

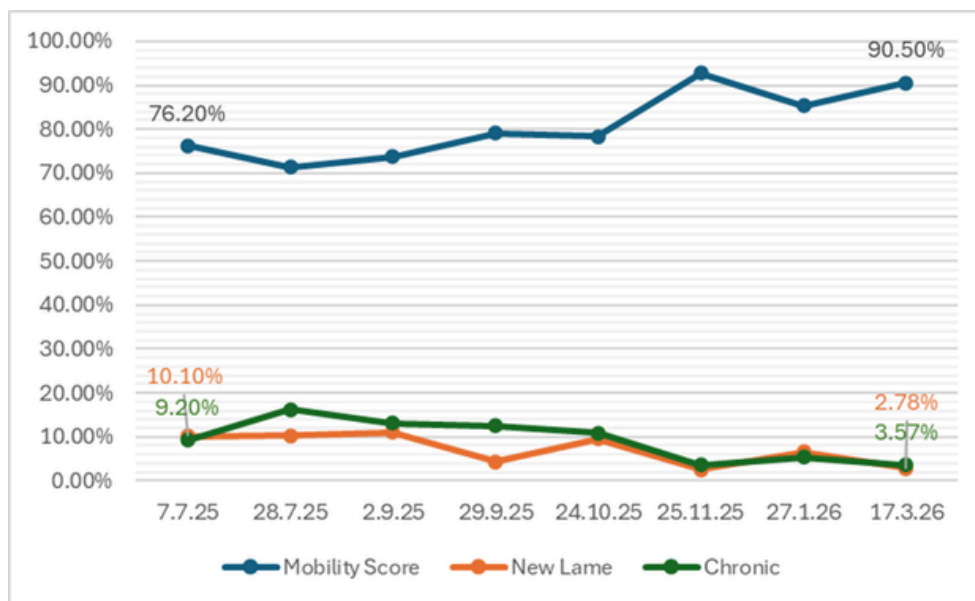
Lameness success story!

June 26

When writing this, the sun was shining (although too much some days), 1st cut silage in and cattle out; and so to continue on the positivity this month we're sharing a case study of a dairy farm which has taken great strides in improving their mobility.

They are a 250 cow all-year-round calving herd, grazing only lows and youngstock in the summer, averaging around 10,500 litres. Over the last 6 months we've improved the mobility score (% herd scoring 0 or 1 out of 3) by nearly 17%! Not only has this improved cow welfare but also the short and long term cost saving, with the average cost of an incidence of lameness (including treatment cost, loss of yield and shortened productive life) being in the region of £330 per cow. AHDB have a handy 'Lameness cost calculator' if you want to calculate the impact lameness is having on your own farm.

Historically this farm has struggled with mobility and has implemented various steps, and we've collaborated as a wider team including vet techs, vets and foot trimmers to improve mobility and welfare.



Mobility scoring

- Our vet tech team are ROMS accredited mobility scorers and use software when mobility scoring to allow us to identify key trends as seen above. Looking at our rates of recovery, new lameness and chronic.
- This has enabled us to discuss key risk factors, such as the spikes in heifer lameness that we attributed to overstocking of the heifer group in cubicles, and then onto a wider discussion of management of heifer fertility to help reduce peaks and troughs in the number of heifers calving.
- We can easily identify chronic and non-resolving lameness cases, which can be examined and foot trimmed by a vet using local anaesthetic. It allows informed and timely culling decisions.

Monthly routine foot trimming

- The herdsperson produces a list to **prioritise routine trims every month, with dry off trims, heifer 80 day trims and cow 80 day trims.**

- Pre-dry off is one of the most important routine trimming time points, as correction of weight distribution in the foot and claw balance can be done before a cow enters the high risk period of the periparturient period. This is when the digital cushion (fat pad in the foot) is at its thinnest and there is slackening of ligament tissues.
- 80 day-in-milk trims, i.e. early lactation intervention, is particularly useful for heifers or cows with a history of lameness, but also allows for early detection of any foot lesions before they become established or chronic.
- The lesion information from trimming sessions can inform how we manage lameness i.e. digital dermatitis vs. sole lesions.

Training and on-farm facilities

- The herds person had some foundation in foot trimming and so completed our LANTRA accredited 'Intermediate foot trimming course' which helped them to gain confidence and greater knowledge in foot trimming.
- They adjusted their foot trimming set up on farm to make trimming easier and more user-friendly e.g. good lighting, hydraulic crush, sharp hoof knives etc.
- This has enabled prompt treatment of new cases of lameness and improved resolution of cases.

Digital dermatitis control

- Daily footbathing with Formalin

Other on-farm factors

- **Re-grooving of high risk areas** to reduce risk of injury related causes of lameness.
- **Monitoring body condition particularly during transition** – as this affects the thickness of the digital fat pad cushion in the foot. It's been found cows with a body condition score of < 2 are at significantly higher risk of lameness compared to >=2.5 body condition score cows.
- **Heat stress management** to reduce standing times.

Improving mobility and reducing lameness can be a challenge and can take the implementation of various steps over time to make a difference, but can be so rewarding! If mobility is an area you'd like to work on, we also have qualified Mobility Mentors within the team who can deliver the AHDB Healthy Feet programme. This is really useful way to bring together the team and review lameness as a whole on your farm.

Lantra accredited 'First Aid For Feet' course, Wednesday Aug 26th, with Tom Morris and Will Sommerville, in Malmesbury

With a combination of theory and practical, this 1 day course will cover:

- Basic anatomy of the foot/landmarks
- Tools for the job (including knife sharpening)
- Mobility scoring overview
- Recognition of main lesions causing lameness
- Handling, lifting and examination of a foot
- Introduction to the 5-step trimming method
- Treatment protocols: Block choice and NSAID administration
- Practical lesion treatment/blocking

£333 ex VAT, to book a place or find out more please ring 01666 823035 or email technical.training@georgevetgroup.co.uk

"Testimonial from herds person after completing our 'Intermediate Foot trimming' course -

"A great informative course that furthered my knowledge and gave me extensive skills to treat and prevent problems in our herd, improving animal welfare and comfort"



Ellie Body