

WHY SHOULD WE BE MEASURING CATTLE PELVISES?

The two most common factors associated with dystocia are foetal oversize and small pelvic area.

Whilst we can control foetal size by carefully controlled comparing of Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs of bulls and dams) and nutrition, we cannot change pelvic area. By measuring the internal size of the pelvis we can help reduce the risk of breeding from heifers with inadequate pelvis size and shape, consequently breeding instead from heifers who have the best chances of calving without problems.

How is it done?

Carried out rectally using a Rice's Pelvimeter, your vet will measure the internal height (vertical measurement) and width (horizontal measurement).



They are multiplied together to give an overall area in cm². The result is then interpreted using the animal's age and breed, and compared to the threshold table (fig.1). Animals are then

assigned a pass, borderline or fail status, depending on whether they reach the minimum threshold (fig.2).

When to do it?

This should be done in your bulling heifers age 13-24 months as the pelvis grows consistently at this age. Native breeds grow at around 8cm² per month whilst continentals grow at around 10cm² per month. This allows you to select heifers who are the right size and if not remove them from breeding stock early.

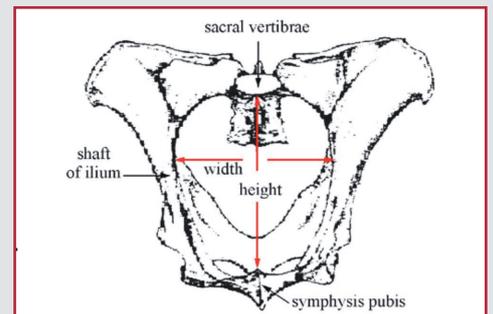
Consistency is key!

✓ By doing this on a yearly basis you will be able to build up an average pelvic size for your herd. Using this information alongside the minimum guide, you can build up a more herd-specific minimum threshold for your stock.

✓ Pelvis size is also heritable, so by being selective you can actively breed for larger pelvic size.

✓ Cattle can be given a calving ease score at calving and it is important to

record and monitor this, to identify if or where issues are occurring.



At the time of pelvimetry, we are also able to scan the heifers and reproductive tract score them. This checks that they are cycling correctly, ready for breeding and can remove freemartins. We also offer synchronisation programs to tighten calving blocks - allowing more heifers to calve at the same time, and making monitoring at calving less labour intensive.

To find out more...

Please contact Jess Partlett via email; Jess@torchfarmvets.com or give any Torch branch a call and they will be able to provide more information.

Minimum pelvic diameter for age in months

AGE months	NATIVE BREEDS cm2	CONTINENTAL cm2
13	140	140
14	148	150
15	156	160
16	164	170
17	172	180
18	180	190
19	188	200
20	196	210
21	204	220
22	212	230
23	220	240
24	228	250
25	236	260

← Figure.1. Pelvic diameter threshold table.

↓ Figure.2. Example of pelvimetry investigation results and analysis

16m	Devon	12	11	132	Fail
12m	Lim	11	11.5	126.5	Borderline
12m	Lim	13.5	12.5	168.75	Pass
12m	Lim	12.5	11.5	143.75	Pass
12m	Lim	12	11	132	Borderline
11m	Lim	12	11.5	138	Borderline
10m	Lim	13.5	11.5	155.25	Pass
14m	Lim	14	12.5	175	Pass
13m	Lim	15	12.5	187.5	Pass

Independent vets, dedicated care

Ilfracombe
01271 879516

Pilton
01271 879516

Roundswell
01271 879516

South Molton
01769 610000

Bideford
01237 870456

Holsworthy
01409 331007

Bude
01288 270670

Bradworthy
01409 331007

A MOBILE COW IS A HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE COW

Lameness is a significant issue on farm and regarded as one of the three key issues every dairy farmer is faced with along with mastitis and fertility.

Lameness can have a host of negative effects on the cow in addition to incurring significant financial losses;

- Reducing conception rates by more than 25%
- A clinical case of lameness can reduce yield between 400-600kg depending on lesion type and severity
- Yield depression can last 9 months
- Higher yielding cows are more at risk of becoming lame
- Lame cows are less fertile – less cyclic and more likely to be cystic
- If a heifer gets an ulcer on her hoof, she will have damage to the Corium for life. It's always better to prevent the ulcer in the first place by functionally trimming.

