

Hi Everyone and welcome to the start of Autumn. The out of hours diary stands as testament to the time of year with the numbers of call outs to calvings increasing steadily. Thanks to all of you who made it to the summer BBQ which was kindly hosted by The Foote family in Brown Candover. A good night was had by all with Ben, Sam, Jonathan and



Celia giving us a run down on the recent investments in the farm to further improve efficiency of yield, youngstock performance and cattle

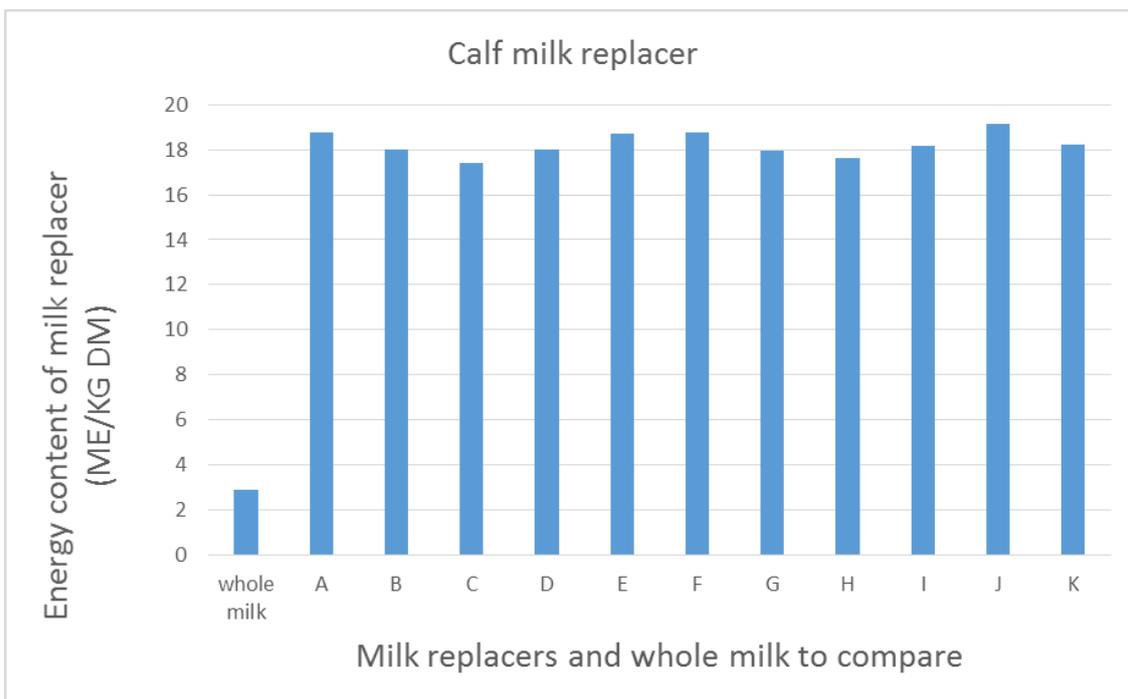
health. Particular interest was in aspects of heifer rearing that included 3 x day milk feeding to heifer calves in hutches with calves receiving 1.5kg of milk replacer per day at peak. Growth rates of calves up to weaning are an important determinant of 1st lactation yield and time will tell if this accelerated growth will pay dividends for the farm, though early indications are that growth rates well in excess of 1kg/day are easily achievable with no associated problems post-weaning. The target age for 1st service in these heifers is coming down all the time allowing them to join the herd and start paying back the rearing costs that much sooner.

After the walk we all enjoyed some of Celia's home-made ice cream that kept everyone going for their journeys home. Thanks once again for all of you who could come and to our enthusiastic and welcoming hosts. Look out for our next meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> for the beef discussion group.

**Calf milk replacer assessments (Megan)**

Thank you to everyone who has sent in their calf milk replacer for analysis. I have really enjoyed chatting to some of you about the different challenges you have managed to overcome when feeding your future herd. Is the milk powder in which you invest so much capital giving you the results you want? We know that the most efficient time for calves to grow is before they become ruminants and particularly before 3 weeks of age. Milk replacer is expensive so you may decide to push them to grow later when food is a little cheaper. If you have opted to do this are they still grown enough to calve down at 90% of their mature body weight at 24 months? I hope you have found the individual spreadsheets we sent out to you to be helpful. The graph shows the energy content of the milk powder expressed as metabolisable energy per kilogram of dry matter. There is some variation in the energy content between powders but all of them sit between 17 and 20 ME. Whole milk is 87% water and is based on average Holstein milk constituents as cited by Pennsylvania State University of 3.65% fat and 3.06% protein. Hence the ME in the calculation comes out very low as the other milk powders are in solid form whereas whole milk still contains all its water.

