



FEET UPDATE & HEAT STRESS - PART 2 - JULY 23

Block Application

Since running the BCVA Lantra Accredited foot trimming courses I have picked up a few tips for applying blocks which I thought I would share.

Glue Application

Glue should be applied only to the front 3/4 of the block. This is to avoid creating pressure points at the heel and the sole ulcer site.



Glue Application

Positioning the Block

The block should be aligned with the tip of the toe or slightly (~1cm) back from the toe. You can use your finger on the heel to give a guide as to where it should sit (see picture)



Block Positioning

The inside of the block should be aligned with the inside wall of the claw. Ensure the block is at 90° to the leg bone or sloping slightly outwards. It should not be sloping inwards.

Preparing the Foot

A lot of you will already be doing this but applying some heat to the claw with a blow torch or similar makes a huge difference to retention. As well as the heat setting the glue, it burns off the natural oils from the sole helping the glue to adhere.

If anyone would like to attend the BCVA CHCSB Lantra Accredited Foot Trimming course please contact the office- they are taught along with a professional foot trimmer and based on the most up to date advice. There are two options, a 1-day Foot First Aid course for beginners, and a 3 day Intermediate course for those who already have some experience.

Thank you to Tom Morris (Morris Moo Shoes) for the pictures.

Use of NSAID's in Digital Dermatitis

Another study, looking at use of NSAID's for digital dermatitis concluded that animals treated with 3 days of Ketofen as well as topical oxytetracycline (blue spray) were 2.57 times less likely to be lame at a subsequent mobility score. If only considering animals who were lame due to digital dermatitis at the start of the study, they were 20 times less likely to be lame following treatment with Ketofen. Animals treated with Ketofen also produced 2.98kg extra milk per day!

Use of NSAIDS at Calving Reduces Risk of Subsequent Lameness and Culling

Many of you will have heard James Wilson speak at the cow convention last year regarding his work into the use of NSAID's at calving. A group of heifers at calving were given 3 days Ketoprofen (Ketofen), as well as 3 days alongside a block and trim if they had a lameness event. The results showed that the animals receiving the above treatment were 20% less likely to be culled, and 10% less likely to have a lameness event, in the subsequent 3 years. This effect is thought to be due to reduced inflammation in the transition period and when lameness events are seen leading to reduced pathological change to the foot. Based on the study results, the authors recommend NSAID treatment at first and subsequent calving's (starting 24 hours post-partum), and NSAID treatment at any lameness event.

The Remainder of this month's newsletter will follow on from last month's discussion on heat stress.

- many thanks to Chloe Rodriguez from Galebreaker.

Heat Stress

With the summer months warming up it is important to think about the effects heat stress could be having on your herd. Investments into improving ventilation and adding cooling systems into cow sheds could save you money in the long run! Cows are sensitive to a combination of heat and humidity, measured by the temperature humidity index (THI), meaning the more humid it is, the lower ambient temperature at which the cow will experience heat stress.

Not just milk yields are affected...

