

# nantwich farm vets



Nantwich Farm Vets  
Hurleston, Nantwich  
Cheshire  
CW5 6BU

24hr phone line: 01270 610349



June 2019

## Dates for your diary

<b>4<sup>th</sup> June</b> All day	<b>Selekt Pump Servicing</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> June</b> 11:15am-2pm	<b>Medicines Course</b> See inside page for details
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	<b>Sheep Meeting</b> See inside page for details
<b>July, dates TBC</b>	<b>Dairyland Foot Trimming Course</b> See inside page for details.
<b>July 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Nantwich Show</b> Join us at our tent for all our usual hospitality!

It's been a super month out and about in the warmth and sunshine. Crack on to read some info on our TB Advisory Service visits, plenty of upcoming meetings and a review of cows time budgets.



## TBAS Visits

We have now carried out 30 or so TB Advisory Visits for our farms which are all in the high risk or edge areas. The feedback from these has been very positive with all farmers saying they have picked up some useful pointers.

We make four recommendations on the back of the visits. These may be very minor things but even small changes can have a major effect. Some recommendations may be totally cost-free to implement. Even if you have never had TB then these visits may help to reduce the risk of having a breakdown in your herd. If you have had previous problems with TB or are currently under restrictions we may be able to give you some pointers for minimising spread or re-infection, and we can also

give advice on how to manage your surplus stock. It is also an opportunity to have any of your queries with regards to statutory TB control answered as well as discuss any other concerns you may have.

There are five main areas of discussion on the visits. These are:

- Infrastructure
- Wildlife
- Biosecurity
- Sourcing policies
- Resilience

It is important to cover all aspects of TB control and not just one area. There might be some aspects that you have previously focused on and not considered other risks you might be taking. We generally have a look around the yard at feeding practices, water troughs, feed storage, then have a look at suspect wildlife activity on the farm, then have a sit down and a chat. It is very informal and not an inspection.

The visit is totally free for farmers and can be up to two hours of one-on-one veterinary time. The project is funded by DEFRA and the EU through the Rural Development Programme for England. It is hoped it will continue until 2020. You will receive a bespoke report as a follow up to the visit.

Contact Amy Cox 07966 833870 or John Manson 07813 690860 to get yours booked in at a convenient time ASAP!

# Upcoming meetings

## SELEKT PUMP SERVICING WORKSHOP

Tuesday 4th June – Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU – FREE!

Most farms will have probably seen the benefit of pumping fluids into sick cows by one of the vets, and some of you know how much having your own rumen pumping set saves you in being able to manage these cases better for yourselves. Whether it's the rehydration needed to save the life of a toxic mastitis case, or managing a fresh calved cow to get it eating and prevent an LDA, they are a brilliant piece of equipment to have to hand.

On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, the Selekt team are offering a free Selekt Pump service. You can drop off your SELEKT pump prior to the clinic or come along on the day. The Selekt team will also be on hand to give you advice on cleaning and maintaining it and can answer any questions you may have about using the SELEKT System.

**SPECIAL OFFER!!** The price of the Selekt Drenching Set combined with the Cattle Pump is £286 +VAT. So if you prevented one LDA with it, or saved one toxic mastitis cow, you've covered the cost. If you purchase a full set throughout June, you will get a £50 discount voucher off the purchase of a full box of Selekt sachets.



## SHEEP VACCINES – WHAT, WHEN & WHY

2nd July, 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.

## MEDICINE TRAINING COURSE + MILKSURE PART 1

7<sup>th</sup> June, 11:15am - Nantwich Farm Vets, Hurleston, CW5 6BU - £65



This course provides a broad look at medicines that are commonly used on farm, what they are for, how they should be stored and used responsibly. 'Responsible use of antibiotics' is a common catchphrase in the industry, with the aim of reducing unnecessary treatments, and making sure when we do treat we are doing so as effectively as possible and minimizing resistance. This course also includes the first half of the Milksure course, involving discussion on minimizing risk of residue and milk failures. If you are interested in the full Milksure course, an on-farm visit to provide the second half can be arranged at a later date.

## FOOT TRIMMING COURSE

Mid-July, date TBC - 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.



# How do your cows spend their day?

A look at the impact of time budgets on a cow's health and productivity



In an ideal, well-designed cubicle shed, cows should spend 12-14 hours lying down each day. When lying down the blood flow to the udder increases for milk production and the cow spends time resting and ruminating. Failure to achieve sufficient lying time increases a cow's stress hormones and increases lameness. So how can we guarantee that every cow gets her 12 hours of rest?

The figure below shows a typical time budget for a lactating cow. A Wisconsin study of 208 cows on 17 dairy farms found that a TMR-fed, cubicle-housed dairy cow spends on average 4.4 hours eating each day (about half the time a grazing cow spends). She also needs to drink around 120L of water per day and will spend an average of 0.4 hours/day at or around a trough. Milking times are hugely variable across herds, but in the study averaged 2.5 hours over 2-3 milkings. With these fixed non-negotiable time slots, we have already taken 7.4 hours out of the time budget, leaving under 17 hours remaining in the shed.

