

Farm News July 2023

Mobility Scoring

Have you had issues with lameness in your herd before? Mobility Scoring is a great way to keep track of your herd and tackle early signs of lameness with effective management.

What is mobility scoring and why is it important?

Good mobility and healthy feet are essential for the welfare of dairy cows. Lameness is linked to a decline in feed intake, herd longevity and fertility, as well as affecting staff morale.

Unfortunately, like many animals, cows are good at hiding pain meaning that while it may be easy to spot very lame cows at the back of the herd, it can be harder to detect the early stages of lameness and allow correct action to prevent further deterioration in mobility.

Mobility scoring is essentially a system of grading lame cows based on severity.



Lameness can be caused by many factors including disease and physical factors such as hoof shape and horn quality.

Common causes of lameness include:

- The type of floor surface. This includes poor quality flooring in cattle housing, poor cow tracks or cows standing on hard surfaces for prolonged periods of time.
- Ineffective foot trimming, eg by an inexperienced foot trimmer
- Infection and poor nutrition

Mobility scoring is required by many milk contracts and farm assurance schemes who have recognised the benefits of monitoring mobility to both cattle and farmers.

The Register of Mobility Scorers (RoMS) is an independent body which provides accredited training courses in mobility scoring. RoMS accredited scorers all use the same system for mobility scoring which allows for consistent monitoring of lameness over time.

We are offering a RoMS accredited services which can be a cost-effective way of consistently scoring cattle and making sure it gets done regularly, as well as making sure the data is properly recorded and interpreted.



How often and when should I mobility score my herd?

Scoring every 2 weeks will ensure lameness is picked up before severe lameness is seen. A good time to do this can be after milking on day 1 of a TB test or as the cows walk in to be milked. It is important to have a flat, even surface where cows can take 6 – 10 uninterrupted steps and that cows are relaxed when walking. Cows should be observed from the side and then walking away.

Mobility scoring allows a list to be produced for all cows that would benefit from treatment and not just the very lame cows at the back of the herd. This can be done before a foot trimmer visit so the right cows are identified to receive prompt treatment, therefore improving the success rate of the treatment.



On-going mobility scoring allows you to monitor success and enables informed decision making for chronically lame cows. It satisfies supermarket contract requirements and shows that high welfare is a priority on your farm. It also enables vets to see seasonal trends on the farm and guide preventative medicine.

To discuss or arrange an appointment for Mobility Scoring, please contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200

FlockCheck 2023

Sheep farmers can ask their vet to blood test their flock for exposure to toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion (EAE), following the launch of MSD Animal Health's 2023 FlockCheck diagnostic scheme.



Ewe reproductive failure, neonatal lamb disease and mortality are the three biggest factors limiting better flock productivity – with toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion continuing to be significant causes of these unwanted flock health issues.

Have you had more than 2% abortions or barren ewes?

MSD are once again offering FlockCheck. This service has been extended until the end of July and will cover any lab fees for up to 8 ewes. The test is for enzootic abortion and toxoplasmosis. Testing needs to be on ewes that have not been vaccinated.

We are offering a visit free of charge and blood sampling to any flocks eligible for testing.

(Any additional work will be chargeable)

Call the Farm Office on 01889 567200 for more details



RAM VASECTOMY

Now is the time to plan ahead to make sure you have enough teaser power this Autumn.

Whilst a vasectomised ram cannot release sperm to impregnate ewes, they can bring ewes into heat. Rams will release pheromones to stimulate ewes to ovulate and become fertile. Because sheep are seasonal breeders, we can use “teaser” rams to bring forward their mating season.



Starting the mating season early can be done for a few reasons:

- To lamb early for better lamb prices
- To increase the number of lamb crops in certain breeds of sheep
- To lamb a group of stock early such as shearlings

In order for this process to work there are a few considerations:

- The “teaser ram effect” can only start the breeding season 6 weeks earlier than the natural starting point
- Rams should be isolated from ewes by at least a mile
- Isolation needs to be for a minimum of 6 weeks
- Rams must have the vasectomy at least 6 weeks before getting in with ewes, they can still release viable sperm a few weeks after the surgery
- Once the teaser rams go in with the ewes there will be a silent heat about 3 – 4 days later.

After your “teaser” rams have spent a few days in with the ewes, they can be removed and fertile rams can be introduced.

We offer a special price of £ 80 ex VAT all in, per ram brought into the Uttoxeter practice.

Please contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200 to book.

TB Wildlife Camera

A wildlife camera is available on loan from the Farm Office for those who want to monitor badger activity on the farm.



Please contact the Farm Office on 01889 567200 for more details.

TBAS visits can also be booked free of charge with our TBAS trained vets.

Farm Safety Week

This year, the annual Farm Safety Week campaign is taking place from 17 to 21 July 2023.

The campaign is managed and funded by the Farm Safety Foundation (YellowWellies.org) and involves over 400 partners in five countries – England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



Agricultural mortality rates remain high in the industry, compared with other sectors, in which fatal accident rates have generally decreased.

Now in its 11th year, the annual Farm Safety Week campaign raises awareness of the impacts of farm incidents on the industry and community and promotes the importance of farming safely.

“Farm Safety Starts With Me” is the theme running through this year’s campaign, which emphasises that farm safety is an investment not a luxury. The campaign seeks to highlight those reasons why farm safety might not be prioritised, and to address them. To learn more about Farm Safety Week visit www.yellowwellies.org



SELEKT PUMP CLINIC

The Pump Clinic day is on
Thursday 10th August
at Uttoxeter

This service is free of charge



Please bring drop your pumps off
before 5pm Tuesday 8th August

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Burton and District Ploughing Match

Saturday 2nd September 2023

By kind permission of Messrs Archer,
Marston Lane, Marston on Dove,
Derbyshire DE65 5GB



Come and see us in the tent for a
cuppa and a chat

Brailsford Ploughing Match

Wednesday 4th October 2023

By kind permission of TR & EC Ball,
Carr Farm, Cubley, Ashbourne,
Derbyshire DE6 5FB



Be our guest at the Ploughing Match
and join us for a Hog Roast

