

## **Student 4. Agricultural and Horticultural Science AS91295.**

### **Management practice ONE:**

*The farmer herds the cows quietly from their paddock and walk them down the race.*

This practice is a very simple technique used in farming that can have a drastic response on your herds performance if done properly. A way to do this is the farmer drives quietly down around the cows, alerting them but no frightening them, and walk them down the race. The farmer must ensure that they are not running but just slowly walking [1].

This will decreased the stress levels of the cows as they are not being pushed or being made to run. The cows will be able to sort themselves into a specific order that they walk in when on the move and they will have more space around them so they know where their feet are going [2].

With stress levels at a low, the farms production will increase. This is because when cows are calm they will happily do what the farmer tells them, this will lead to cows letting all of their milk out when in the cowshed effectively resulting in an increase in milk solids produced. If cows are pushed down the race their stress levels will more than likely increased which could increase the cell count, resulting in grades and loss of production.

The hierarchical behaviour in a herd is important. This is where the herd moves in a specific order with the middle ranking cows leading, the highest ranked cows in the middle and the lowest ranked cows at the back. If this is interrupted it could results in the cows becoming aggressive causing bunching and pushing of other cows which will cause their stress levels to rise [2]. It is important that this order is kept so the cows have enough space to move and see where their feet are going [1]. If the cow does not know where it is putting its feet, the cow could stand on some foreign object such as a sharp stone, resulting in a lame cow. This will cause the cow to decrease milk production as it is putting all of its energy into healing rather than producing milk.

### **Management practice TWO:**

*Reducing a large herd of 600 cows to two smaller herds of 300 cows.*

This is a commonly used practice in larger herds which involves splitting a large herd of 600 cows to two smaller herds of 300 cows.

Each herd is milked at separate times of the day. This means the cows will spend less time in the yard on concrete and more time in the paddock eating pasture.

Having two smaller herds means that the herds will be milked at separate times which results in them spending less time in the yard and more time in the paddock digesting pasture. This will increase the amount of milk produced, increased the overall production of the farm and a healthier cow as well. Reducing the herd size will also benefit the social position of the cows

[1]. There will be less cows to sort through when the cows are sorting out their hierarchal order. This will ultimately result in the cows stress levels being decreased [2]. The other behavioural response to this management practice is bullying [1]. When cows are in smaller herds they sort out their social order faster, so when they eat they are not having to fight for food so they will not become stressed. If the bullying does not occur the cow will be able to consume the correct amount of food and water without having to fight for it [2].