

July 2021

Why Mobility score Cows?

Lameness within herds is an area where with simple methods farmers can make massive potential savings and a huge difference in individual cow welfare. Cost of lameness nationally is approximately 15% of the overall cost of milk production. In the UK independent studies have estimated the mean prevalence of lame cows in dairy herds to be between 32 and 36%, but with a wide range. Some herds have very low prevalence of lame cows whilst others have greater than 50% prevalence.

On average a lameness case costs £330. This breaks down to £2.20/cow/day taking into account the average lameness incidents is likely to last 5 months.

Most of these costs go unnoticed and fall under the following 3 main economic impact categories:

- Increased risk of premature culling,
- reduced fertility
- reduced milk yields (see diagram)

Actual treatment/medical costs are small percentage of the total.

Example: On a particular farm the prevalence (amount of cases) of moderate to severe lameness within the 200 cow herd is 25%. Taking the average cost per cow (£2.20) this calculates to $200 \times 0.25 \times £2.20 = £110$ per day for this farmer. If this prevalence remains constant throughout the year this means a total cost of $£110 \times 365 \text{ days} = £40,000$ per year. And for an average yield that is 2.3 pence per litre.

By halving that prevalence the cost can be reduced to just over 1 pence per litre

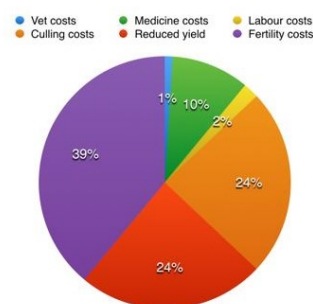


Figure 1. Breakdown of annual costs of lameness (from Willshire and Bell, 2009).

Early detection and prompt effective treatment is vital to reduce the impact of lameness and record the number of cases that can be assess to see if the prevalence is falling then preventative measures are put in place Regular mobility scoring is key to any lameness management system. This is a simple system of inspection of how cows walk designed to record the prevalence (amount of cases) of lameness and the individual severity of locomotion impairment.

One of the most common scoring systems is the AHDB Dairy four-point system with scores ranging from 0 to 3. For this we use the scoring sheet provided at the end of this article.

Key points to mobility scoring are

- Monthly routine
- Find a time and a place to allow for 6-10 uninterrupted strides on a hard non-slip surface where you can observe side and rear of the cow. She should at make 1x turn in her trajectory.
- For the 2-3 scores schedule treatment as soon as possible
- Tally the individuals with score 0-1
- Make certain you are able to give a cow a score

Why is this beneficial?

- Possible to early intervene via foot trimming and other actions
- Identifying new problems early
- Collecting data for bench marking on the farm
- Motivation among all staff to improve herd mobility and overall herd health

However it will not give indications to the cause of lameness or type of lesions present

As a practice we can help set up the system of mobility scoring with you or even provide the service of regular independent scoring. Besides treatment, we can also assist in performing a risk assessment to examine all the environmental and management impacts on lameness within the farm. We could help with prioritising changes and interventions to those that will be most beneficial. Ongoing monitoring, using regular independent mobility scoring, assesses the impact of changes on herd lameness and leads to cost-benefit analysis. Contact a Parklands vet for advice on reducing lameness in your herd.

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Preventing Summer Mastitis

The main ways to **prevent** Summer Mastitis are:

1. Fly repellents like pour-on and spot-on (**not** pour on wormers as these do not repel flies) and fly tags for the ears. Other products like Stockholm Tar on the udder twice weekly work well at the peak fly time when the flies are "savage".
 2. We need to ensure they have adequate dry cow therapy in the form of antibiotic Dry cow tubes and teat sealants, which will last all summer and not run out half way through. Please ask in Parklands for their combination deal on sealer and antibiotic dry cow tubes!
 3. After last year Parklands have sourced a **barrier teat dip** which forms a layer outside the teat to seal it off from flies.
 4. Management practices like keeping the cows on high, exposed "airy" fields can have a huge effect on reducing fly numbers.
 5. Moving the cows every 2 to 3 weeks to clean pasture has been shown to reduce mastitis after calving!
- Speak to a Parklands vet for more info.

Subsidised blood sampling for EAE Abortion in Ewes

Parklands vets have accessed an industry subsidised farm blood testing for *Chlamydophila abortus* (EAE Enzo.). Aborted ewes can be tested for EAE, **ideally from three weeks to three months after lambing**. An investigation is warranted if two per cent or more of a total flock have aborted or if two or more have aborted over two to three days, irrelevant of the size of the flock. Up to 6 ewes can be sampled from flocks that do **not vaccinate** against EAE already. These samples may be useful in flocks where an investigation during the outbreak was not possible, or to confirm the diagnosis in aborted ewes. EAE is an insidious cause of abortion in sheep, it can trickle along in flocks causing abortion or barren ewes at levels higher than normal, sometimes there can be explosive outbreaks. If you had some abortions why not contact Parklands to get this investigated?

Lame Cows, Soft Feet? Try our New Biotin Bolus

Biotin is an Amino Acid essential for production of hoof, horn and hair. Studies have shown that biotin supplementation can improve hoof quality and therefore reduce lameness caused by sole ulcer, white line disease and sand cracks. On top of this **Biotin** also helps synthesis of glucose, proteins and fats by the cow therefore it can increase milk yield by up to 2kg per day!

Lungworm and Gutworm

Usually from now on we will see problems with Lungworm and Gutworm. If you are unsure if the animals need dosed or not why not take a pooled dung sample and have it tested in Parklands. Results are rapid and it will give you peace of mind that they do need dosed or not, it may save you the cost and labour of dosing!

Project Feet

Please take a few minutes to fill in the **Project feet** survey, this will help inform lameness control across the industry, use the address here or check out our facebook page for it.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ProjectFEETFarmer>