

## Winter Routines at Hensley

### A Typical Winter's Day Through the Eyes of a Cow



Cow Yard

We are awoken in the morning by the extra lights that are set to come on at 5 o'clock, and shortly afterwards we hear Alan calling to tell us it's time to get up for milking!

We are all driven into the collecting yard (which is where we wait to be milked).



Collecting Yard



Milking

It will take about 2 hours for us all to be milked, with us going into the parlour in groups of 18.

While we are being milked, our cubicles are brushed off to make them nice and clean for us to go and lie down again after milking.



Brushing off the Cubicles

The brush (designed by Alan and made by George Moore, an engineer at Puddington) is attached to the handler and sweeps off the dirty straw.

The same machine then spreads lime onto our beds to make them dry and kill any bacteria to prevent our udders becoming infected with mastitis.



Lime Being Spread



Straw Chopper

The small blue tractor then comes around with the straw chopper and blows clean straw onto our beds.

This makes the cubicles comfy and absorbs any moisture.



Bed Made!



Yard Scraper

The straw chopper is then unhitched and replaced with the yard scraper to clean all the passageways.

Any leftover silage is cleaned out of our feed troughs three times a week, so that we've always got fresh yummy silage to eat. Alan is very good at making silage and we have a delicious mix of grass silage and wholecrop triticale. There are 172 of us in milk at the moment and we eat 1.5 tonnes of wholecrop and 6 tonnes of grass/red clover silage a day!! This is moved from the silage clamp to our feed troughs with a shear grab while we are milking, so we can look forward to a tasty breakfast!



Wholecrop Silage



Grass Silage



Shear Grab



Silage Clamp

We also get to eat our equivalent of chocolate!! We call it a concentrate and it is made up of wheat, triticale, peas, soya, sunflower and palm kernel and is made into a pellet.

This is fed to us in the out-of-parlour feeders so we can decide when we want to eat it.



Out-of-Parlour Feeder



Cow's Collar

When we are out in the fields grazing, you may have noticed that we all wear a collar around our necks. Each collar has a transponder that can be read by the feeder and is linked to a computer in the farmhouse.

We all have different amounts of feed depending on how much milk we are producing and it also makes sure we don't make ourselves feel sick by eating it all in one go!! I am producing 30kg of milk each day and am allowed to eat 7kg per day. This is divided over a 24 hour period. If I'm not feeling well and don't feel like eating, the computer alarm will let Alan know I've lost my appetite and he will check me over.

It is very important that we drink plenty of water, approximately 75 litres each a day. You may have read about the rainwater harvesting tank that we now have on the farm which provides us with filtered rain water to drink. Our water troughs are cleaned out once a week as we are messy eaters/drinkers!



Drinking Trough



Liquid Minerals

We also have liquid minerals added to our water to keep us healthy. The minerals are injected into the water supply and a computer system monitors we have the correct amount each day.

Twice a week we walk through a footbath when we come out of the parlour. The first section is to clean our feet and the second contains formulin to keep our feet hard and prevent digital dermatitis.

By 8.30am we are allowed back into our cubicle sheds to eat and rest.



Eating!



Time to Relax!

At 4pm we are driven into the collecting yard and it all starts over again!



Entering the Parlour Again



Second Milking of the Day

We don't mind being indoors when the weather is cold and wet, but we do look forward to the spring so we can get out and about again and sleep under the stars!