



St David's December 2008 Farm Newsletter



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In this issue:

Mastitis / St David's Christmas opening times / Welcome Oliver / Raw material update

The big mastitis issue

We generally talk about two kinds of mastitis – environmental and contagious. These articles will take a look at both types focusing on prevention.

Environmental Mastitis = Environment + bacteria + teats

So preventing this kind of mastitis involves;

Keep these bacteria to a minimum in the environment

Bacteria mostly come from faeces but also thrive in damp housing so bacteria levels are kept low by maintaining clean, dry, well ventilated housing. Ventilation is vital to prevent dampness,

the perfect condition for bacterial growth. A high yielding cow sheds 60-70 litres of water/day in various forms into the shed which is a lot to be removed through ventilation and drainage. Diets producing liquid faeces make maintaining a good environment much more difficult.

Keep these bacteria away from cows' teats

Keeping cows clean is achieved through attention to detail in housing. Passage ways and yards must be scraped at least every milking, more if cows' legs/tails are dirty. Comfortable cubicles with fresh dry bedding encourage cows to lie properly and so keep udders clean. They also reduce stress which has an important role in disease.

We aim to measure cow hygiene by the Cow Cleanliness Score. This puts a figure on the environmental mastitis challenge the cows face. Casual assessment of cow cleanliness often under-estimates how dirty they are; you need to use a standard system to document their cleanliness.

This can then be used to compare cleanliness between farms, or on one farm over time. Also by quantifying where the hygiene is poor (flank/hindlegs/udder/tail) we can then determine where it is coming from and target better prevention.

20 cows should be selected at random and assessed from both sides recording the highest score. Separate scores on a scale of 1-5 (1 = very clean, 5 = heavily soiled) are assigned to the flanks, hindlegs, udder and tail. The pictures below show a few examples.



Flank: 1 Hindlegs: 1 Udder: 1 Tail: 1



Flank: 2 Hindlegs: 1 Udder: 1 Tail: 3



Flank: 5 Hindlegs: 5 Udder: 5 Tail: 5

Ensure good teat closure

The best chance for bacteria to get into the udder is during or just after milking when the teat canal is open. Pre dipping kills bacteria which have got onto the teat between milkings, so preventing them from entering the teat canal during milking. After milking 20-30 minutes is needed for teat canal closure, so it is best to feed cows in a clean yard after milking to keep their teats off the beds where there is potential contamination. Feeding is best – just standing around on a concrete yard only makes them hungry with sore feet!

Cubicle comfort and hygiene

- Good cubicle design gets cows lying correctly and thus keeps the back of the cubicle clean so reducing mastitis – aiming to reduce exposure between the udder and faeces
- 90% of cows should be lying correctly in cubicles when resting. Less than this amount indicates a problem with cubicle design and comfort.
- Optimal production comes when cows lie 14hrs/day. This gives maximum time for rumination.

Contagious Mastitis = teats + milking cluster + bacteria

The risk here is transfer of infection from udder to udder via the milking routine – the clusters and the milking person are the route of transfer.

Thus we need to assess the parlour operation and milking routine...

Cow hygiene

This applies as it does above. Dirtier cows represent a higher risk of infection. They should be scored as above.

Operative hygiene

The milking person is handling the teats and clusters. If hygiene is compromised here then the teat ends are exposed to more bacteria. These can be environmental bacteria from faeces or contagious bacteria from infected milk.

Basic hygiene practices include:

- Wearing gloves and changing regularly.
- Washing hands regularly.
- General hygiene – keeping parlour/clusters/apron clean

Pre-milking routine

How well is the udder prepared? This is tied to the Cow Cleanliness Score – dirtier cows will need much more careful preparation. A basic routine includes:

- Note hygiene score and adjust routine as necessary
- Foremilk – early detect of mastitis cases is essential in control
- Teat preparation – wet or dry depending on teat conditions
- Teat dipping/spray if environmental mastitis a problem
- Dry wipe – ensure individual towels used for each cow.

Milking machine operation

The milking machine exerts a vacume at the teat end to extract milk from the udder. Thus there is a lot of stress at the teat end. The teat end is the point

of entry for infection into the udder – incorrect machine function will compromise the teat end and increase infection risk. The machine should be assessed regularly by a professional person. Teat End condition is one indicator of poor machine function.

Post milking teat hygiene

Post milking teat disinfection kills any bacteria left on the teat after cluster removal. This is important in the prevention of spread of infections between cows. Good teat disinfection requires attention to detail – dipping versus spraying! This is the single most important control point in the spread of contagious mastitis.

