

Farm news

December 2023



Welcome Fran!

Francesco graduated from the University of Perugia, Italy, in 2015 and started his career in Spain where he worked with horses for a year.



In 2016 he moved to the UK and initially worked as a vet inspector in the abattoirs. Before long, Francesco pursued his career in the clinical field initially as a TB Tester, then as farm vet surgeon, and then becoming the lead vet of a farm practice.

Francesco particularly admires various types of surgery, DA's, Caesareans as well as fertility work. He is also focused on dairy/beef herd management and on improvement of youngstock health.

Outside of work, he loves playing tennis, sailing and cooking Italian food.

Update on Fay

Many of you will know that Fay's been off work for the last few weeks after injuring her knee (in almost every way possible!) playing netball. She's now had surgery and is recuperating at home. Beanie has also been very unwell in hospital but is now safely home too. We wish them both a speedy and full recovery!



Red Tractor and Medicine Hub

You may have heard already that the Red Tractor dairy and beef/lamb boards are now recommending that farmer members upload their data to Medicine Hub (or equivalent).

Wording to this effect is now included in the revised Red Tractor standards online. This is a recommendation only, specifically for antibiotics, and will not be audited against until early 2024. This is an important step towards centralisation of antibiotic records across the dairy, beef, and sheep sectors. An electronic Medicine Book has existed for the pig sector since 2016, and increasing the rate and amount of data uploaded for the ruminant sector will bring the UK in line with the EU where collection of antibiotic usage data is mandatory.

Why?

Ultimately, Red Tractor is responding to requests from industry to make the recommendation. The supply chain is increasingly looking towards farm assurance to support the collation of a national dataset which will be capable of giving evidence, for the first time, of the UK ruminant sector's responsible approach to antibiotic use.

How?

There are several ways data can be uploaded.

- Farmers can enter their data directly onto the Hub.
- Farmers can ask their vets to do it on their behalf.
- Where data are already being collected within the supply chain, for example via milk processors, this existing information can be uploaded in bulk with the permission of the farmer.

Usually, the data provided refers to purchased medicines, but usage data can also be uploaded to the Hub.

Data security

You will always own your farm's data and you control who can and cannot have access to it. Red Tractor, for example, will not have access to the data, just confirmation that it has been uploaded to the Medicine Hub. Moreover, Medicine Hub will only report aggregate and/or anonymised data, unless you specifically give permissions to other third parties (typically your vet), to view your individual enterprise data.

For more information, including how to get started, visit www.medicinehub.org.uk where there is a range of guides and instructions or contact the team on email: medicinehub@ahdb.org.uk or phone: **02477 719414**. And as always – feel free to ask us for help!



Scan me to take you to the medicine hub!

Medicine Matters

Norbrook's Norodine 24 has become available again, and we'll be swapping back to this from Diatrim. Same active ingredient, both Category D. Same withdrawal periods too – 48 hours milk, 12 days meat in cattle (pig meat is 20 days).

TB Sue's New Hour's

TB Sue's new working hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am - 2:00pm.



Christmas Lights



Written by Carolyn Baguley

Light shining into the darkness. New life in a cowshed. December nights.



Feeling festive? Me too. And all the above reminds me of another of the CowSignals® '6 freedoms of pasture' - light.

The closer we can get to ideal conditions for each of these 6 freedoms, the healthier and more stress-free our housed cows will be. This year we've looked at water, air and now we come to light (watch this space in 2024 for rest, feed and space!).

Light's important in a cowshed for people, as well as for cows (if you want a laugh, send me to read some ear tags in a dark cowshed with a slippery floor and a few holes in the concrete, and see what happens).

Cows can see in low light and in the dark much better than humans, due to the reflective layer at the back of their eyes. But what's the ideal amount of light for a shed from a cow's point of view?

Basically, we want to aim for a Long Day Photoperiod (LDPP) for milking cows and a Short Day Photoperiod (SDPP) for dry cows.

Long Day Photoperiod (LDPP): 16 hours light, 8 hours dark

A LDPP improves milk yield by up to 2kg/day compared to a natural day length. It gives stronger, healthier production cows and a lower SCC when compared to a 24-hour artificial lighting regime, and it also improves calf growth and feed efficiency and reduces time to puberty. It does all this by influencing the levels of three key hormones - cows exposed to LDPP have increased levels of prolactin (essential for maintaining lactation) and IGF-1 (an insulin-like growth hormone), and reduced levels of melatonin (a hormone released during dark periods which reduces milk production).

Don't be tempted to keep the lights on all the time, though. 24-hour lighting should be avoided since it's not good for fertility and can lead to problems with cow health.

Short Day Photoperiod (SDPP): 8 hours light, 16 hours dark

Milking cows exposed to a SDPP have increased levels of melatonin and lower levels of prolactin, leading to lower milk yield. They also tend to have a higher SCC.

However, dry cows exposed to SDPP give up to 3kg/day more milk in the following lactation. At least part of the reason for this is that cows exposed to a SDPP during the dry period acquire more prolactin receptors in the mammary gland, making the udder more responsive to prolactin in the following lactation, thereby increasing milk yield.

Brightness

Brightness of light (i.e. its intensity, or illumination) is measured in lux. Recommended illumination levels are as follows:

Cattle Housing: at least 100-200 lux

Passageways: at least 50-100 lux

Parlour Standing Area: at least 200 lux

Night-time Observation: Less than 10 lux. (Low levels of red light may be used at night as they don't have a stimulating effect on the brain and are unlikely to trigger a hormonal response).

For comparison, the brightness level outside on a sunny summer day in the UK would be around 50,000 lux, and a well-lit office might be 500 lux.

If you'd like to know what the lux levels are in your sheds, let us know and we can bring the practice lux meter to your next visit!



Lighting up

Sunlight is free, so let plenty in! Transparent panels on the northern side of the roof (to reduce heat radiation) can be a good idea, as can white ceilings. Electricity-wise, LED lighting is the superior and most energy-efficient option and can be timed as well as dimmed.

Light levels should be uniform throughout housing and passageways, to eliminate shadows and alleviate cow stress - cows don't like strong shadows or sharp contrasts between light and dark (this is why cattle grids work so well!).

If you want to read more on this topic, see Sandercock and Bond's Dairy Lighting Technology Review, written for AHDB Dairy in 2021. It's an interesting read and has a couple of case studies, plus a list of lighting manufacturers with details of some of their products.

And, as we celebrate the season of light coming into the darkness, a very happy Christmas to each and every one of you!

Carolyn & our wonderful Farm Team x



Christmas Opening Hours

21st December - 8:30am - 5:30pm

22nd December - 8:30am - 5:30pm

23rd December 8:30am - 12:30pm

24th December - Emergencies only

25th December - Emergencies only

26th December - Emergencies only

27th December - 8:30am - 5:30pm

28th December - 8:30am 5:30pm

29th December - 8:30am - 5:30pm

30th December - 8:30am - 12:30pm

1st January 2024 - Emergencies Only

2nd January - 8:30 - 5:30pm



Please place all medication orders prior to the 20th of December for collection before Christmas.

Farm and Equine Centre
Markeaton Lane, Markeaton, Derby DE22 4NH
01332 294929

Alfreton
01773 304900
Pride Veterinary Centre
01332 678333

Allestree
01332 554422
Shelton Lock
01332 700321

Hilton
01283 732999
Stapenhill
01283 568162

Langley Mill
01773 304914
Stretton
01283 565333

Mickleover
01332 518585
Wollaton
01159 676586