

## Vet's Corner: Proper bunk space for Transitional Cows

During another spring time DA storm season, are you getting bored beating up on your feed rep and veterinarian about the causes of the problem? At the Vermont Large Farm Dairy Conference, Dr. Nigel Cook, U of Wisconsin presented many helpful suggestions about stall size dimensions and pen moves that can explain the cause of DA's.

90% of the time, the following dimensions should be observed:

1. At least one stall per cow
2. At least 30 inches of bunk space per cow for pre-and post-fresh pens
3. At least 24 inches of bunk space per cow for far-dry cows and heifers
4. At least 120 square feet of bedded area per cow in calving pens

Cows want to come up to the bunk to eat as an entire group and Holsteins need 30 inches of bunk space to allow top DMI. After the next DA surgery, take a minute to look over the dry cow pens with your herd health Vet. Using 30 inches bunk space/cow as the limitation, determine the capacity of the close-up dry cow pen. Many of our DA investigations reveal that over stocking of the dry cow facility is the predominant cause of the problem. Above all other factors, Dr. Cook favors protecting inches of bunk space per cow. In times of heavy calving schedules, this will mean moving cattle through the close-up group faster than the traditional 3 weeks. A close-up pen visit of as short as 9 days can be adequate. To manage this closely, excellent breeding records that predict accurate due dates are essential.

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