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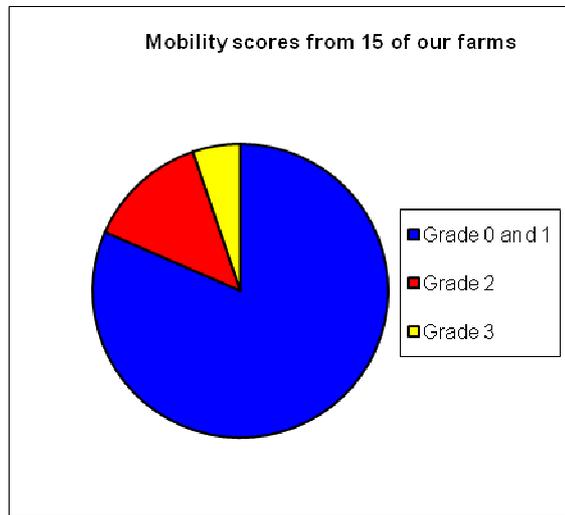
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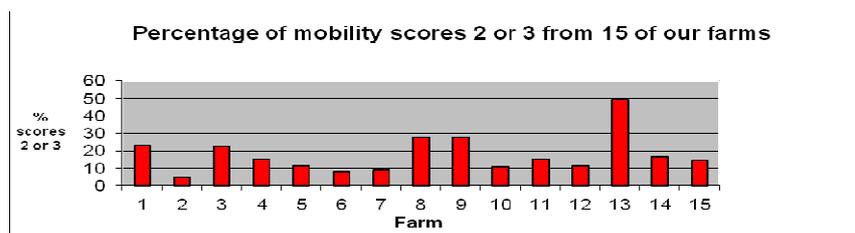
**Healthy Feet
Jay Tunstall**

Since the article in last month's newsletter, a few of our farmers have been asking about lameness prevention and started using our mobility scoring service. Mobility scoring involves watching the cows walk (usually as they come out of the parlour) and scoring them 0 – 3, (0 being a sound cow and 3 being a lame cow that is unable to keep up with the herd). If you would like your herd independently mobility scored, get in touch with any of the offices, or if you would like one of the vets to teach you how to mobility score just ask them next time they are on farm.

I've looked at the data from over 2,900 animals that have been scored on 15 farms to see where we are as a practice and to see where we can help. The pie chart shows that 81% of cows would not be classed as lame, with scores 0 or 1. However, 13% of cows scored 2, and 5% of cows were a score 3. Nationally, the best 25% of UK farms have 78 to 100% sound cows, meaning many of our herds are scoring well. However, nationally only 3.3% cows are at score 3, so at 5 % we are higher than average, suggesting room for improvement. Statistics suggest that these score 3s may struggle to go sound long term.



The graph below shows how different the situation can be from one farm to another. Some of our farms had just 5% of their herd lame, with scores 2 or 3, while others had 49% lame. The average was 18% score 2 or 3. This shows that there are some areas where we can help to reduce lameness in many herds.



Healthy Feet contd... Jay Tunstall

Mobility scoring has the immediate advantage of providing you with a list of which cow needs to have their feet picked up (the cows with scores 2 and 3) but there is also a longer term advantage in tracking progress.

Evidence has overwhelmingly shown that farms that take a zero tolerance approach to lameness suffer least from lameness problems. Once you have had your herd mobility scored you can use the results, alongside foot trimming records and observations, to investigate areas for improvement; routine mobility scoring can then monitor improvements.

DairyCo have had extremely successful results since introducing the Healthy Feet Programme, and so I've been training with them to qualify as a mobility mentor, Whether you're concerned about above average lameness, or if you want to take a pro-active approach to seek better performance, let us know. The Healthy Feet Programme reduced lameness prevalence by 20% (some farms by over 50%) on the 24 farms it was implemented on during its first year.

The Healthy Feet Programme involves a number of stages:

- Mobility scoring, and review of all available data by mentor
- Discussion and observation of current protocols, and farm walk with mentor
- Draw up 'mobility contract' – a plan of priorities to improve lameness with mentor
- Changes implemented on farm, followed by discussion and review with mentor



Nemotodirus Risk

Some of you may have seen an article in the Farmers Weekly this past month regarding the increased risk of Nemotodirus. Eggs that may have overwintered will now be reaching their optimum hatching temperature due to the warmer weather we have been having.

Lambs between 6 and 12 weeks of age on pastures grazed last year will be at particular risk. Clinical signs (profuse yellow green scour and ill thrift) usually appear about 2 weeks after ingestion and can have a significant impact on your lamb crop.

Whilst at any other time of the year we would advise submitting a sample for a faecal egg count in order to determine a personalised worming strategy, this disease strikes too quickly to wait for the results from the lab. The damage is caused by the sudden ingestion of immature worms **before** they develop into adults and start producing eggs. Instead, SCOPS recommendations state that if the lambs are currently grazing previously grazed pastures the decision to worm should be on a basis of risk assessment and veterinary advice.

