Bovine Newsletter

November 2011

Fall is for Feet

Footbaths are an important part of maintaining hoof health in freestall housing. Using topical agents such as formaldehyde, copper sulfate or a new alternative product, KlingonBlue can significantly decrease the prevalence of foot rot and digital dermatitis (strawberry).

Current recommendations from the University of Wisconsin-Madison suggest that a wash bath in front of the treatment bath should not be used. Their study found that when a wash bath was placed right before the treatment bath, more cows ended up defecating in the treatment bath. As well, the water from the wash bath was transferred to the treatment bath, resulting in significant dilution of the treatment. They also found that the use of a single wash bath did not appear to greatly reduce the contamination of the foot prior to treatment.

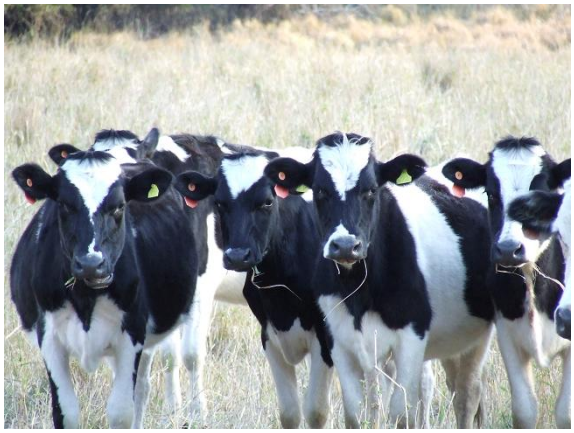
The recommendations for dimensions of the treatment bath is:
* 10-12 feet long
* 24” wide (or wider) with sloped sidewalls
* step-in height of 10”

This is quite a bit longer than a typical 6’ bath, but will maximize the amount of footfalls within the bath. With a 6 foot bath, only 50% of rear feet receive 2 immersions. With a longer bath, up to 96% of rear feet were immersed twice. The narrower width of 24” lets you maintain a similar volume compared to the shorter bath. Adding sloped sidewalls allows the narrower width and was well tolerated by the cows in their study (down to a width of 20”). The 10” step-in height helps decrease the loss of solution from the bath.

A footbath dose calculator was developed by Dr. Nigel Cook at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is available to all our producers as an Excel file. If you are interested, email kirktonvetclinic@gmail.com and we will send it to you.

Please ask your herd health veterinarian if you have any questions about your hoof health program - they would be happy to discuss farm-specific protocols and recommendations with you!

Do your grouped heifers have enough bunk space?



While everyone is concerned about bunk space for their lactating cows, it is also an important aspect to think about with respect to your replacement heifer housing.

When grain feeding younger calves, or limit-feeding older heifers, it is important that all animals have access to feed at the same time to ensure the same access for the smaller heifers in the group. Even if your heifers are being fed a TMR diet, without adequate space smaller animals may only have access to feed after it has been significantly sorted by the older animals. Inadequate diets in heifers can have lasting impacts on their future health, fertility and production.

The following feed and water space requirements were formulated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison based on their research as well as that from Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension Service. Why not check and see if your heifer pens measure up!

Body weight (kg)	<60	60	100	150	200	300	400	500
approx. age (months)	1	1.5	3	5	7	11.5	15.5	20
feed space, width per head (cm)	30	30	36	41	51	56	61	66
throat height above floor (cm)	33	33	36	37	38	42	46	50
neck rail height above floor (cm)	76	76	86	97	104	112	122	127
water trough perimiter per head (cm)	5	5	5	5	6	8	9	9