

HEALTHYFEET

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An introduction to the Healthy Feet Programme



DAIRY

The Healthy Feet Programme

The Healthy Feet Programme (HFP) has been developed to help you reduce the number of lame cows on your farm by identifying and applying the right solutions.

Lame cows cost time and money and are a problem. No one wants to see cows not walking right and herd lameness can have affects on staff morale as well as the image of dairy farming.

Lameness is a term that covers many conditions: some are caused by infection and some by physical and management factors. An understanding of which types of lameness are present on your farm, coupled with knowing the most beneficial changes you can make, will help you to tackle lameness effectively and permanently.

The Healthy Feet Programme is a stepwise approach to help you diagnose the problems, devise an action plan and develop the skills needed for long-term lameness control. Trained programme deliverers facilitate the whole process and act as one-to-one advisers or 'mobility mentors'.

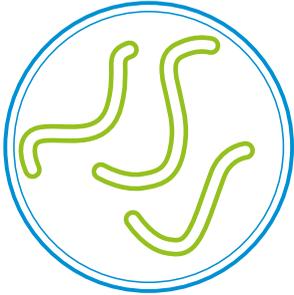
What is a mobility mentor?

A 'mobility mentor' has been trained specifically to deliver the Healthy Feet Programme. Usually, they are vets with a special interest and expertise in lameness control. They will work with you to introduce the right working practices and management to reduce lameness on your farm.



The programme is based around four key success factors:

1



Low infection pressure

A circular petri dish containing several green, worm-like organisms, representing low infection pressure.

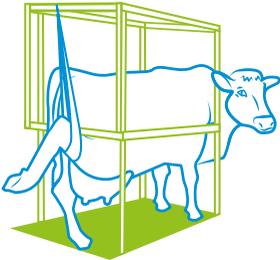
2



Good hoof shape, horn quality and digital cushion

A diagram of a cow's hoof and horn structure. A green checkmark is placed to the left of the hoof, indicating good quality.

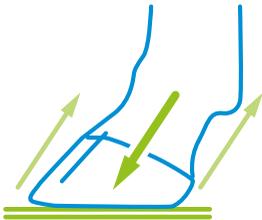
3



Early detection and prompt, effective treatment of lame cows

A cow is shown standing in a metal cage, with a blue line representing a leg or treatment being applied to its lower leg.

4



Low forces on the feet (good cow comfort and good cow flow)

A diagram of a cow's foot with three arrows indicating force: a green arrow pointing down and two yellow arrows pointing up and outwards, representing low forces on the feet.

How does it work?

- Working with your mentor, you will use the HFP risk assessment tool to work out what the most productive changes will be to reduce lameness on your farm
- Every farm is different and often there are many people on a farm who will influence lameness levels – everybody needs to be involved. Your mentor has been trained to guide you and your team so the changes you make will be effective
- Your mentor will help you find ways to measure and monitor improvements. You will be supported to ensure the changes work. If you wish, you may become involved in benchmarking with other farms so you can learn from the experience of others and share what works

The programme provides you with the materials you need, to:

- Recognise, treat and record lesions properly (the Hoof Care Field Guide)
- Mobility score effectively and ensure your staff can too
- Understand footbathing and make sure it works for your herd
- Cost out herd lameness and calculate a cost benefit for changes considered

Summary of the programme

Data review

- Herd lameness prevalence estimated using an independent **whole herd mobility score**
- The farm's '**Lameness Map**' is devised using a Participatory Epidemiology approach; analysis of available treatment and trimming records, plus discussion of which lesions are recognised most frequently
- A **cost benefit** potential is calculated

Risk assessment and action plan

- The HFP **Risk Assessment Tool** examines all the **environmental** and **managerial** impacts on lameness in the herd
- Interventions and changes are **prioritised** to those that will be most beneficial
- Results used to facilitate development of an **action plan**, agreed by the whole team

Follow up

- Ongoing **monitoring**, using regular independent mobility scoring, assesses the impact of changes on herd lameness and leads to a **cost-benefit analysis**
- **Support** is given through access to further **skills training** and **benchmarking** with other HFP farms
- Continual regular **review** of data and **targets** with periodic reassessment of risks

The aim of the programme is to help you make the necessary changes to reduce lameness and improve your business performance.



Mark Humphry

Manor Farm, working with Synergy Farm Health Vets, Dorset

“ The whole dairy team here at Manor Farm got involved and we now have a mobility contract on the dairy office wall with 15 action points, who is responsible for each action, by when and a progress column. Some of the actions we were able to implement straightaway and some are more long term. We are now all much more focused on lameness and we have already seen a 40 per cent reduction in cows with mobility score 2 and 3. We all helped draw up the plan so we feel we have ownership and a set of achievable targets ”

For more information on the Healthy Feet Programme please visit dairy.ahdb.org.uk/technical-services/healthy-feet-programme or email, healthyfeet@ahdb.org.uk

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