



**Jonathan Statham has been testing sensor technology.**

## **Aircraft tech may help to manage calving**

Temperature sensors developed for use in aircraft tyres could become essential management tools for beef producers.

A tiny sensor inserted into a cow's rumen will give a reading of the animal's temperature 200 times a day, with the data transmitted to a mobile phone, explained, Jonathan Statham, of Bishopton Vets who has been testing the technology on-farm.

"When cows are on heat they walk more, pace a lot and there's increased head movement.

"By using head collars and ankle bracelets fitted with sensors we can pick up this increased activity remotely.

"And when cows are on heat their body temperature rises and when they start to calve their temperature goes down," he added.

"This system can take away a lot of the management uncertainties of running a herd of beef cows," said Mr Statham.

Beef farmer Mike Powley has fitted activity sensors to his cows as part of the ongoing evaluation.

Signals from the sensors indicate when a cow is showing increased activity.

Cows identified as being on heat are then checked for oestrus using a progesterone test.

"We've found the progesterone test has proved the sensor is very accurate and is working well for us," said Mr Powley.

Mr Statham said making the best use of superior genetics was a clear example of how remote methods of herd management could help beef producers become more profitable.

"Remote management is labour saving and by identifying when beef cows are on heat it enables the best use to be made of superior genetics."

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