

nantwich farm vets



Nantwich Farm Vets
Hurleston, Nantwich
Cheshire
CW5 6BU

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July 2019

Dates for your diary

- | | |
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| 2 nd July | Sheep Meeting
See over-leaf for details |
| July, dates TBC | Dairyland Foot Trimming Course
See over-leaf for details. |
| July 24 th /
Sept 23 rd | Ram Pre-breeding Examination Day
See over-leaf for details |
| 31 st July | Nantwich Show
Join us at our tent for all our usual hospitality! |
| 27 th Aug | Beef Club Meeting
Visiting speaker from AHDB discusses market forecasts and carcass selection |

As I write this we've just had the hottest day of the year so far, and one of the hottest June days in 40 years. And now today it's about 15 degrees cooler and chucking it down! The ups and downs in weather certainly make it more difficult and unpredictable for you for field work, but it has a big impact on your stock as well. With that in mind, the main feature of this month is an article on dealing with heat stress. For our flock-keeping clients, we have a couple of ram examination days that will help your advanced preparation of rams for the breeding season.

And for all of you, we look forward to seeing you at our tent at the Nantwich Show at the end of the month with our normal provision of bacon butties, booze and other goodies!



In case you're interested...

Here's your big word for the month: *perosomus elumbis*.

Laura was called out to this interesting calving, which was in full breach position, with the hindlegs fused and unable to be repositioned correctly. A solid boney mass protruding from the spine (inset) also made the calving much more difficult, but it was eventually successful!

Perosomus elumbis is a rare congenital disorder in cattle, with a currently unknown cause. It results in hind limb deformity, with the entire back half of the foetus much smaller in proportion to the front.

Often there is a deformed or shortened spine, and in this case the foetus had spina bifida, or a gap in the spine. In discussion amongst other vets in the team, other similar cases have been seen or mentioned by farmers recently.

Got something interesting for the newsletter? Let us know!



Upcoming events

SHEEP VACCINES – WHAT, WHEN & WHY

2nd July, 11-2PM - Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU - £35

Our next flock meeting aims to discuss the ins and outs of vaccines available for protecting your flock. Do you need to vaccinate at all? What for? When is the best time to give them? Come along for a chance to find out what's best for your sheep and get any questions answered. Refreshments provided. Ring the office or speak to Amy to book a place.

FOOT TRIMMING COURSE

Mon 15th – Thurs 18th July - Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU

There are still a few places left on our next foot-trimming course. These are run in conjunction with Dairyland Hoof Care Institute, and provide an excellent grounding in foot anatomy and common causes of lameness, together with a practical approach to routine and therapeutic foot trimming, both with knives and grinders. It involves two mornings of theory followed by afternoons practicing on dead feet, and two full days trimming on farm. It's a course designed to train you effectively whether you have trimmed for years or never lifted a foot in your life. Contact Steve for more info, or ring the office to book.



RAM PRE-BREEDING EXAMINATION DAY

Wed 24th July and Mon 23rd Sept 2019 - Nantwich Farm Vets, Chester Road, Hurleston, CW5 6BU

The days will run at the practice between 9:30am-5pm in pre-booked timeslots. We will perform a full pre-breeding examination (PBE) of your rams to ensure that they are fit and ready to work. It is **critical** that you ensure that your ram(s) is/are up to the job as no sperm = no lambs = no profit.

The PBE will start with 5 steps of the EBLEX ram MOT. The 5 components of this are:

- Toes:* Check his locomotion, arthritis and feet
- Teeth:* Check for under shot or over shot teeth, gaps and molar abscesses
- Testicles:* Measure and check firmness with no lumps or bumps
- Tone:* Aim for body condition between 3.5-4
- Treat:* Check he is up to date with relevant vaccines etc



The next step of the PBE is electroejaculation and collection of a semen sample which will then be examined under a microscope to ensure quantity and quality of sperm. We will then be able to advise on the suitability and capability of the ram for your flock.