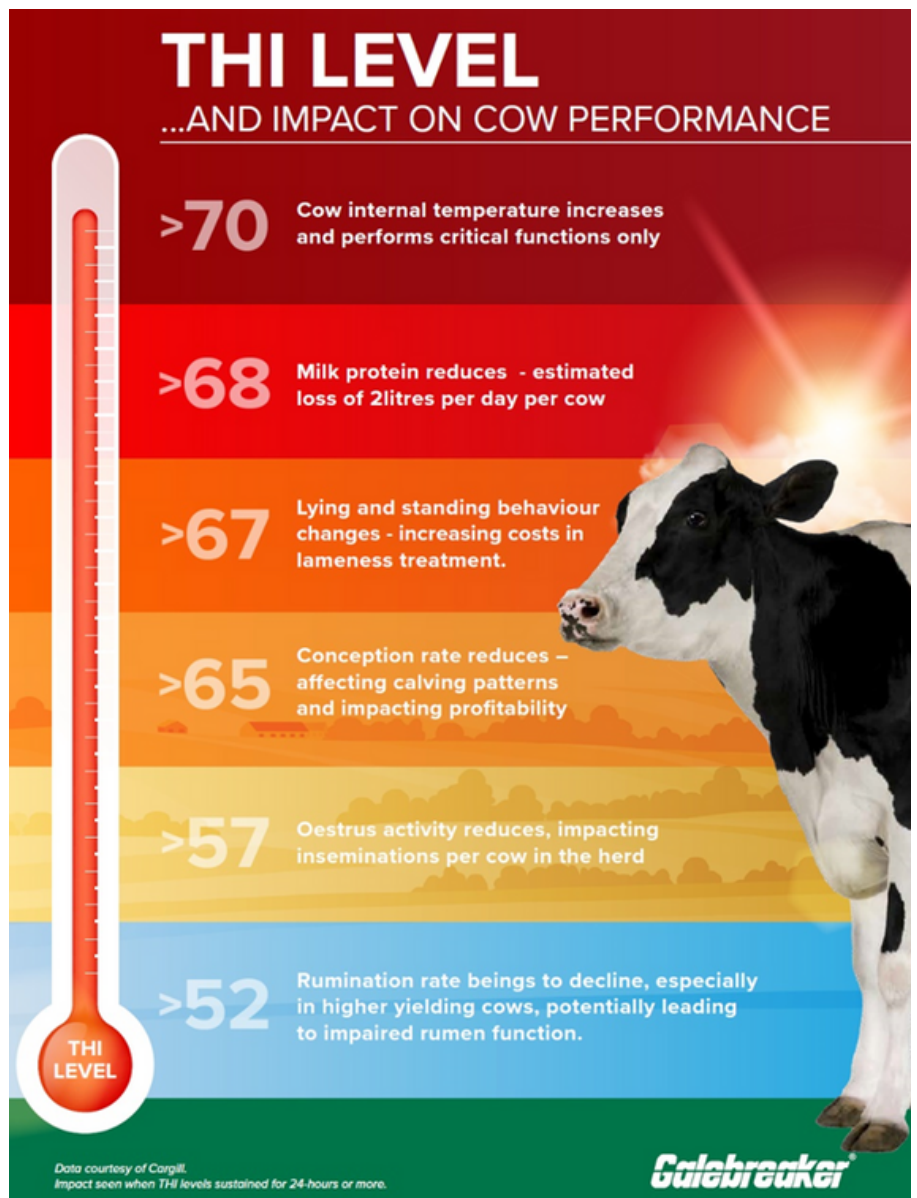
Traditionally, farmers have used milk yield as an indicator of heat stress, as milk yield falls when the cow becomes heat stressed. However, new research indicates that the THI threshold for fertility is lower than for lactation, meaning reproduction could be affected at a much lower THI than first thought. As shown in the thermometer.

Heat stress can cause a decline in egg quality, decreased fertilisation rate and an increased risk of abortion, which can lower the herd's conception rate by up to 30%.

This decline in fertility can last beyond the summer months and can carry on into the autumn. This suggests that heat stress affects follicles (undeveloped eggs) which become the eggs that are released for fertilisation 50 days later.

This increase in empty days can affect those on a block calving schedule as they will not be able to calve in time to receive the best prices in their contract.

Additionally, cows which endured heat stress while still in utero are also impacted – being older at first calving, having a higher culling rate, longer calving intervals and lower milk yield.



Spotting the signs of heat stress in your building

Building design, and how it ventilates, is fundamental to the likelihood and severity of heat stress risk. Buildings cannot always be rebuilt but there are several steps you can take to improve ventilation. Many of these measures are at an investment level which show an attractive pay back in terms of animal health and productivity.

- Galebreaker recommends measuring the THI in your housing – a simple sensor can do this for you and is a much more reliable indicator of heat stress risk than focussing on temperature only
- How does the building smell – is it damp? Does it smell of ammonia? This may indicate there is not enough ventilation in the building. Galebreaker recommends that buildings have an open ridge to exhaust warm, stale air and open sides (inlets) which are between 2 and 4 times the outlet area
- Does the building have cobwebs? Cobweb build-up is a sign of still air and little ventilation
- Rusting roof purlins, fixings and drip marks – another good sign of damp stagnant conditions. Light should be uniform throughout the building. When a cow starts to overheat, they associate light with heat and move towards darker areas, which can cause bunching
- Smoke testing can easily highlight if there are areas within the building where air is hanging for too long. Research suggests that air should be refreshed within the building a minimum 60 times per hour, so all smoke should clear within 1 minute
- Traditional building materials such as fixed cladding can reduce not only the amount of natural light coming into the building but doesn't offer the flexibility of increasing natural ventilation during the hotter months.

DISPENSARY ANNOUNCEMENT:

Starting Saturday 29th July the farm and equine dispensary will no longer be staffed on Saturday mornings.

Medicines can still be dispensed and collected on Saturday mornings but will have to be pre-arranged via the on call vets.

Please call 01666 823035 to arrange this.

Thank you.



Vet Tech Update

Rosie, Zoe and Toby have been busy out and about meeting you all. Don't forget they are happy to do your Freezebranding, just give the office a call to arrange.



Best wishes,

Sarah