

Health insurance that pays off

A dairy producer in southern Jutland has had great success in preventing milk fever and a range of derived diseases with X-Zelit.

"The money is indeed well spent, as it ultimately yields interests and shows on my bottom line", says Hans Jørgen Fischer from Gammelgård near Christiansfeld. The thing he is referring to is the product X-Zelit, which is an efficient and well-documented product to ensure a normal level of calcium in the blood immediately after calving.

"It must be done according to the book", says Hans Jørgen Fischer, who in co-operation with his 3 employees run a farm with 290 jersey cows and 200 ha.



Specialist vet Jan Thomsen and Hans Jørgen Fischer establish that the health of the herd is still optimal.

"Systematization is the keyword. You need to divide the animals in order to control it. If you are not willing to do so, it cannot be done. My advice to everybody is to do it, because obviously it can be done. So there is reason as well as money in it", claims Hans Jørgen Fischer.

For the southern Danish farmer has not only been able to get rid of his milk fever problem. He has also witnessed a reduction in the number of incidents of ketose and retained afterbirths.

"Previously, typically 10 out of 30 newly calved cows had milk fever, and now we hardly see it anymore. Just think about all the problem cows I needn't bother with anymore".

Hans Jørgen Fischer started using X-Zelit when Knud Lykke Christensen from Vitfoss told him about the product during one of his visits to the farm.

His vet knew that the product worked in theory, as he had seen the documentation, and therefore thought it was safe to try it.

Health all the way through

Cattle specialist vet Jan Thomsen from Raskkovet in Haderslev pays regular health visits at Hans Jørgen's farm every Friday and it is clear to him that the product is good for the herd.

"Besides the fact that the milk fever is almost eliminated, it is clear to see that X-Zelit reduces the frequency of ketose, and I cannot remember the last time we saw a retained afterbirth", says the vet.

Moreover, his health registrations show a positive impact on the condition of the dry cows, just as the reproduction in the words of the vet "has risen to the sky".

Hans Jørgen Fischer adds.

"The death rate of the calves is almost close to zero, and it is just more fun to spend the time on prevention than on running behind. It gives a satisfying feeling that the animals are healthy, and that there are no cows with milk fever.

If he must point out something negative, it is the fact that the product does not taste very well. This is however remedied by mixing X-Zelit with a bit of roughage. At the same time, he states that you need to do this cogently and divide the animals in order for it to succeed. But as he says: "Do you really want this or not?"

Hans Jørgen Fischer consequently gives his dry cows 500 grams the last 14 days before calving. After having used the product for more than a year, he has learned that he cannot reduce the amount without it having a negative impact on the result. For 6 months, he tried giving 400 grams, but he immediately had more cows with milk fever and ketose. When he gave 500 grams again, the problems all disappeared. He has therefore chosen to systematize it, so that all employees know what they have to do. Among other things, the product is weighed, so that he can control that the dry cows have been given the X-Zelit.

Documented effect

According to production consultant Knud Lykke Christensen, who has recommended the product, there is probably not a more well-documented product in the market for reducing milk fever. Since the end of the 1990s, researchers have been working on developing the product.

X-Zelit binds calcium in the cattle feed, so that during the dry season, it disappears with the dung instead of being digested. The dry cow is thus preparing for a situation of low availability of calcium and is in this way already during the dry season "trained" to take in a lot of calcium from the digestive system.

When you stop giving X-Zelit during the calving, the cow can easily absorb a sufficient amount of calcium. This is the theory, which practically gives Hans Jørgen Fischer a satisfaction in regards to health and contributes positively on the financial bottom line.

Facts about Gammelgård - Denmark

- Owned by Hans Jørgen Fischer
- The farm includes 290 jersey cows
- Is currently being expanded, and expected to contain between 330 and 350 cows
- 3 full-time employees
- 200 ha land, which is part of a field co-operation and a machine union with 2 colleagues, so that a total of approximately 550 ha is maintained

Feeding plan

- 0.25 Fe Wheat straw
- 0.75 Fe Soya grits
- 1.8 Fe 3 Cut grass
- 3.2 Fe Maize silage
- 110 Gold d-alfa bio
- All in all the dry cow is given 6 Fe with 110-115 g raw prot./Fe, a rumen abundance of 0.55 and a chewing time of 65 minutes.