

Tackling mastitis problem through ELT

EARLY lactation therapy (ELT) is a practical approach to controlling mastitis, said Tom Clarke, veterinary surgeon with Synergy Farm Health, Dorset:

He said it had three key elements – identifying high mastitis risk cows, monitoring them closely and identifying clinical cases early and treating appropriately.

Mastitis costs the industry in excess of £2 million per year, plus animals in pain are a welfare issue and bad for consumer perception of the industry, said Mr Clarke.

He added all fresh-calved cows are high risk. Others with increased risk include those with problems in the dry cow/transitional period, if they are stressed nutritionally, if they have concurrent disease or historic SCC or mastitis issues.



Tom Clarke

He advised setting up a simple routine, which should be strictly adhered to, with all staff on board and involved. Good hygiene is crucial and fresh cows should be stripped every day as a minimum.

Cows treated for mastitis early will bounce back quicker, said Mr Clarke, and will have less chance

of repeating. All farms should have a written and verbally confirmed protocol for mastitis.

“It is important to know what bug you are treating, so take a sample prior to treatment and freeze for future reference,” said Mr Clarke. “You need to be able to justify to consumers and milk buyers what you are doing and ensure everyone knows how to treat the cows. Any treatment needs to be backed up by evidence.”

Mr Clarke said there was no excuse not to use anti-inflammatories as mastitis is a painful disease, and it is important to get the cow eating which will help her recover quicker.

He added recording treatment was vital and enabled producers to see past patterns, but set achievable targets and review treatment success and failure.