



**VET  
FOCUS**

01749 341761  
www.sheptonvet.com



**January saw a big rise in milk yields across many of our farms; some of this was due to better forages compared to winter 2012 and DairyCo reported yields up around 10%. Much of the reason for milk yield increases at this time of year are down to putting yourself back in control of the cows, now they are housed and on conserved forages.**

Dry cows will have been housed throughout the dry period, allowing controlled intakes of high fibre low energy diets in the far-off dry period. Transition cows can have good feed access and comfort, with a diet preparing them for the milking cow diet.

We always look to help farmers manage cows successfully through the transition period, but also think it is worthwhile monitoring this, either by regularly testing cows for ketosis after calving, or by monitoring milk proteins in early lactation. We test cows monthly using the milk Ketotest, and look to keep the percentage positive below 30%.

Alternatively we look to keep milk protein above 3.0 for cows less than 60 days calved. Where performance does not reach these targets, then we see more transition problems such as retained cleansings, displaced stomachs and later poor fertility.

Fat cows are a greater risk for ketosis problems; we have had some success with these cows using Kexxtone, a continuous-release intraruminal device. These cows have less problems and better yields, despite being at greater risk.

The persistent rain may be causing problems with right displaced abomasums (RDAs). These are less common than left displaced abomasums (LDAs), but typically cause a more severe presentation, with a risk of death if the stomach twists.

Cows can be seen grinding their teeth, kicking their belly and going down. They are more difficult to identify as the cow's abdomen often looks full due to trapped fluid in the rumen and abomasum.

The cause is likely to be excessive fermentation in the abomasum, probably due to foodstuff not being retained in the rumen long enough for full digestion, ie insufficient structural fibre and excess concentrate material. Interestingly we have seen a number of these in the past month, and wonder if all the rain means that the proportion of forage dry matter in the ration is reduced, due to excess water on the silage face.

**More information visit [www.sheptonvet.com](http://www.sheptonvet.com) or call 01749 341761**