



Healthy Feet Project and Beyond



NETTLEBED
ESTATE

Merrimoles Farms

The Farm

- ▶ 1000 acres all organic since 2002




- ▶ Mixed farm



- ▶ 150 cow dairy herd



Lameness?

- ▶ Before 2007, was an on going problem
 - ▶ Cases treated as required
 - ▶ Inadequate footbaths, rarely used
 - ▶ No strategy
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First Thoughts?




- ▶ Interested in Healthy Feet Project?
- ▶ Initial scepticism
- ▶ How much work?
- ▶ How much will it cost?

Assessment

- ▶ Herd was locomotion scored
 - ▶ 47% of herd showed signs of lameness
 - ▶ 62 treated cases per year

 - ▶ Estimated cost £180/case

 - ▶ Estimated loss to farm £11,160 per year
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Recommendations

Accepted	Tried but rejected
Improve walking surfaces	More hosing and hand scraping
Improve foot bathing regime	Reduce standing time
Consider regular foot trimming	Set up fresh calving group
Improve treatment timing	Changes to scraping routine
Improve treatment facilities	
Improve diets	

Changes made

1. Improve walking surfaces



2. Introduce regular foot bathing regime

- ▶ Foot bath weekly
- ▶ Foot mats used with various 'approved' proprietary chemicals

3. Regular trimming

- ▶ Contractor used, 20 + cows at a time

4. Timely intervention

5. Improve diet, especially transition

6. Improve foot trimming facilities



Cost of changes made

	£
Cow tracks, gateways and trough areas	5,000
Concrete repairs	1,100
Rubber matting on collecting yard entrance	1,000
New Crush	2,400
New foot mats	500
	<u>10,000</u>
Simple write off over 8 years. Cost per year.	1,250

Foot care ongoing costs

Item	£/year
Foot bathing chemicals	550
Contract foot trimming	350
Woodchip top up for cow tracks	<u>800</u>
	1,700

Foot care total costs

	£/year
Capital cost per year and on going costs	2,950
Cost over 4 years of project so far	11,800

Cost v Benefit

Year End	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Locomotion Score % lame	47	26	12	7	11	
Number cases treated	62	55	53	45	25	
Estimated loss (@£180 per case) (£)	11,160	9,900	9,540	8,100	4,500	
Estimated saving (£) compared to 2007		2,700	1,620	3,060	6,660	£14,040
Cost over 4 years of project so far						£11,800

Conclusion, was it worthwhile?

- ▶ Many other benefits not costed
- ▶ Cows are happier & healthier
- ▶ Staff are happier



Advice!

- ▶ Do the easy things first
- ▶ But don't bury your head in the sand!
- ▶ Be patient
- ▶ Be persistent and consistent



Further Developments

- ▶ **New footbaths 2010**
Cost approx £1500
Using Peracetic Acid plus
Copper or Zinc Sulphate
- ▶ **More rubber matting?**
Parlour and exit areas
FISS funded?
- ▶ **Three way cross breeding**





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