

# OUR WORKING PRACTICES AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'

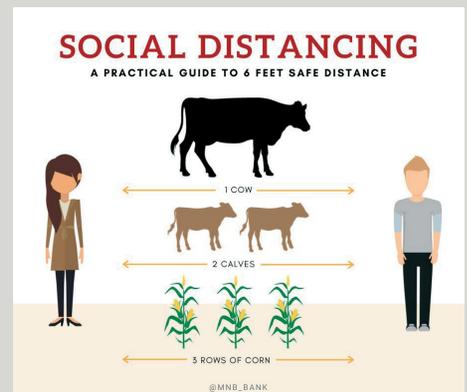
**As we enter the next phase of the 'new normal' we continue to work hard to provide a service for all our clients. As all will appreciate, we want to keep our clients and our staff as safe as possible. Some updates:**

- We will continue to ensure you can pick up medicines at your preferred location. Please phone ahead to allow us to ensure you can collect these without delay. We will continue to limit access to the inside of our locations but will keep this under review. Thank you to all for working with us. Fridge items present the biggest challenge but we will work with you to find a solution. In most cases we will put up the items just before you collect them.
- Visits: if anyone is self-isolating, please remember to alert us BEFORE the vet arrives. Also remember the 2m rule. There

is almost always a way of restraining stock safely for you, us and the animal. We have seen some very clever solutions. Some are so simple that it is surprising that we did not use them before.

Sometimes it will be necessary for us to bring another team member. This is to reduce the number of close contacts. Again for your safety and that of our team.

- TB testing: Thank you to all for working hard to protect yourselves and our team. The 2m rule is likely to be here for a while so be sure to identify a "vet" zone that is safe for them to stay within.
- Health plans and similar visits. We are conducting these by phone, "Zoom" and other means. It works pretty well. Sometimes call will be part-visit and part-video.



Above all, if you have concerns then please make contact and we will do what we can to help.

## WELCOMING KATE FORGAN

**We are pleased to welcome Kate Forgan BVSc MRCVS to our team of farm vets.**

Originally from the Purbecks in Dorset, she now calls Bude Home. She started her career doing predominantly dairy work and got the best of both worlds with daily border crossings between North Devon and Cornwall along the Atlantic Highway.



Kate enjoys all aspects of cattle and sheep practice and isn't one to shy away from a challenge.

Aside from work, she enjoys walks with her two dogs and competes with both at agility. Occasionally, when the sea is flat, Kate might be spotted exploring the coastline in her sea kayak and during the winter months, loves a short escape to the Alps for skiing.

## WATCH THIS SPACE...

**Plans are underway to open a new space in Holsworthy.**

More news coming soon!



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

**Arm yourself with the right tools to deal with worm burdens in your flock.**

A simple faecal egg count is an important diagnostic tool which will allow you to take informed, targeted action. It will also save you time and money by preventing unnecessary and inaccurate drenching. Our in-house faecal worm egg count service offers rapid results and the advice of our experienced clinicians, who will help you plan an effective control strategy for your flock based on the results. Now is the time to be undertaking worm counts - speak to your vet or call your local surgery for more information.



Please, if possible, bring in your samples Mon-Thurs, avoiding Friday afternoon!

## Independent vets, dedicated care

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# HOW'S YOUR WATER SUPPLY?

**What do you feed your cows? What are their intakes? How palatable is the ration? How is it presented to them? What is the space per cow at the trough?**

These are questions constantly considered in relation to feed but not as consistently applied to what is arguably the cows' most important nutrient – water.

This becomes very important for both housed and grazed cows during the summer.

Water is required for optimal rumen fermentation and constitutes at least 87% of milk. A cow giving 30 litres of milk a day, on a silage based mixed ration when the temperature is 20°C, will drink more than 100 litres per day; that's three litres of water for every litre of milk. Easy access to good quality fresh water is therefore really important to optimise production. Most farms have room to make improvements and therefore gains in health and production.

The two main points to consider are the cows' access to water and the quality of the water available.

## Access

Look at what your cows are telling you, is there ever an empty trough, or animals waiting for their turn to have a drink? It is important that heifers and submissive cows do not have to wait or be pushed away from the trough.

Cows with restricted water access (twice a day vs. ad lib) repeatedly show a decrease in yield of 2.5% and 1.7% drop in butterfat.

## Time and space

For optimum health and production we want a cow to spend 3-5 hours a day eating, 30 minutes drinking, 12-14 hours a day lying to allow rest and good rumination and 2-3 hours socialising, showing oestrus etc. Milking accounts for several hours, therefore, the less time cows spend queuing or trekking to a water trough the better.

