

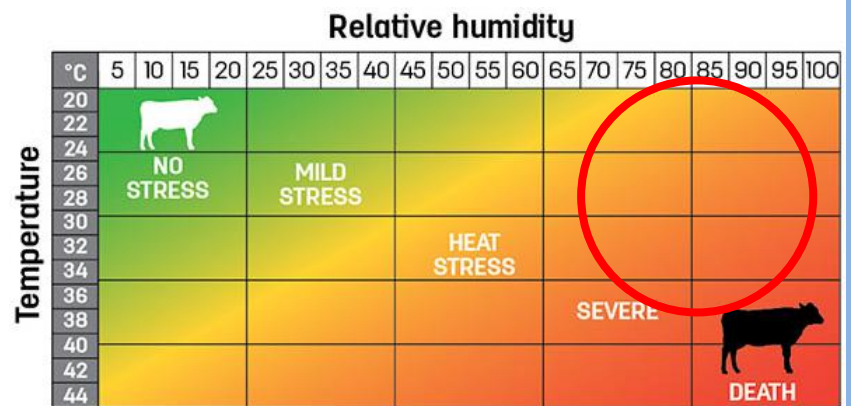


### British Weather! Again

Only here in wonderful England can in one month we struggle with heat stress and in the next get no more than one dry day in a row. Thankfully silage, slurry and now combining are all being squeezed in those breaks in the weather and yields appear to be holding up despite the crazy weather.

Whilst the temperature has been lower and wet, the humidity has been pushing into the 80 and 90s consistently which means cattle are still in a high risk zone for metabolic heat stress. You can see how low temperatures can still result in an issue where humidity stays up inside the red circle:

- Keep fans going to reduce humidity and provide temperature stability
- Ensure cattle have adequate **shade** and **fly repellent** especially when at grazing
- Ensure **water troughs** are:



Livestock Conservation Institute (Whittier, 1993, Armstrong 1994)

1. **Clean** with fresh water supply – 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

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.

### Grazing Young stock - Coccidiosis

During the summer months many of you will be grazing cows with calves at foot, finishing cattle as well as rearing replacement heifers. With lots of young calves on the ground now and humid and wet weather, we almost certainly see a rise in the number of scour outbreaks. Cocci is the most common cause of scour around weaning and turnout so now is the perfect time to review the topic. **We have seen some incredibly high counts in samples over the past few weeks so please be vigilant:**

- **What?:** Coccidia are single-celled parasites (not bacteria) that infect calves via the faecal-oral route causing diarrhoea, weight loss and poor coats
- **Age:** Under 2 years old (most common age affected is 3/4 weeks to 6 months) Infection can happen both indoor and outdoor in these age groups



- **How?:** Spread between calves in the environment by shedding lots of egg stages (oocysts) in faeces that survive for long periods despite heat, cold and many disinfectants. Calf pens are the perfect environment for spreading infection so it is not just grazing animals that are at risk
- **Why?:** Damage the wall of the large intestine creating watery diarrhoea often resulting in straining with mucus and blood seen in the diarrhoea – long term damage occurs where that section of gut fails to repair and cannot absorb nutrients and fluid properly going forwards
- Severe cases show depression, loss of appetite, weight loss and dehydration however...
- 95% of cases are not diagnosed and so the main loss with cocci is **poor growth or lack of weight gains**



- **Diagnosis:** Colour of scour is not diagnostic. Collect individual or pooled muck samples and submit them to the lab to count cocci and worm egg numbers – if samples get warm enroute to the lab, the eggs can hatch giving false readings so deliver them fresh or keep them in the fridge until delivered

- **Treat:** Separate animals with diarrhoea and once diagnosed on a sample, treat the group with a coccidiosis treatment – speak to us about timing and type of product – fluid therapy can be useful in severe cases to treat severe dehydration and ultimately deaths

#### **Prevention of Parasite burdens requires excellent hygiene and management:**

1. Reduce stocking density
2. Regularly moving feed and water troughs - clean out water buckets frequently
3. Reduce faecal contamination of feed and water troughs - raise or cover
4. Increasing bedding indoors to reduce contamination/frequently rotate animals in paddocks
5. Avoid mixing different ages of calves
6. Clean and disinfect all buildings between groups of calves. Always use a disinfectant that claims effectiveness against coccidial oocysts. Clean pens out promptly so they are empty for as long as possible
7. When all else fails, preventative medication can be used but this does not fix poor management

#### **Grazing Young stock – Worms**

Another issue of turnout in young animals is worm eggs. Adult cattle aren't affected by worms as they develop immunity to them but young calves don't have this yet.

Sampling calves from two weeks post turnout is the best way to establish if there is any requirement to treat:

- Collect dung from at least 10% of the group and submit to the lab without getting warm
- Target worming based on results of count, how much grazing is available and planned rotations
- Test groups every 4-6 weeks throughout the grazing season but more frequently if diarrhoea or weight loss/lack of growth occurs

The best and safest way to promote this immunity to both worms and cocci parasites is by low level exposure. This means that we need some parasites present for cattle to react to so we will discuss with you the results as to which levels require action or not. This is also why we don't promote routine blanket worming at set intervals as it can delay the onset of immunity to when cattle are older and a lot less feed efficient than when they are calves.

Speak to us today to find out about sampling, tests results and help with developing a parasite plan



Wood Vets Farm Team



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