



THE
**WOOD
VETERINARY
GROUP**



FARM NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024

New Farm Reception!



We are delighted to announce that after a very long refurbishment process involving the entire building, we have finally banished the green portacabins from the carpark and the build team are very nearly off site. We have moved into our new farm offices with a dedicated farm reception area. This is now located on the front of the building on the right-hand side under the glass roof. There is a hashed parking area in front of this reception which you are welcome to park in if the main car park is full.

This office will be open 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and covered by one of our amazing farm support team. Main reception at the left of the building will then be available from 5.30pm to 7pm as before. As part of this project, the meeting rooms have also had a refresh and we will be hosting meetings at the practice from the new year as well as hosting some open days and tours of our exciting new facilities so watch this space for dates.

Cold Weather Calf Management

With temperatures now falling fast as we head towards the shortest day, calves will need extra support to deal with colder weather. The alternating frost and wet, warm weather has given youngstock a bit of a shock so we need to support them as best we can.

Adult cows are happiest between minus 5 °C to + 5 °C due to the vast amount of heat they produce when ruminating. This is their Thermoneutral zone. This is the temperature at which there is no effect on metabolic temperature regulation or where no energy is used to regulate body temperature. It is also how adult cows contribute to the movement of stale air out of sheds drawing in fresh air also known as the “stack effect”. The bottom of this range is known as the **Lower Critical Temperature or LCT at which animals use up energy to keep warm rather than growing**. Calves are not ruminants yet and have a proportionately large surface area to lose heat from and so have a very different LCT as in the table here.

When calves are cold or below their LCT, they attempt to maintain body temperature using up energy normally used for growth and immunity.

Calf age	LCT °C
< 3 weeks old	15 °C
> 3 weeks old	10 °C
Added moisture or wind	Raises LCT

So how can we combat the fact that calves born in any English winter (and summer!) will be using most of their nutrition to maintain body temperature and are therefore susceptible to disease (little nutritional protein left for immune function) and are unlikely to be growing well?

1) Feed more milk to compensate during winter months:

As with all calf management, gradually increase and decrease feed allowances. By over 6 weeks old they can tolerate 0 °C but not sub-zero temperatures. Mix extra powder with water allocation as normal but **not over 160g into a litre** of water to avoid excess mineral intake. If already at maximum powder inclusion rates then increase volume but keep consistent for a week at a time rather than daily fluctuations:

For calves under 3 weeks old:

Feed 50g more powder/0.4L whole milk at 10 °C

Feed 100g more powder/0.6L whole milk at 5 °C

Feed 150g more powder/1.6L whole milk at 0 °C



2) Nesting Scores

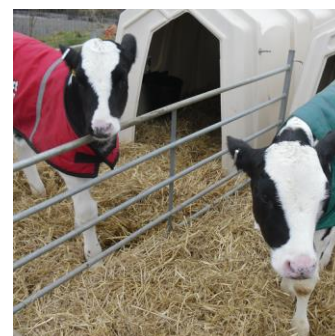


Straw is a very good way to stop drafts, prevent wind chill and stop calves from being damp and losing valuable heat to the atmosphere. It also helps drainage. Bedding should completely cover the legs when lying down to get a nesting score of 3 like the photo here. In score 1 or 2 beds you can see lots of the calf and its legs when lying down and the straw won't provide any protection from the cold. Score 3 beds are linked to significantly lower rates of respiratory disease and scour – using straw is a lot cheaper than sick calves!

3) Extra TLC

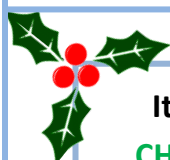
Heating devices can be used such as forced air, fixed radiant or heat lamps but some of these can often pose significant fire hazards so not always a good option.

Calf coats can be useful if poor housing means that calves are constantly below their LCT and in draughts, especially if they are sick or small. Use coats that are breathable to stop sweating and can be machine washed between each calf. Once the temperature starts to rise or the calf is of an age to cope with the current ambient temperature, start by taking coats off in the morning, replacing them at night for a week as these calves won't have a good hair coat or subcutaneous fat reserves.



Older cattle will start to sweat in foggy and still days when housed, so clipping out the central back hair can prevent pneumonia. By removing the hair we avoid cattle staying damp as the air cools overnight and it reduces the amount of straw that sticks to them as well. You just need to spend a day as a hairdresser a few times through the winter months.

Get a **maximum/minimum thermometer** up in your calf sheds to know what needs to be done and when!



It's only just December but... **CHRISTMAS MEDICINE ORDERS**

Please ring ALL medicines orders in
by
Friday 20th December to ensure
collection/delivery on visits over
Christmas and New Year!



Festive Opening Times

Mon 16th to Fri 20th Dec:
Sat 21st and Sun 22nd Dec:
Mon 23rd to Tue 24th Dec:
Christmas Day (25th):
Boxing Day (26th):
Friday 27th Dec:
Sat 28th and Sun 29th Dec:
Mon 30th and Tue 31st Dec:
New Years Day (1st):
Thurs 2nd Jan Onward:

Normal Hours
Emergencies Only
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