A team approach

If we are to keep cows sound, we need to ensure the farmer-vet-foot trimmer team

are continually communicating, and a vital element is preventative foot trimming. Where possible we recommend cows' feet are examined and trimmed if necessary twice annually, at 8-4 weeks before they calf and again at 100 DIM. We also recommend preventative trimming and regular foot bathing of heifers because, if you prevent problems in heifers they are less likely to have problems as cows. Lame heifers never make old cows.

Correct functional trimming does not require horn removal from all of the sole, never involves grinding the hoof wall or trimming between the claws and should not result in all of the feet being white. You should never have lame cows after preventative trimming.

Total Hoof Care

Total Hoof Care is a hoof trimming service run as a partnership between Torch Farm Vets and local hoof trimmer/instructor and consultant David Rowe. We use a modified five step trimming method tried and

tested by David himself and hoof trimmers from all around the world. David has 25 years' experience of trimming and has been using the Dairyland trimming method for 10 years. This involves measuring correct claw length, assessing correct sole depth and correctly shaping claws to relieve pressure – wherever possible sole horn is left on the foot.

David says "By using up to date cow friendly crushes and the latest techniques and technology, we can achieve great results for our customers. By using computerised record keeping we can easily identify problems in the herd and report them to you by email after each visit, building up a foot health picture for your herd."

If you would like further information about the services provided by Total Hoof Care or would like to book a visit, please contact our Bideford practice or phone Shaun on 07498 332352.



STAY VIGILANT FOR BLOWFLY STRIKE

The relatively cold, dry early April weather, which is slightly below averages for the time of year means that at the time of going to press the strike risk remains low.

This is likely to remain the case until well into May but it is possible that, particularly if associated with rain, we may see a sudden rapid emergence of adult blowflies.

It is important to be well prepared at this time of year and aware of the early signs of strike which include:

- Irritation
- Nibbling at tail head
- Increased swishing of tails
- Rubbing
- Further signs of discomfort in lame animals

The most common species of blowfly that infests sheep is the greenbottle; *Lucilia sericata*. A soil temperature of 9°C or higher and humidity of 60% will stimulate overwintering larvae to hatch and adult flies can start depositing eggs on sheep fleeces two weeks later.

This early infestation of ewes goes mostly unnoticed, however this low level allows the fly population to grow quickly. An adult fly can deposit up to 250 eggs. With a life cycle from egg to fly as short as two weeks in favourable conditions, it is possible to have over 15 million laying flies within 6 weeks of the first infestation. This growth in population in the early season is what causes the problems we see in the summer months.

By controlling fly population in spring, we

can prevent the exponential growth of the fly population and reduce the challenge later in the season. It also prevents the overwhelming effect of high fly numbers on the permethrin-type products, which can then be perceived as ineffective when simply they cannot cope. Methods to reduce early fly population include:

- Using a short acting insect growth regulator (IGR) such as CLIKZIN on ewes.
- Using a short or long acting insect growth regulator (IGR) such as CLIKZIN or CLIK EXTRA in lambs.
- Covering carcasses and removing as soon as possible.
- Dagging of ewes to reduce faecal soiling.

BUILDING WORKS AT TORCH MULLACOTT

We are currently undergoing some unavoidable building works at our Mullacott practice.

Whilst we hope there will be minimal impact and disruption to our clients, please be aware that there will be scaffolding surrounding the building and heavy machinery in use on some days for the next few weeks.

Our Veterinary Client Support Team will be fully informed and able to advise you further on the phone should you need to bring an animal up to the surgery at any point.

HAVE YOU BOOKED YOUR BVD COMPLETION MEETING?

Thank you to everyone so far who has joined us for their BVD completion meeting via Zoom.

We still have some session dates available - remember it is a requirement of the scheme funding that you attend a completion meeting. May dates are:

- ✓ Monday 10th May - 19:00
- ✓ Tuesday 25th May - 11:00

To book, please contact your usual branch, or email info@torchvets.com with the date you would like to attend.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Are you a super-organised multi-tasker with a farm and equine background?

We are looking for a friendly professional to join our Client Support Team on a part time basis at our South Molton branch. More information can be found on the job vacancies page of our website or by contacting the HR Manager by email, Heatherwraith@torchvets.com. The closing date is 12 May.