AHDB recommends that 10% of cows can drink at any one time, to allow enough space for this 10cm water trough space is required per cow in the herd, making it easy

to access the trough and drink quickly. The recommended height for a water trough is 850mm from the floor. Ideally there would be a 3.6m passageway behind the trough to allow two cows to pass behind those drinking.

## Filling speed

The speed of troughs filling up is also incredibly important, so that at times of peak demand (eg. after milking) they do not run low and cows can drink as much as they need. A minimum flow rate of 10 litres per minute is recommended but what is actually required will depend a little on the size of the trough. Trough fill may be improved with wider pipes, pumps, or a reserve tank to use in times of high demand.

## Access for all

Lastly, remember some of your thirstiest and most vulnerable cows; those that are about to or have just given birth. Good water supply to dry cows can really help to improve their dry matter intakes (particularly where the ration contains a lot of straw). This in turn improves their dry matter intakes post calving, reducing negative energy balance and all the health issues that that brings with it. Cows may not get up to drink for a while after calving so it is worth taking her a large bucket of warm water, put it next to the calf soon after calving and they are likely to indulge.

## Quality

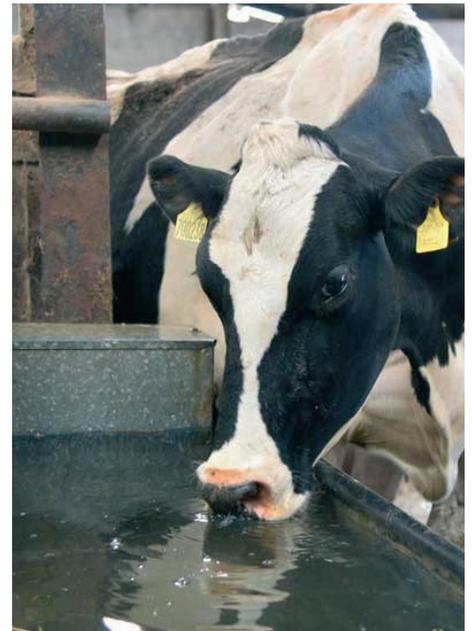
Would you drink the cow's water?

## Palatability

Cows have a very sensitive nose and will drink more water more readily if it is palatable to them, unfortunately there is no way around this except cleaning the troughs but it is a task worth spending time on once per week. Tipping troughs or a large bung make this task much easier.

## Bacteria levels

If you are not using mains water then consider your water treatment. UV filters only work at a certain flow rate and don't work on murky water. If you have a header tank then this could allow bacteria to proliferate before it



even reaches the drinking troughs.

Natural water sources are often preferred by cows but these need to be managed carefully. Cows should not drink from streams that have passed through another livestock farm as this risks transmission of diseases such as Johne's or TB.

## Minerals

Consider the mineral content of the water; Iron and Manganese are often high in Devon. These can not only reduce palatability but increase oxidative stress on the cows. This weakens their immune function and may result in increased mastitis, somatic cell count, retained foetal membranes or poorer fertility.

## Acidity

Look at the pH of the drinking water; water that is too acidic could potentially contribute to sub-acute ruminal acidosis.

As with many aspects of dairy farming, attention to detail here is key, this attention to detail and increased care will be rewarded with improvements in performance.

# MASTITIS TUBES

**There are ongoing production issues affecting many of the mastitis tubes we would commonly use on farm.**

An alternative to Tetra Delta is now available in the short term. This tube is included in

the table below and is called Gamaret.

If you are using tubes more frequently than the label usage this is classed as off-license and will have a 7 day milk withhold and 28 day meat withhold.

Tube name	Label usage	Milk withhold	Meat withhold
Noroclav LC	3 tubes every 12 hours	84 hours	7 days
Ubrolixin	2 tubes 24 hours apart	5 days	10 days
Gamaret (Tetra Delta equivalent)	2 tubes 24 hours apart	72 hours	7 days
Ubropen	1 tube daily for 3-5 days	6 days	3 days

It is good practice to regularly sample clinical cases of mastitis for bacteriology and sensitivity. This will allow us to understand which pathogens are currently on farm and what antibiotics they are most likely to respond to.

Currently there is funding to subsidise the lab fees for bacteriology and sensitivity of 5 cases per farm. We would recommend that a sterile sample is taken when mastitis is identified before treatment and frozen, once five samples have been collected they can be sent together.

Depending on pathogen some of the above tubes may be more suitable for your farm than others and this will vary between farms. If you are changing tube due to production issues please discuss which tube would be most suitable with your lead vet.