



KERNOW
DAIRY VET SERVICES

Newsletter August 2019

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Welcome to our dairy focused newsletter for the proactive dairy farmer

Considerations for footbathing

Constantly clean feet can be very challenging to achieve, but is the main way to control digital dermatitis. Bedding cubicles on deep sea sand and adequate passage scraping is important but improving foot cleanliness with a regular foot disinfection protocol is key. Furthermore, recent work has shown how the bacteria quickly invade deep into the skin via the hair follicles. If footbathing is to have a chance the feet must be clean, so the disinfectant reaches the bacteria under slurry and on the surface of skin and hairs before they reach the relatively protected sites in hair follicles and skin glands. Daily foot disinfection is probably one of the most cost-effective ways of improving foot health in a herd with digital dermatitis. In order to make it practical, a simple 'easily fill, easy clean' footbath is required. This usually consists of a washing bath of water to clean the feet prior to entry of the medicated bath, a 6 inch drain with quick release bung, nearby hose for easy washing and filling and the means to safely and accurately dispense chemicals. Automatic footbaths which fill the bath with the correct concentration of disinfectant and water, as well as empty it after the right number of cows have been through, can be a safe and low labour alternative.

Special consideration should be paid to cow flow and dispersal. A single width bath is best placed far enough away from a parlour to avoid queues out the parlour. Where good cow flow is a premium a double width bath is recommended. Ideally cattle should feel confident with no change in floor height as they enter the bath, which reduces the risk of them dunging and contaminating the bath contents. A 1.8m wide and 3m long bath will hold 540 litres if filled to the recommended 10cm. This is enough for 540 cow if the feet are pre cleaned.

Chemical choices are vast with many farms still relying on formalin. This can be effective but care must be taken to slowly increase the concentration from 2% to 5% to prevent foot sores. There are also human health risks with formalin so safer and effective chemicals are available such as organic acids and copper sulphate. Chemical choice is not as important as correct bath design and ensuring a clean solution. The more often the cows feet are cleaned the better the outcome and ideally your herd should be walking through a footbath after every milking, every day. Speak to your vet to discuss how foot bathing could work effectively on your herd to reduce the incidence of lameness and the hidden costs associated with it.

Article written by Scarlett Creasey MRCVS

Free Dairy Workshop 7pm at the KFE Building Bodmin

CHANGE OF DATE

- ***19th September—Transition cow management— Getting it right to reduce ketosis related disease eg fatty liver, LDAs, increase milk yield and maximise fertility***

Ring the practice on 01208 76403 to book your places and reserve your free supper.

Please do not hesitate to call us on 01208 76403. Office hours 8.30am-5-30pm Mon-Fri and 8.30am-12pm Saturday and we have vets available 24 hours a day.



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Infusion of Dry Cow Tubes and/or Internal Teat seal at drying off.

A systematic approach and attention to hygiene is essential when administering tubes at drying off.

Mark the cows and bring them into the parlour after milking as a batch – drying off cows during milking is less hygienic and risks tubing a milking cow by mistake resulting in a costly antibiotic failure and it will be difficult to identify the offending cow

Remember we need to treat all 4 quarters and not just use 4 tubes per cow !!

Milk cows due to be dried off again unless drying off is to be done immediately after milking.

Put on a clean pair of gloves, wash them between cows and change them if they become soiled.

Dip teats in an effective “pre-dip” germicidal product. - pre-dip all cows picked out to be dried off so the teats are covered in disinfectant.

Allow a minimum of 30 seconds contact time before wiping teats with an individual disposable paper towel with particular attention to the teat end.

Thoroughly disinfect each teat end, paying particular attention to the teat orifice, by scrubbing with cotton wool swab soaked in surgical spirit.

Use a separate piece of cotton wool for each teat turning it until the discolouration of the pre-dip is no longer visible on the cotton wool.

Teats should be cleaned and infused individually particularly when double tubing (Antibiotic & Teat Seal)

Have a system to avoid tubing one quarter twice and missing another. (eg circular FL FR then BR BL)

Insert only the tip of the cannula into the teat end and infuse all of the contents gently.

Do not allow the sterile tip of the cannula to touch anything prior to infusion.

With antibiotic tubes – Slide your non-tubing hand down the teat after infusing and hold the teat just above the teat end WITHOUT touching the teat orifice to allow you to MASSAGE the contents up towards udder with your tubing hand.

When infusing internal teat seal slide your non-tubing hand back up the teat and

- PINCH TEAT NEAR TOP (where it joins the udder – use the crook of 1st finger and thumb and the teat will bend towards you)
- INFUSE ENOUGH TO FILL THE TEAT (You do not have to use all the tube in cows/heifers with small teats)
- DO NOT MASSAGE teat seal towards the udder
- DEPOSIT A SMALL QUANTITY OF TEAT SEAL IN THE TEAT CANAL (as you remove the syringe)
- If cows are to receive both antibiotic and Teat Seal tubes (*Combination dry cow therapy*)
 - Always infuse Teat Seal tubes after antibiotic tubes.
 - If using Teat Seal alone in uninfected cows (*Targeted dry cow therapy*) Utmost hygienic technique is essential to avoid the risk of toxic mastitis and potential fatalities.

If you want to get rid of that annoying air in the tube store the Teat Seal tubes standing vertically nozzle up and expel it before you infuse the teat

Post dip (or spray) quarters individually to identify which quarters have been infused

Confine to a clean loafing yard for at least 30 minutes to allow closure of the streak canal

Identify treated cows and remove them from the milking herd to prevent treated cows being accidentally milked.

Record cow number, treatment date and product details.

Speak to your vet to tailor a plan for selective dry cow decision making and for on farm training. We will use UV fluorescent gel on teats to confirm correct teat preparation and give you the confidence to dry cows off without the use of antibiotics. Dairy crest and other buyers require you to be trained in infusion of sealants– Contact us to update current workers and train new milking staff

The above protocols were reproduced with permission from Andy Biggs



**Article written by Dr Phil Dawber
MRCVS**

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