

PÉLPUSZTA, HUNGARY

Problems with flowing water

Ben Drewitt manages 2000 cows with an average yield of 8600 litres in Pélpusztá, Hungary

* So, finally, I'm in my new shed. This last week has been a trial and I've only put 300 animals in to try it out. Training that many heifers into cubicles is a job in its own right, but other teething problems of the new unit have somewhat blown me away.

We have had a flushing system put in, with yards being flushed two at a time from a tower silo holding 150,000 litres. The water then passes through a pipe network and into the first collection tank of 180,000 litres.

Then, the two separators kick in, clean and push the water into the recirculation tank which then goes one of three ways, back to the shed header tank for another spin around the system, or to the parlour header tank for a trip around the collecting yard



and herding passages. The third option, for a change of scenery, sends it up to the 40m-litre lagoon.

Now, back to my problems. The air pressure valve that lifts the metal flush head up burst the first day of testing with water appearing behind the head two days later, coming from the concrete. After breaking up 8m of said concrete, the Hungarian foreman found he had forgot to

put the rubber gasket between the push joint when assembling the flush system. What a wally.

On a much better note, cow fertility is whizzing along. We have been using a stick-on patch called Estroprotect which works fantastically, resulting in far fewer missed heats, if any. They look a bit like a scratch card you can buy at the garage, but boy have they made my life easier. On a large herd bulling aids are a must.