

Free test for ketosis by bringing sample of milk

Cows are milking far better this autumn than in autumn

last year, so producers need to be particularly alert to energy imbalance and metabolic disorders in early lactation, says Michael Head from the Shepton Veterinary Group.

Help will be on hand at the Dairy Show where producers are invited to

bring milk samples on to the group's stand from any cow which has been calved for two to 21 days when it will be tested, free of charge, for ketone bodies.

Concerns

"If anyone has concerns about any cow they should test her milk or blood, as ketone bodies indicate that she is mobilising excessive body

fat in order to keep milking," says Mr Head.

"And if the herd is suffering more than its share of other metabolic disorders – whether that's left displaced abomasums, retained cleansings, endometritis (whites), or if it is simply more prone to infection – then the herd is also quite likely to have ketosis and all of its associated problems."

One such problem is cystic ovaries, which Mr Head says is most commonly caused by ketosis.

Management during the transition period is one of the best tools for preventing metabolic disorders in early lactation, and this too will be a theme on the Shepton Group's show stand.

There will be discussion

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Michael Head



Michael Head: transition period.

about preventing ketosis and the use of the dry cow bolus Kexxtone.

"We'll be considering condition score in particular, which should ideally be managed in late lactation rather than during the dry period, and a cow should dry off and calve down at the same score," says Mr Head.

Condition scoring

Suggesting this is likely to be about 2.75 for a Holstein and 3.25 for a Friesian, he says visitors to the stand can have a go at condition scoring some of the cows belonging to willing exhibitors in the cattle lines, under the guidance of one of the Shepton vets who will be on hand to give advice.

► Gloucestershire Suite by showing. Call 01749 341 761, or visit www.sheptonvet.com