A pre-breeding exam should take place around two months before the ram is needed to be used with the ewes as this gives time to correct any problems or, in a worst-case scenario, find a suitable replacement.

It isn't only rams that you plan to use for breeding that should have a pre-breeding soundness exam; vasectomised rams should be tested to ensure that they are not producing any sperm. This is especially important the longer you continue to use him after his vasectomy as with increasing years the risk of his spermatic duct reconnecting increases.

The price of a pre-breeding exam on the day will be £60 for 1 ram, and £50 for any subsequent ones. To book your slot please contact Amy Cox (07966833870), Joe Mitchell (07773342345) or Jake Lawson (07891843573) or if you would prefer an on-farm visit also please let us know. The first date will be for MV-accredited stock and the second for non-MV accredited.



Heat Stress: Keeping your cool

Craig Scarisbrick (our soon-to-be new vet) discusses this hot topic

With the warmer climate that the UK now generally experiences, our dairy cows are subjected to temperatures not too dissimilar to those experienced in North America and the Middle East, where heat stress has been a recognised issue for some time due to their higher temperatures and relative humidity.

When should I worry about heat stress?

The normal body temperature of a cow should not exceed 39°C (102.2°F). An increase above this threshold is indicative of either systemic disease (mastitis, metritis etc.) or could be a pointer towards potential heat stress. The thermoneutral zone of a dairy cow (where environmental temperature does not affect core body temperature) is between -4°C and 22°C, meaning only when temperatures drop or rise above this range will problems arise.

Due to the component of relative humidity, it doesn't have to be excessively hot before heat stress can take effect. Figure 1 shows how temperature and humidity contribute to the temperature-humidity index (THI), and how

this affects the severity of the signs observed.

With our summer temperatures a mild to moderate level of heat stress will not be uncommon

In the UK last summer, peak temperatures were between 30°C and 32°C (we weren't far off that at the end of June!) and the humidity would normally be between 60 and 80%. The black box on the table shows the temperature and humidity that could cause problems for our cows here in the UK.

Who is likely to be affected?

Milking cows (especially high yielders) are at an increased risk

compared to dry cows as they have more heat produced from metabolism. A study has estimated that a cow giving 30 litres/day has double the amount of heat production than a dry cow, and a cow giving 50 litres/day produced three times the heat of a dry cow. However heat stress can also affect youngstock, predisposing them to bouts of pneumonia.

How could heat stress impact my herd?

There are many studies that demonstrate long term impacts on cows that have experienced even a short period of heat stress. There are well established links to:

