

## Student 5.

### Livestock Behaviour.

The two management practices that I am going to look at to improve the stress of dairy cows are; splitting a large herd of 800 into smaller herds of 400, and the farmer quietly herding the stock.

#### Splitting a larger herd of 800 down to two smaller herds of 400:

In the larger herd of 800 the cows would be a lot more stressed due to the being bullied by other more dominant cows especially if they are constantly moving around, as they tend to fight and be more stressed. Smaller herds allow the cows to establish their social order a lot quicker than when in a large herd [1]. Reducing herd size considers the outcomes of the observed livestock behaviour of bullying and the hierarchal order amongst cows in larger herds. Being in a smaller herd, reduces the cow's stress as when they are in the paddock the cows are more at rest and are not being bullied by others as much for food, space and water. Splitting a larger herd into smaller herds also helps the cow to lower their stress levels in the cow shed due to not standing cramped up in the yard for long periods of time [2].

#### The farmer quietly herding the stock:

The livestock positively behave to this management practice both in the shed and in the race as they are walking, this is shown when the farmer herds them quietly they happily walk down the race slowly with room around them so they can see where they are walking and there is no bullying, pushing or shoving. This shows that the cows are happy and that this does not stress them out to walk like this. This management practice also allows the cows to maintain their social order, by allowing the cows that want to go first to go, usually the middle ranked, followed by the top ranked and then the lower ranked cows [1]. This management practice uses the knowledge that cows get stressed when they are rushed, nervous, gone in the wrong social order, or mistreated by the farmer. The cows greatly respond to this management practice in the milking shed as they are more relaxed if the farmer herds them quietly. The cows are more likely to stand there quietly and not fight or resist the farmer's orders. Cows that go in the correct social order are less stressed and more relaxed. This results in higher milk production as they have not been stressed or running so they are more likely to let their milk down [2].

If the farmer was yelling aggressively then the cows would get all up tight and not want to let their milk down when they get to the shed and they would be jumpy and nervous risking the safety of the farmer.