Activity	Average Time (hours)
Eating	4.4 (3-5)
Drinking	0.4
Milking / travel	2.5 (2.5-3.5)
Socialising	2.4 (2-3)
Standing in cubicle	2.9
Lying down	11.3

Figure 1: Typical time budgets for a lactating dairy cow

Time left in the shed will be spent performing three activities – lying down, standing in a passageway and standing in a cubicle. The average cubicle-housed cow spends 2.4 hours/day standing in a passageway socializing, moving between the feed barrier and cubicles, and returning from the parlour. Once in the cubicle, the average cow spends 2.9 hours/day standing (range 0.3-13.0) and 11.3 hours/day lying down (range 2.8-17.6). Normal non-lame cows rarely spend longer than 2 hours/day standing in a cubicle.

*Time out of the shed milking was a significant factor for increased lameness prevalence*

If we want a cow to spend at least 12 hours a day lying down, and we subtract these average eating, drinking and standing times, we are only left with 2.8 hours/day for milking. That means 84 mins per milking for 2x milking and 56 mins for 3x milking.

Unfortunately, milking groups are not always sized on turnaround time and it is not uncommon to find time out of the shed exceeding 5 hours/day in many dairy herds. In this scenario, the dairy cow simply has no other option but to reduce resting time. It is perhaps not surprising then that time out of the shed milking was a significant factor for increased lameness prevalence in a recent survey of cubicle-housed herds. And unless they are kept in a separate group, often the cows standing the longest at milking time are the lame

ones at the back of the collecting yard that get pushed back by the others.

Studies monitoring overstocking in small groups of cows under tightly controlled situations suggest that overstocking does decrease lying time. However, for lying times to drop below the target of 12 hours/day, most of these studies find that stocking rates in excess of around 1.2 cows per cubicle are required. However, in the transition period stocking rates should be much lower than this to reduce fresh cow disease.

A cow's total lying time is usually spread over 10-15 bouts, averaging 60 minutes each. A cow needs to feel secure and confident in the movements required to both lie down and stand up. So a cubicle surface with poor traction will reduce the number of lying bouts with prolonged standing time between bouts, which lowers overall lying times and increases risk for lameness.

The main factor determining whether a cow spends time standing or lying down in the cubicle is lameness. When cows with sore feet have to rise or lie down on a firm unyielding surface, such as a rubber mat or a poorly cushioned mattress (or bare concrete!), the pain associated with the process leads to increased time spent standing in the cubicle between lying bouts and a decrease in overall lying time.



Figure 2: A lame cow will stand longer in the cubicle and have fewer lying bouts

This lameness then is perpetuated due to the differing behaviour of a lame cow in cubicles. A lame cow will tend to stand for longer, and have fewer lying bouts, compared with a non-lame cow. Sand, because of its ability to supply traction and support to the whole foot during rising and lying movements is the optimal bedding and results in shorter cubicle standing times, typically less than 2 hours/day.

In conclusion, when a cow's time budget is challenged through increased time out of the shed milking and reduced lying time due to overstocking and poor cubicle design, the primary outcome is increased lameness. Using the example of improving the comfort of facilities through the use of sand bedding for example, the main benefits are accrued through a reduction in lame cows, improvements in herd turnover rate and retention of older, fitter mature cows in the herd.

So what can you look at?

- i) **Your milking time.** What is the longest time a cow will be out of the cubicle shed (think of the last cow through the parlour)? If longer than 1.5 hours each milking, then your cows will have reduced lying times.
- ii) **Your cubicle comfort.** Wait an hour after milking or feeding, and count the number of cows lying normally and comfortably (not backwards or half in/half out) out of the total number in cubicles. This is known as the *cow comfort quotient*. Target >90% lying normally. If less than this, cubicle comfort needs improving.
- iii) **Your cubicle usage.** Count the number of cows lying down as a proportion of the total number of cows in the shed. While resting it should be close to 85%. If not, is this linked to poor cubicle comfort, or to stocking/cow flow so that cows aren't able to find an

empty cubicle easily? Narrow passageways or dead-ends in a cubicle shed can also affect this.

There is some great technology about that can help monitor lying times and cow activity over a day, built into pedometers and now included in other heat detection devices. But identifying where your time bottle-necks are and how they are impacting your herd's health and production may just take an extra eye to look at some of the areas mentioned above.

#### Resources:

Nigel Cook. Time Budgets for Dairy Cows: How Does Cow Comfort Influence Health, Reproduction and Productivity?

[https://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/dms/fapm/pu\\_blicats/proceeds/TimeBudgetsandDairyCowsOmaha.pdf](https://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/dms/fapm/pu_blicats/proceeds/TimeBudgetsandDairyCowsOmaha.pdf)

AHDB Dairy Housing - Chapter 3: Cow Behaviour and Comfort.

[https://dairy.ahdb.org.uk/resources-library/technical-information/buildings/dairy-housing-chapter-3-cow-behaviour-and-comfort/#.XO\\_5KYhKiUk](https://dairy.ahdb.org.uk/resources-library/technical-information/buildings/dairy-housing-chapter-3-cow-behaviour-and-comfort/#.XO_5KYhKiUk)



Figure 3&4: The 'cow comfort quotient' can give an indication of whether cubicle comfort is a limiting factor for lying times in your herd.

#### Vets Mobile Numbers

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Stuart Russell	07770 448179
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Laura Donovan	07800 647608

Steven Crowe	07891 843694
Mike Wilkinson	07866 257014
Jake Lawson	07891 843573
Amy Cox	07966 833870
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Lewis Hodgson	07972463365

#### Vet Tech Services

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