Going forward I would encourage you to keep sending me your milk replacers so we can put the topic up for discussion when we see you at meetings and routines. No doubt we shall discuss this amongst other things in the next Heifer Rearing Group meeting in the Autumn.



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### Waste milk (Maarten)

Many of our dairy clients have ceased feeding waste milk to replacement heifer calves over recent years. Part due to the risk of Johne's disease and part because of the risk of transfer of antibiotic resistant mastitis bugs. A recent study has looked at the antibiotic resistance patterns of faecal E. coli and nasal Pasteurella multocida isolates from calves fed either milk replacer or waste milk. A greater number of faecal E. coli were resistant to various antibiotics and more multidrug-resistant E. coli phenotypes were isolated in faeces of calves fed waste milk than in those fed milk replacer. From nasal samples also an increase in the prevalence of resistant P. multocida was observed in calves fed waste milk compared with those fed milk replacer. **The findings of this study confirms that feeding calves waste milk fosters the presence of resistant bacteria in the lower gut and respiratory tracts of dairy calves.**

### Rams ready, steady, go! (Sarah)

Its that time of year again ram sales have been happening across the country and our attention on sheep farms are settling on the boys. For everyone lambing from mid February onwards this is a vital time for making attempts to get the lambing pattern we want. We think of 'Day 0' in the ewes breeding calendar as 5 and a half months before the date you want to start lambing. Here is a quick timeline for getting the tightest lambing pattern possible, and using your teaser rams to your best advantage: 2 – 4 weeks = Keep all rams/teasers well out of ewes sight and smell. (ideally for a month)

Day 0 – put teasers in. These should be in equally fit BCS as you rams, have good feet and ideally not ram lambs as their libidos tend not to be as good. They need to do a job all of their own remember! You can use 1 teaser to 100 ewes approx.

Day 14 – take teaser out – NO longer than this! Replace them with the fertile Rams. Oestrus activity will peak at 18 – 24 days after teasers were introduced, so this means there will be an awful lot of work for the real rams to do! This means they really, really need to be in tip top condition and you will need a slightly lower ewe:ram ratio so they can get the work done.

Day 28 – remove rams from ewes after 14 days of breeding. \* If the ewes were already cycling when the rams went in/not synchronised they will need to be in for a month minimum.



As for your Rams that get to do the tough part I hope they are in good condition and health?! Perhaps you have bought some nice new ones?! We hope you asked lots of questions and looked before you bought...With a vet like Maarten in the practice I would hope you are all familiar with what a ram fertility examination consists of! If not please head to our Facebook page where there is a good video of what we look for. We will be going over this in more detail, and practically at my next Medium Flock Club Members meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> September – for more details or if you wish to join please email or call me!

### Sheep feet (Maarten)

Pretty much most of our sheep clients have ceased to trim sheep routinely and none have experienced any adverse effects due to this change. Since the work done by Warwick University a few years ago many sheep farmers have changed the way they approach treatment for footrot. It is now well accepted that the most effective treatment for sheep with footrot is a dose of long-acting antibiotic injection plus antibiotic spray to all four feet, without trimming hoof horn. This treatment is effective because the antibiotic injection removes bacteria that are deep in the tissue of the foot and the antibiotic spray reduces the bacteria on the surface of all four feet. Avoiding trimming prevents deliberate or accidental damage to the foot. Using this treatment, 70% of sheep recover within 5 days and almost all recover within 10 days. A very small number of sheep might need a second treatment if they have not recovered within 14 days. If there are sheep with footrot that are not responding to this treatment the most likely explanation is that they are being under-dosed for their weight. The main finding of this study is that foot trimming sheep with footrot delays recovery: when combined with injectable and topical antibiotic, or even just topical spray, it halves the rate of recovery.

Prompt treatment, within 3 days, reduces the spread of bacteria onto pasture or bedding. To reduce the spread of bacteria further, affected sheep should be isolated from the flock until fully recovered.

Percentage of farmers carrying out management practices in 2004 and 2013

Management practice	2004	2013	Recommended
Routine foot trim the flock at least once per year	76%	56%	No
Always use foot trimming to treat footrot	76%	40%	No
Always use antibiotic injection to treat footrot	10%	24%	Yes
Treat lame sheep within 3 days of onset of lameness	Unknown	50%	Yes