

## Newsletter July 2022

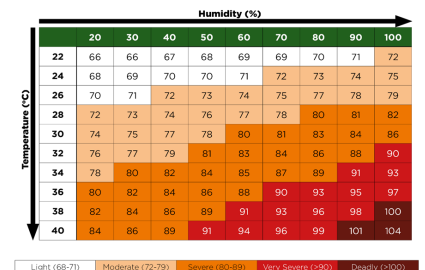
### Six Ways To Manage Heat Stress in Cattle

When Summer is with us, don't we know it? The issue in Britain is, it can turn up very unannounced, quickly taking its toll on both humans and cattle (don't get us started on waterproofs). Heat stress can be a huge problem for cows even on days which don't seem excessively hot to us, with both milk production and fertility being affected. Yield may fall by as much as 20%, and dramatic dips in fertility are commonly seen. The effects of heat stress are long-lasting and the economic consequences can be disastrous if not carefully managed.

There's increasing evidence that even our low (but increasing) summer temperatures have a big impact on production leading to:

- Depressed dry matter intakes
- Lower milk yields
- Reduced fertility through reduced oestrous and poor conception
- Depressed immune system – leading to higher disease incidence such as mastitis
- Increased lameness – cows stand for longer to lose heat more effectively, leading to more sole bruising and ulcers following the heat stress period

Stressors act on dairy cattle as they do on humans. Minor causes of stress can be seemingly shrugged off, but multiple small stresses can amount to bigger problems. Cows are very hardy animals, happily going out their business getting in calf and producing milk regardless of minor stresses. However, add in overwhelming heat and that might just be the tipping point to illness. If you're able to harness the cow to be able to adapt to the heat, then we can minimise the impact and reduce the likelihood of reaching tipping point. The Temperature Humidity Index (THI) is a good reference for cow side stress:



High humidity dramatically reduces the ability of cows to lose heat. Similarly, poor air flow increases the humidity of the air around the cow. Even 'mild stress' can cause major problems and occurs at temperatures humans find comfortable. Waiting until we feel the heat is too late!

In essence, waiting until we are hot means it's too late. Here are 6 tips to reducing and managing heat stress in dairy cows:

**Focus on your at risk** – your fresh cows are the most susceptible to productivity issues, therefore during hot weather, they will need additional TLC. In addition, your high yielders and older cows will be at greater risk of heat stress. Keeping an eye on these groups and monitoring any transition issues will allow you to intervene quickly and it also acts as an early warning sign for the rest of the herd.

**Allow plenty of water access** – a no brainer really, but in hot weather cows will drink up to double their normal amount (190 to 230 L). Ensure there is at least 10cm space for each cow and at least two troughs for groups larger than 10. Large volume troughs are ideal as cows will drink in groups and intake up to 60% of their daily water following milking.

**Provide suitable shade** – shade provision at pasture has been linked to a 10-20% increase in milk production, something to think about when the hot weather hits and to build into paddocks if possible. Remember your dry cows and youngstock too.

**Reduce collecting yard stocking density** – during even moderate temperatures, consider moving smaller groups of cows through to the collecting yard to allow more room for them to disperse heat. Typically they need 3.5 – 4.5m<sup>2</sup>.

**Fit some fans** – a brilliant option for cooling cows in many areas; sheds, collecting yard, parlour. It's not the cheapest option, so should be done after cheaper modifications, but it is one of the most effective especially when working with older buildings; Fans should be angled downward to create continuous air flow through the entire length of a building.

**Don't add to the stress** – minimise movements and avoid working with cattle where possible. If it can be done on a slightly different day, then consider it. Added movements will only stress the cows out further and could be the additional tipping point.

As always, if you're concerned about heat stress or have a particular pinch point on farm, please speak to your vet.

## Tackling Lameness

### Mobility scoring

Perhaps the first step is a mobility score? 3 of our Vets and Vet techs are Register of Mobility Scorers (ROMS) mobility scorers. Not only does it give us a snapshot of "where we are" with regards to lameness (prevalence), on bigger units regular mobility scoring can be a useful way to detect lame cows so we can instigate treatment sooner. Mobility scoring is competitively priced at £27/hr for a ROMS Vet scorer, (2 hour minimum).

### Foot trimming

Having a system of regular foot trimming is vital. The practice uses Phil Jones, a NACFT accredited trimmer. He attends farms regularly and as well as trimming the lame cows he carries out pre-dry trims and 70-days-in-milk inspections. This way he can correct problems and foot imbalances before the cow goes lame. In between visits from the foot-trimmer, it is imperative that someone on the farm is skilled and confident in foot trimming to tackle new cases as soon as they appear, so they don't have to wait for the next foot-trimming session. Early treatment is more effective than delayed treatment. Most cases of lameness can be treated successfully with a corrective trim, a block and a pain killing injection (Metacam or Ketoprofen). To that end David Taylor is holding a **practical foot trimming course on the 6th and 21st July, 2022**. This 2-day course will instil in you the confidence to tackle cases alone, knowing you are using best practice. We have a few places still available, so contact the office to book.

## Dung Tested for FREE for 1 Day Only

We are doing a special faecal worm egg counting day on Wednesday 13th July. **FOR ONE DAY ONLY ALL FAECAL WORM EGG COUNTS WILL BE FREE**. If you would like your sheep, goats or cattle dung tested for **FREE** please drop a sample into our Bridgwater practice on **Wednesday 13th July** or our Ilminster or Yarcome branches on **Tuesday 12th July**.

**Walk behind a group of cattle/corner a group of sheep or goats in a corner of the paddock and collect fresh dung from them as they walk away/come towards you.** Aim to collect from at least 10 animals if sampling a group or the whole group if less than 10. This can be collected and dropped into us in gloves/sandwich bags or old butter tubs.

\*\*\*Samples dropped on days other than stated above will be charged as normal Faecal Worm Egg Counts at £20 + VAT\*\*\*

### FREE SELEKT Pump Service

Either come to the office at Sedgemoor Auction Centre on Wednesday 20th July from 11am or drop off before and SELEKT will service your pump for FREE

### Medicines Course

This course will take place **Tuesday 16th August** at Sedgemoor Auction Centre. Please contact any of our offices to book your place.