

Student 2. Mind your behaviour.

Management practice One. Reducing a large herd of 800 cows down to two smaller herds of 400 cows.

Introduction. The benefits of having two smaller herds is that they will be separated into two different paddocks to stop bullying and confusion in the social order. The benefit of milking at different times is that they won't be in the shed all day on their feet which can cause many types of foot injuries. The less time they have in the shed the more time they have in the paddock feeding which will express maximum milk product.

Explanation of the management practice. Reducing herd of 800 cows down to two herds of 400 cows is a lot more beneficial because it cuts back the amount of time they spend in the shed. Instead of them being in the shed the whole day they can go back to their paddock which is less stressful for the cows. It will increase the milk volume produced. A cow in a 800 cow herd will have more stress and less time feeding in the paddock which will result in less production [1].

Social position and herd size. When running herd of 800 cows it causes many problems, it upsets the eating, space and water of the cows. When you have two herds of 400 cows they can find their social position in the herd. There is a lot less interruptions for the cows as in a herd of 800 there is new entry's coming in and out for calving, works, new farms etc [3]. It helps the cows relax when in a smaller herd which means they are fully relaxed to eat and can express maximum milk [4].

Hierarchal social order and herd size. When running two herds of 400 cows it lets them find where they stand in the social order. It also stops the bullying that occurs when you have a big herd [4]. It minimises the challenges that other cows want to start. So it helps them to produce milk at their optimum level. When you have two smaller herds of 400 the cows know where they stand in the hierarchal order. When in a bigger herd there is too many other cows and they start to stress out a lot and they don't know where they stand in the order [3].

Summary of herd size. When running a small herd it reduces the time the cows have to stand on the concrete when milking which causes all sorts of foot problems and it allows them to go back to grazing. They don't have to compete for their food because they know where they stand in the social order. It cuts back the amount of stress levels the cow gets so they can express maximum milk. It increases the milk production of each cow in the herd. When you have smaller herds it lowers the chances of bullying. If the farmer doesn't pick up in a cow that is sick, lame or bullying it starts to make an impact on the other cows in the herd, and it is easier for a farmer to pick up and treat these things in two smaller herds.

Management practice two. The farmer herds the cows quietly from their paddock and walks them down the race to the milking shed.

Explanation of the management practice.

Farmers herd the cows quietly and peacefully from their paddock to the shed making sure to not rush or make the cows run. The farmer doesn't chase the cows with the motorbike or dogs, which causes a lot of stress on the cows when they are rushed into the shed [2].

The effect of quietly and calmly moving the herd. When quietly herding the cows it reduces the stress levels and helps the cows to relax. They don't push, shove and bunch when trying to get in to the shed [3]. Which means they're less stressed when they arrive at the milking shed [4] so they won't be defecating everywhere and will let down their milk calmly having a positive effect on total milk production.

The effect of quietly herding on animal behaviour. It helps a lot when you quietly herd the cows because they don't poo a great deal, when they are completely relaxed. When they are walking down the race they can see where they are putting their feet so it stops bunching and shoving [3]. It reduces the amount of water that is used in the shed when they are not quietly walked to the shed because they defecate more in the shed. When they are relaxed and stress free it allows them to let down all their milk for maximum production [4].

Summary of quietly herding cows. When quietly herding cows to the shed it reduces the stress on the cows. Cows that are rushed to the shed stress out and don't produce milk at their optimum level. When cows are quietly walking to the shed at their own pace are less likely to defecate in the yard. A calm cow will also produce and let down more milk than a stressed cow [4]. It benefits the farmer a lot it gives good productivity and profits overall.

Justification. I think that the management practice one reducing a large herd of 800 down to two herds of 400 is a lot more beneficial because it causes less stress and bullying on the cows. They are in the shed for a smaller period of time, which means they have more time in the paddock to feed which means more milk to produce. Where if they were in a herd of 800 cows it stresses the cows out because they get bullied for food, space and water etc. And also their social order gets mucked up. In a herd of 800 they are in the shed longer each day. Which means less feeding time they won't fully express maximum milk. Compared to two herds of 400 cows they are in the shed for less time each day which means more grazing time. It also minimises bullying. A herd of 400 know where they stand in the social order. A herd of 800 stresses the cows as there is too many other cows around. They don't have to fight for food, water, and space in a herd of 400. This management practice has a greater effect on the cows than quietly herding as it affects the cow 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Where quietly herding cows only impacts the herd twice a day for around half an hour during the milking season.