

There is NO gain with pain in dairy farming

Lower welfare, reduced productivity and longer recovery times. Why we need to get better at treating pain in dairy cows.

Wave goodbye to pain – how to improve the quality of life of dairy cows

The pain associated with lameness causes a stress response in the cow, leading to the release of 'stress hormones', such as adrenaline, which at high levels inhibit the release of oxytocin, responsible for milk let down.¹

CEVA, the manufacturer of Ketofen® (ketoprofen), has launched the 'wave goodbye to pain' campaign alongside livestock vets and farmers, to raise awareness of the benefits of early lameness detection in cattle and the more expedient use of NSAIDs. If used in early cases of lameness, NSAIDs can reduce inflammation and structural changes in the foot, decreasing the risk of chronic lesions. We are also focussing on other conditions or procedures (such as disbudding or castration) that can cause discomfort and stress and discussing pain management plans that suit each herd.





Why is pain relief not given often enough?

- Worries about cost we know that in the last 10 years, the number of farmers who vets perceive are prepared to pay for pain relief has gone up from 36% to 52%.²
- Concerns about milk withdrawal highly effective analgesics can be given that have zero milk withdrawal.
- In the past, few NSAIDs were available to farmers for the treatment of lame cattle and the positive benefits of these products had not been fully recognised, so were not always used. Over the last few years, as more options for treatment have become available, farmers have become more aware of the need to recognise and treat pain.³
- Confusion about the difference between antibiotics and analgesics (pain relief) and concerns about antimicrobial resistance. Analgesics have no impact on the development of antibacterial resistance – and may contribute to more responsible use of antibiotics by helping to reduce the amounts used.
- The out-dated belief that pain is beneficial because it restricts mobility and therefore speeds healing. In fact, pain can delay healing because of the associated stress response. We know when analgesia is added into a lameness trimming and block protocol, it results in a faster and higher rate of cure.⁴



Recognising pain in dairy cows

As herbivores, cattle are 'programmed' to adopt 'prey behaviour', which means they try to disguise signs that they are less able to defend themselves or run away in the face of a predator. This makes picking up early cases of lameness difficult and unnoticed lesions are commonly missed, leading to low level mobility problems in the herd.

Typical signs of pain in dairy cows include:5,6

- Changes in posture or movement to protect the painful area
- Ears back or low •
- Head held down •
- Withdrawal from the group
- Reduced appetite or thirst
- More time spent lying down/ lying • down next to a fence
- Reduced focus on surroundings and • easily startled
- The avoidance of any social interaction
- A facial expression indicative of pain
- Shallow, rapid breaths if pain is severe •
- Sunken eyes/ tight skin



- AHDB://dairy.ahdb.org.uk/technical-information/animal-health-welfare/mastitis/symptoms-of-mastitis/milk-let-down-an-efficient-routine/#.XZxLSEZKiUk 2
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- 5. 6.
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