



October 2023

Parasite control at housing: Fluke and Worm Treatment Decisions

Vets Andy and Roger will be holding a worm walk and discussion at Tregondale Farm, Menheniot, with the Rows kindly hosting. Paul Uglow (of Norbrook) will be challenging commonly held beliefs about parasite management, asking questions like – ***do you really need to use fluke products?*** Food will of course be provided! This meeting is free to beef club members, with a fee of £25/farm - all welcome!

Date: Wednesday 18th October

Time: 11:00 – 14:00

Address: Tregondale Farm, Menheniot, PL14 3RG

The transition away from single farm payments

With so much changing quickly, and the costs of everything rocketing, there has never been a better time to use tailored, free, on farm support. **Castle Vets are hosting a free workshop with Business Information point.** They have been given funding to support farms across Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Somerset.



Letting you know what is available, when you can apply, how to make sure your business is viable and if there are any easy changes you can make to help improve your farm as the subsidies are withdrawn. You are entitled to further free, individual, one-to-one support with a consultant - they can come onto your farm and carry out a detailed, independent investigation of all farming and business activities, to develop a plan and support you through it. The workshop will take place on **11th of October, 7pm-9:30pm at Liskerrett Community Centre, Vareley Lane, Liskeard PL14 4AP.** This is free to attend and includes a buffet and refreshments.

Please RSVP with the surgery (**we will need your SBI number**) or via this link:

<https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/workshops/farm-grants-update-navigating-the-agricultural-transition-94/>

Vet Tech Services

The number of clients using our vet tech service is increasing. Our main vet tech Ellen's duties include carrying out cow mobility scoring at multiple dairies, to help drive down lameness and improve animal welfare on farm. She also regularly carries out disbudding on both dairy and beef farms – a time-consuming job that many busy farmers could do without! Castle Vets is also able to hire staff out (with advanced warning) to help with jobs during TB testing days, such as worming and vaccination – or if you just need another pair of hands.



Vet Tech Ellen: “Mobility scoring is an effective way of assessing lameness prevalence within your herd. When used with foot trimming records and vet input it can be used as a tool to reduce lameness. Not only is lameness a massive hidden cost to the dairy industry, but it is also now a Red Tractor standard to mobility score and body condition score on a regular basis. We can do this all-in-one visit, saving you time and labour, and will produce a quarterly Red Tractor compliant report.”

Lameness costs an estimated £2.20 per cow per day of lameness. These Costs include:

- medicines
- increased culling rates
- reduced milk production
- reduced fertility

An example herd:

Herd of 100 dairy cows with a 15% lameness prevalence.

The cost to the farm is £33 per day, or £12,045 per year. By using an external RoMS accredited scorer on a regular basis every cow is regularly assessed. Viewing lameness on an *individual* basis doesn't allow trends and patterns to be explored- i.e., when and where lameness is greatest.

By producing quarterly, or more regular, reports your vet can aid in highlighting potential causes of lameness and suggest ways to tackle this. Using the AHDB lameness cost calculator you can input your most recent scoring data to calculate what the true cost of lameness is to your herd.



Getting Your Beef Cows Pregnant – what’s an acceptable empty rate?

With more and more of a spotlight being put on the beef industry in terms of ethics, climate impact and sustainability, the public seem more than ever to be looking closely at UK farming. Efficient beef herds can be managed in a profitable, sustainable way – and with the future of farming changing, assessing basic key figures can be a good way to check up on the overall performance of your herd.

For both Autumn and Spring calving herds, the number of calves weaned per cow mated is a crucial and easily obtained figure. The ‘perfect’ scenario is:

- all the cows become pregnant
- All give birth to live calves
- All calves survive to weaning

If this happened, you would have an 100% result for calves weaned to cows mated. However, often an empty cow or two will slip through, one calf might be born dead, and a calf might die between being born and weaning. This means the industry target for this figure is around 90% (for every 10 cows you put to bull, you wean 9 calves).