Teat end scores

The teat end is subject to a lot of stress from the milking machine. This will result in a thickening of the teat end – like a callus on our own hands. In an extreme situation there will be excessive thickening and damage.

Teat ends are scored from 1 (no damage) to 4 (extreme teat end damage). A higher score will reflect a teat end less able to protect from new infections. Also a teat end with a higher score is more likely to harbour gram + bacteria – Staph and Strep – that cause clinical and subclinical infections. As with the Cow Cleanliness Score it is important to follow a system. 20/30 cows should be scored. Scores will vary depending on stage of lactation and age – heifers will have lower scores and cows in later lactation will tend to have higher scores.



Score 1: No callus.

Score 2: Smooth, thick calloused ring.

Score 3: Rough calloused ring with some fraying.

Score 4: Very rough calloused ring with a lot of fraying.

St David's Farm Practice Christmas period opening

Monday 22nd December	8:30-17:00
Tuesday 23rd December	8:30-17:00
Wednesday 24th December	8:30-12:30
Thursday 25th December	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Friday 26th December	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Saturday 27th December	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Sunday 28th December	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Monday 29th December	8:30-17:00
Tuesday 30th December	8:30-17:00
Wednesday 31st December	8:30-12:30
Thursday 1st January	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Friday 2nd January	8:30-17:00
Saturday 3rd January	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY
Sunday 4th January	OFFICE CLOSED – EMERGENCIES ONLY



Welcome Oliver

It is with great pleasure that Three Counties Feeds welcome Oliver Mayo to the company.

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Oliver's uncle and aunty farm in Dorset and he has spent the last few years working on a dairy farm

and for a farming contractor. Prior to this, he was educated at Bicton College, before continuing to Seale Hayne, where he obtained a degree in Agriculture. Oliver will be working in the Three Counties office in Tiverton, initially supporting Steve in dealing with the phenomenal growth of our blend business.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to join a dynamic

and forward thinking feed company like Three Counties and I'm looking forward to working with the rest of the sales and admin team, and handling your business with us into 2009 and beyond."

Oliver is contactable either through the office on **01884 256256** or on his mobile **07825 331751**.

Raw material update

Soya – Due to the weakening of the pound, soya prices rose up to £245/t over the last few weeks. More recently, figures released by the U.S. Census bureau have given a bigger than expected soyameal stock, hence the market is now bearish. If you have not contracted all your requirements for the winter or next spring, to remain on the spot market may well be the best option.

Soya Hulls – With beet being so expensive hulls have been very popular this winter. At the moment a premium of £10 p/t for next summer seems a little high, I suggest holding off until the New Year.

Sugar Beet – Trident still seem reluctant to lower supaflow prices which in turn has reduced usage. Imported beet is now available on the market at a discount. I believe prices for next summer will come under severe pressure, so hold off booking any supplies.

Wheat and Barley – Trading levels seem to be up and down on a daily basis with world stocks remaining

Raw material prices

	Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08
Hipro Soya	£241	£227	£235
Sugar Beet	£185	£185	£185
Soya Hulls	£130	£106	£103
Rapeseed Meal	£133	£119	£117
Wheat	£103	£89	£91
Barley	£101	£87	£89

unchanged. News from the U.S. of the bankruptcy of Vera Sun (a major ethanol producer) has caused concern in the market, while in Missouri it is now cheaper to buy straight gasoline rather than a blend of ethanol and gasoline. Back in the UK, cereal growers are holding on to their grain hoping for increases which may never come. At some time cash flow will be an issue and a lot of grain entering the market at the same time will put further pressure on prices.

Molasses – There's always an exception to the rule! All the molasses companies have increased prices at the end of November, very much to the surprise of both the trade and farmers. If using a high protein liquid feed is it as cost effective as you think for each percent of protein, usually most diets

require sugar and that's where the combination comes into its own.

Rapeseed Meal – Rape prices have remained fairly static over the last few weeks. It still represents value for money. Forward prices for next summer are similar to current levels.

Protected Fats – Once again the demand for Megalac is huge, with a lot of low energy forages on farm it's a real battle for cows to perform. There is no doubt that Megalac will not only increase yield but will maintain milk quality and improve fertility through holding cow condition. Better news is that prices are due to fall in the New Year so plan your forward orders.

Steve Symons – 01884 256256
(Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays)



It's Christmas time, with mistletoe and wine
so please place your orders in really good time.
Mill's are so busy, lorry drivers too
then we won't struggle to supply you

If you will be requiring a bulk or bag delivery before Christmas or New Year,
would you please place your order no later than December 10th 2008.

There will be minimal deliveries on the 24th December and
no deliveries on the 25th or 26th December and 1st January 2009.

Thank you for your co-operation and support during 2008.