

### **Student 3. Demonstrate understanding of interactions between livestock behaviour and New Zealand management practices.**

#### **Quietly Herding Stock.**

Quietly herding stock is when the farmer walks the cows in a calm and quiet way. The farmer can do this by not rushing the cattle so no pushing or shoving occurs. The farmer can also ease of the cattle and give them room so no pressure is put on, also if the farmer has a dog he can make sure the dog doesn't run around the cattle and bark because this will apply stress. For the cows to produce milk at their highest possible level, they need to be kept calm, happy and not be engaging in conflict [2].

Two behavioural responses from livestock when they are herded quietly can be calm and stress free cow, that will have a nicer mannerism and let down more of her milk because she is less stressed [2]. This management practice considers livestock behaviour and uses knowledge of their behaviour to increase the farm commercial production because the farmer takes in to consideration how the cow will behave when she becomes stressed and knows that he will not get the highest possible level of milk production when his cows are stressed and feel uncomfortable in there milking shed [1].

If the cows are rushed to the shed or if too much pressure is applied in the yards it will cause the cows to wee and poo [1]. This is because the more stressed the cows are, the more bullying that will occur. Hierarchical behaviour also influences this alot because the cows behaviour in yards and in races is influenced by rank. Middle ranking diary cows lead the herd followed by high ranking and then low ranking animals. Low ranking animals may try to avoid dominating animals, if they are pushed and bunched this may occur an upset in the hierarchical order and will cause the cows to be upset and stressed [1]. This can also put pressure on the cows and will raise their stress levels. In this situation the cows can also become frightened, which will lead to less milk because the cow is not clam enough to let down her milk.

#### **Reducing a large herd of 800 cows to two smaller herds of 400 cows.**

Reducing a large herd of 800 cows to two mobs of 400 cows is carried out by the farmer. This is because when herds are large, cows can spend long periods waiting in yards to be milked. This can lead to problems such as footrot and bruising which will lead the cow to be stressed which will lower her milk production because she is unsettle and in pain. 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].

This management practice considers livestock behaviour and uses knowledge of their behaviour to increase the farms commercial production. This is because in a smaller herd the farmer has greater chance to observe the cows behaviour and the farmer can easily see if a

cow is becoming lame or on heat. These behaviours can be dealt with earlier and milk production can return to normal as soon as possible. The farmer considers livestock behaviour because the cows in small herds have greater opportunities to express their behaviours, that the farmer will then also be able to recognise earlier. The farmer thinks about herd size because cows waiting in the yards for long periods of time, means that the cows are spending less time eating, which reduces milk production.