Ways to help achieve this target include:

1. Maintaining a fertile breeding herd
 - o Voluntarily culling older cows after weaning - one year they will not get pregnant and the grass they have been eating could have gone into a replacement heifer

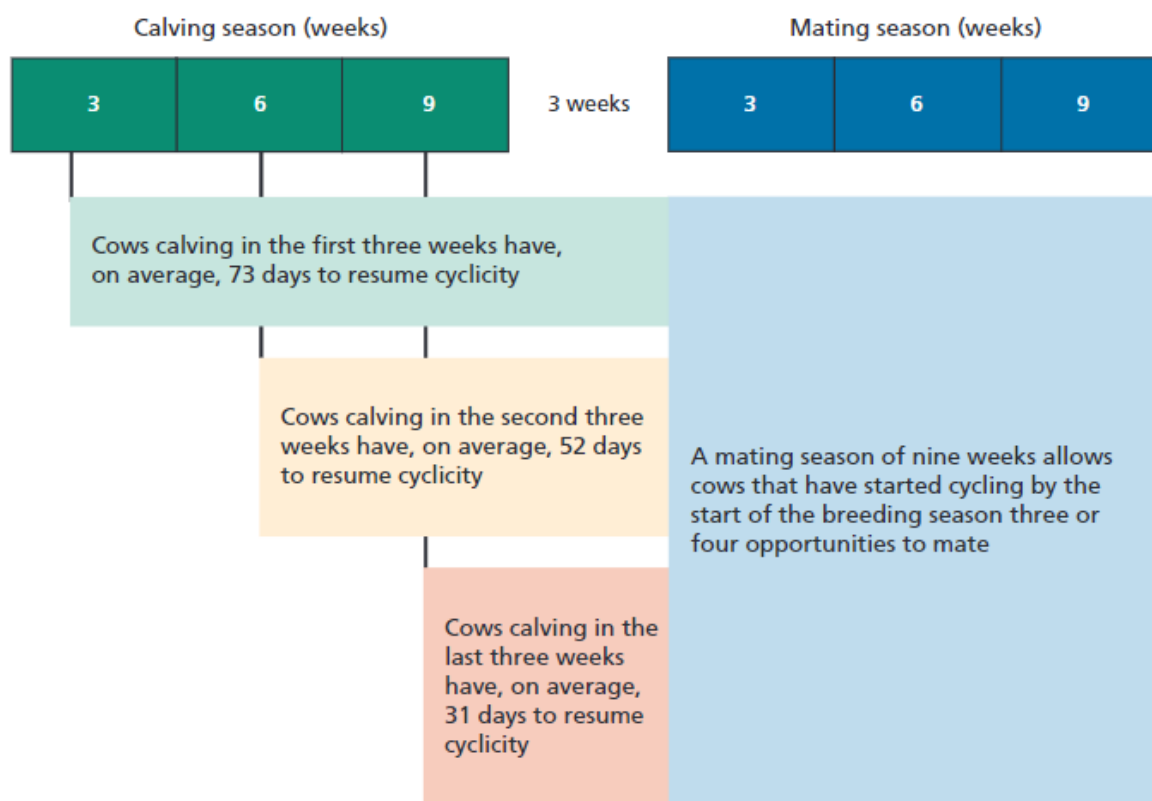


Illustration showing the number of days available to achieve three to four mating opportunities for cows calving in different three-week periods of the calving season

From: Caldow, G. Lowman, B. Riddell, I. (2005) *Veterinary intervention in the reproductive management of beef cow herds In Practice*. 27(8), pp. 406-411

2. Having a strict bull-in, bull-out policy
 - Cows cycle every three weeks -if she cannot get pregnant after 9-12weeks with the bull (3-4 cycles), she is sub-fertile and should be removed from the herd
 - Leaving the bull in for longer also extends your calving period, increasing chance of disease spread and reduces the chance of her calving during the correct period next year

3. Picking your replacement heifers from the first 50% that calve down
 - Again, you are selecting only the most fertile individuals for your herd

4. Drive down the number of difficult calvings in heifers
 - You should have to help less than 15% of your heifers calve
 - Using an easy calving bull is crucial, to allow them to recover and continue to grow, before being mated again
 - It takes heifers 3-4years to regain profitability after a bad calving, as their calving to calving window normally stretches from 12 to 15 months (it takes them much longer to get back in calf!)

5. 65% of your cows should be pregnant in the first 3 week cycle with the bull
 - Using pregnancy scanning part way through your breeding season can be a valuable tool to make sure you stay on track + detect any issues (especially with the bull!) early on

The beef industry in the UK is world leading and has changed a lot in the hundreds of years it has existed. We need to continue working to make herds profitable and sustainable in a changing environment, both climate-wise and economically. Please give us a call if you wish to discuss your herd's fertility, or to book an early pregnancy diagnosis session - we are here to help!

Medicine Handling Courses

Our high-quality small group training has proved very popular, over 120 of our farmers have attended. The training is delivered by vets and is Red Tractor Accredited. Topics covered include storage, administration, types of medication, antibiotic usage, and medication disposal.

Upcoming date:

Monday 30th of October 10-12.30pm

Price: £57.20 ex VAT

Location: Lifton Community Centre, Park Wood Rise, Lifton PL16 0LA

Please call the surgery to book a place.