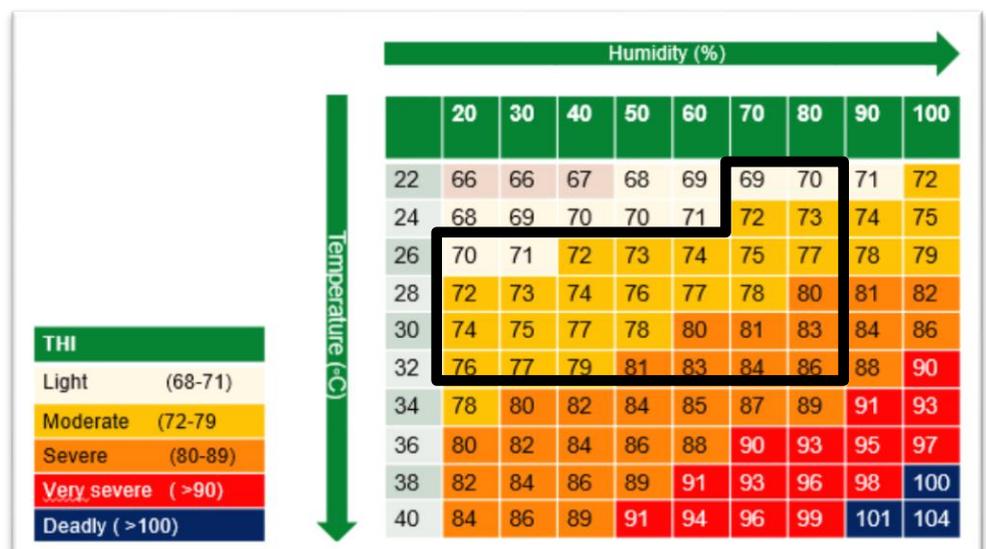


Figure 1: Temperature and humidity combine to provide a Temperature-Humidity Index, which in turn shows the severity of heat stress a cow will experience at those levels. The black box indicates the common summer conditions we experience in the UK.

- **Reduced dry matter intake (DMI)**
- **Decreased milk yield.**
- **Increased Lameness**
- **Reduced Fertility**
- **Reduced immune function**
- **Increased SCC/mastitis**

How do cows deal with heat stress?

Cows will respond by reducing their energy requirements, which usually involves a reduction in both milk yield, and any energy that would be used towards reproduction, whether that be displaying oestrus behaviour, or hormone production.

As with any stress, there is an increase in cortisol levels which

has a negative impact on the immune system and makes cows more vulnerable to mastitis along with other diseases.

Figure 2 below illustrates some of the known effects of heat stress on cows.

How can I reduce the risk?

- **Provide more water-** intakes can increase by 10 to 20%, so a high yielding cow can require 100 litres of water per day. Ensure that pressure to water troughs in housing and in fields is sufficient for increased intakes.
- **Provide shaded areas.** If there is no shade outside consider bringing cows in at peak temperatures – so long as the sheds are well ventilated!



Figure 3: Cows with heat stress will show behavioral changes, such as panting, sweating and drooling

- **Install fans-** particularly in areas of high crowding, especially the collecting yard.
- **Increase the energy density of the ration-** careful not to over-do this and cause acidosis, talk to your vet or nutritionist first. Buffer feeding at cooler points of the day may also help to maintain intake levels.

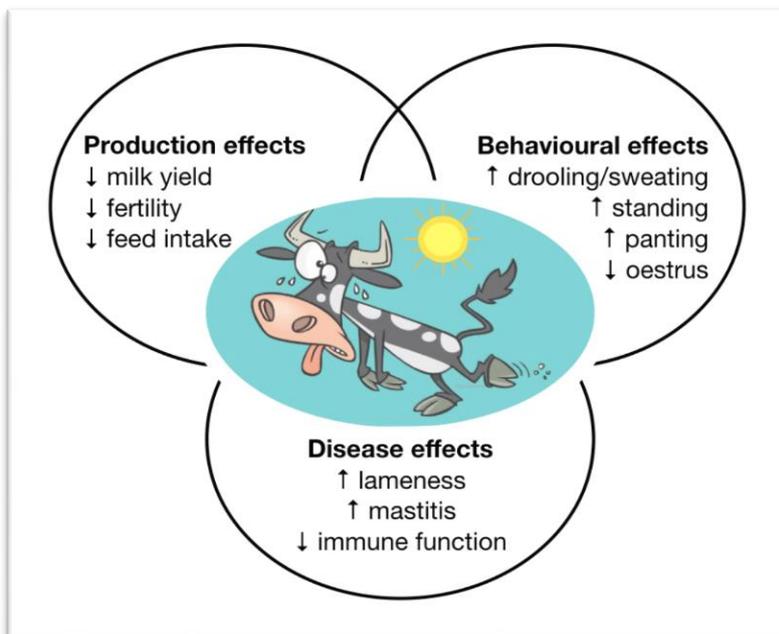


Figure 2: Effects of heat stress cows

Take home messages

- Short-term heat stress can cause long-term impacts – prevention is best. Water is key!
- Ensure grazing areas have shade or consider bring cows in at periods of intense heat
- If you're going to install one fan to reduce heat stress, put it in the collecting yard!

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