

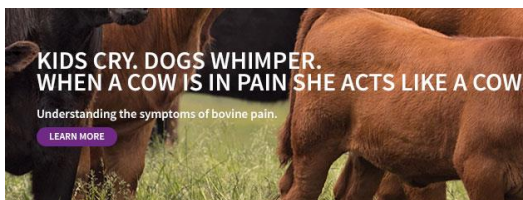
Everyone hopes that other than planned visits they don't have to see the vet too often. However, cattle often have other ideas and inevitably at some point you will have to call a vet out to calve a cow or deal with a lame foot or sick animal.

The vet visit is the first stage of that animal's recovery. The aftercare that you put in is **AS** important as the diagnosis and initial treatment.

I have outlined below how you can help give your animals the best chance of recuperation - without having to call the vet out again!

Treatment Courses

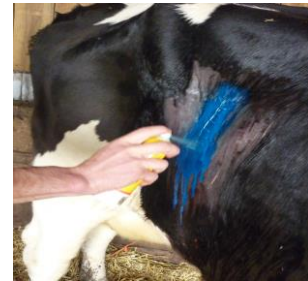
- It is essential that you carry out the instructions left by the vet correctly.
- Giving antibiotics at the wrong dose or route of administration will reduce their efficacy and increase the risk of antibiotic resistance.
- If in doubt as to how much to give look on the ticket left by the vet, or the bottle, or ring us - don't just make it up.
- We will nearly always give pain relief to cattle under our care. Our most common pain relief drug is Metacam which lasts for around 48 hours. Watch cows for signs of pain or discomfort - teeth grinding, off food, ears down and repeat the Metacam at 48 hours if you think they need it.
- Spotting cattle in discomfort is sometimes easier said than done as their default reaction is to hide pain. Use of pain relief in cattle has increased dramatically which is great, but my advice would always be if you think there is a chance they need it -give it.



TLC

- Sick animals or cows that have had difficult calvings or operations need care in the days following.
- Check them often.
- Provide a deep straw bed, clean water and fresh food ad lib.

Wounds



- Cattle generally heal extremely well, but surgical or traumatic wounds need to be inspected daily for signs of infection or swelling.
- Spraying the wound daily with Engemycin Spray for 3 days will promote healing.
- Keep it clean - if straw or muck is stuck to it - it isn't clean.



Talk to us

We hope we are good at calling to follow up on cases we see, but it is a two-way street so never shy away from picking up the phone to chat to us if you have any worries about an animal or you think they aren't picking up as you would like. We would much rather talk to you and alter the treatment protocol or come back out in good time rather than when it is too late for us to do anything. Communication is key!

Lame Cow Follow Up

Prompt identification and treatment of lame cows gives you the best chance of healing the lesion. Studies have shown that the best way to get a cow back to normal mobility is to pick the foot up the same day you notice it; trim the lame claw, give pain relieving anti-inflammatory such as Metacam or Rimadyl and block the sound claw.

I have done a lot of trimming of score 2 and 3 lame cows over the past few years and have learnt that these cows that have significant lesions where a lot of horn is trimmed away **need to be followed up** in the coming weeks. If these cows are not re-seen within a month of the initial trim, there is a real risk of creating large areas of under run horn where bacteria can get trapped and set up infection - often rendering the cost of the initial trim wasted.

We have had some real successes on farms treating score 3 lame cows but the follow up is so important! I like to re-see these cows myself, but they could also be looked at by you or a foot trimmer to check how the horn is growing back and readdress the foot balance.

A cow that has had an extreme foot trim like the ones below should have anti-inflammatory at the first trim (repeat in 48 hours if you think they need it) and be re-checked 3-4 weeks later. (Any cow requiring trimming like this should be done by a vet under local anesthetic)



Recent discussion within the farm team regarding lame cows has prompted us to alter our lame cow protocol slightly. Sole lesions such as white line and sole ulcers are caused by the pressures on that foot from the cow's environment. If one foot has a lesion it is likely that the other foot may be showing similar signs. Therefore, it seems sensible that if we are called out to see a lame back foot, we will check both back feet. It is far better to dish out the sole ulcer site on a foot with slight bruising rather than have to treat it as a full-blown ulcer down the line. This advice is the

same for you guys trimming lame cows on farm- check both feet!

Obviously, your aim and ours is to prevent score 3 lame cows occurring at all. We can help you work out where your lameness risk factors are on farm and how to improve your herd's mobility. My main advice is as follows:

- Monitor levels of lameness by regular mobility scoring and trim score 2 and 3 cows asap on identification.
- Treat lame cows with 3-pronged approach- curative trim, pain relief and block.
- Maximize cow comfort underfoot, reduce standing times, ensure cubicles are comfortable and cow tracks well maintained.
- Get digital dermatitis under control - it makes all other foot lesions harder to heal. Foot cleanliness is key.

Over Trimming

The Dutch 5 step method of foot trimming states that the foot should be trimmed to a toe length of 7.5cm. A recent study that scanned claws pre-trimming to determine claw depth and appropriate dorsal wall length for trimming concluded that 7.5cm would be too short for 95% of Holstein cows. They suggested 8-8.5cm was more appropriate.

Logic would assume that no one toe length will fit all breed and size of cow. Many cows presented for trimming may not actually require trimming, it takes some confidence and change in mindset to pick a foot up and put it back down again without using your knife - but that may be the right decision for that cow.

'The primary objective of hoof trimming is to attempt to restore the foot to its correct shape and weight bearing surfaces' – Roger Blowey

Give me a ring if you want to discuss lameness levels on your farm or anything else discussed in this newsletter. I hope you are all surviving the winter so far - it will be spring before we know it.

All the best, B.

