

FAQ's for July 2008

Setting two part adhesive in cold weather

Hi Neil,

If you have a spare moment I just have a quick question from one of your seminars. When you place a "shoe" on a cow ie cow slips, demotec blocks etc what do you use to heat/set the adhesive? I have heard mentioned the use of hairdryers and paint stripper guns etc but have wondered about the practicality of having to plug these into a power source (especially in wet sheds!). Do you have a cordless version of these? What do you use? We are in a relatively cold climate and find shoes often fall off without an added heat source to help the adhesive set.

Liz (Australia)

Dear Liz

I always have a spare moment for lameness questions and particularly concerning blocks!! I wish more vets (and farmers) would use more blocks. The cow is instantly more comfortable.

I live in a cold and wet place so I know what you mean. I also agree about the risks of using electrical equipment at the back end of a cow in cowsheds.

What I use to dry the claw after scraping it clean is a gas burner - the type you buy from the hardware shop for soldering. It is just a small bottle and I use a cigarette lighter to light it. One of our vets has found a gas soldering canister that has its own lighter attached. The gas lasts for years because you need so little for each foot. Gas is great because if the cow urinates on the prepared foot after you start mixing the glue, you still can get the foot dry. The other good feature is that the foot is warm (unlike the foot after being dried with meths that is so cold) and so speeds the glue setting. In cold weather I also help speed up the glue drying by putting the liquid into a bucket of hot water (real hot - about 40 C) before I even start treating the foot. Be careful as it will now set quite quickly - so don't get caught!

Hope this helps

Neil

Grates in the beginning of the yard?

My thoughts are a good way to have stones drop off the cows feet. But most importantly a good place to make sure all stones are washed off the yard each milking. Negatives at some yards I have found cows don't like to walk over these.

At this stage he is looking at 1m wide where the cows come in and 300mm on the out yard
Any of your thoughts would be good.

cheers
Philippa

Dear Phillipa,

I don't recommend grates for a number of reasons - some you have mentioned.

- 1) Heifers don't flow very well over them. Even some cows balk.
- 2) They don't dramatically reduce the amount of rocks in the yard.
- 3) They fill up with the gravel from washing the yard.
- 4) They are seldom cleaned out and are a pain to do so.

Some South Island sheds build them so that about 50mm water covers the grates with the purpose of cleaning the feet even better. Less gravel gets into the yard but heifers often try to jump the water - flow is even worse.

Always the best answer from my observations is to use a transition material of lime or similar before the yard to absorb the gravel and rocks.

Neil