinds to promote air movement:
  - High Volume Low Speed fans (pictured) seem to be the best fan type for both cows and energy efficiency. They are also relatively quiet compared to the vertical High-Speed versions and require less fans per shed overall.
  - Whatever fan type you have make sure they are **all working**. Putting fans on at lower temperatures (around 10-12°C) makes fans more efficient, not needing to drop temperature just maintaining it. Thermostat controlled fans tend to work the

best so that nobody needs to remember to turn them on or off. Fans need to be running from 17 °C as this is when we start to see issues around 50-60% humidity.

- Ensure cattle have adequate **shade** and **fly repellent** especially when at grazing
- Reduce stocking density of sheds and **limit handling** in the heat (middle) of the day – better for all!
- Split cows into small groups for milking so the collecting yard isn't full and don't use the backing gate.
- Consider grazing cows at night, instead of during the day if shade isn't adequate outdoors.
- Ensure **water troughs** are:

1. **Clean** with fresh water supply – often tip-over-troughs are not used to their full potential – tip them over and give them a scrub weekly to avoid it becoming a big job.
2. **Constantly full**/filling – water should always be available so adjust water pressure accordingly.
3. **Enough troughs** to avoid competition/dominance and ensure their placement doesn't cause bullying or block access to feed, water or cubicles – **ask us about how to measure requirements.**

- Mix rations just before feeding out and feed twice a day to avoid spoilage/heating
- Feed 60% of ration overnight when intakes will be at their highest
- Cows will sort out the long fibre trying to reduce heat from rumen fermentation. Make sure if sorting happens that the ration is adjusted to be more nutrient and energy dense to compensate.
- Observe cows for bulling in the early morning and evening to increase chance of seeing cows in heat.
- Transport cattle in the coolest part of the day to avoid extreme heat stress.

Put a thermometer and a hygrometer (measures humidity) in the sheds and parlour. This can help you trigger management changes before we see long term impacts on health and production.

On Farm Medicine Disposal – Dairy, Beef and Sheep Units

In order to comply with Red Tractor and crucially DEFRA guidelines, **ALL LIVESTOCK PREMISES MUST HAVE A YELLOW SHARPS BIN AND GRIFF BIN. This is** to dispose of used needles and empty medicine bottles. These containers are also suitable for the disposal of medicines that are out of date, contaminated or have been broached for over 28 days and recorded as wastage on your medicine records. Containers are always available from the practice and the cost of purchase includes returning the full container to us for licensed disposal. It couldn't be easier to dispose of your waste! To help get everyone compliant with the rules we are running our summer offer again:

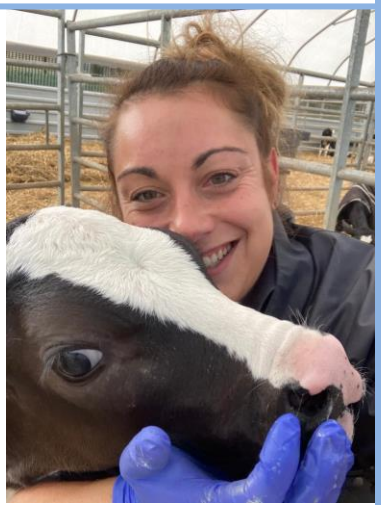
Throughout JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

Buy a 27 Kg Bottle Bin and a 2 Litre sharps bin for just £65 +VAT

This is a saving of nearly £20 and for a lot of you these two containers will last a very long time.
Remember that these rules apply to all medicines administered on livestock premises

Ring the Office today to order your summer deal!

Farewell and New Arrivals



Flick our Vet Tech is sadly leaving us at the end of this month to pursue a career on a calf rearing unit. Flick has been at Woods for nearly 5 years. In the last two years she has been instrumental in developing the Vet Tech service into what it is today. We are really sad to see her go but wish her all the very best with her new youngstock role and are incredibly proud of the how the Tech service has grown. The Vet Tech service at Woods has become a huge asset to clients and vets alike and we are excited to see where it can go next. Coming on board to the Woods team as our new Vet Tech is Ellie – you will see her around on farm over the coming weeks as she joins the team. Watch this space!

WoodVetsFarmTeam @woodvetsfarmteam