



Survey results set to shape the future of foot health

The results of the 2024 Stride national dairy mobility survey provide a detailed picture of hoof health in the UK herd. So, armed with this information, what's the next step for this initiative – and producers?

TEXT PHIL EADES

Stride is a major new industry-wide not-for-profit initiative representing a broad range of companies involved in helping producers to improve foot health and mobility. It is committed to helping reduce the consequences of compromised mobility in herds, and improve productivity and reduce losses. The partners in the Stride initiative are Ceva, HerdVision, IVC Farm Vets, Neogen and Zinpro, and a number of industry organisations are also supporting the initiative.

The survey, which ran from February to April, was the first to be carried out with the intention of forming a clearer picture of mobility and foot health in the UK. It was designed to explore the issues faced on farm, the preventative and treatment measures used, as well as attitudes to foot health and mobility. More than 350 respondents completed the survey, with a combined total of 119,000 cows.

While the survey confirmed that most herds are focused on improving hoof health, and had a good understanding of the ways to reduce the consequences of lameness to their business, it also highlighted the opportunities that exist to improve still further.

Producers are employing a range of approaches and taking advice from numerous external experts including vets, foot trimmers and nutritionists. But there would be benefits from better delegation of responsibilities, as well as the adoption of robust protocols, clearer communication and, perhaps the most difficult of all, making mobility management a

priority and scheduling time for the activity.

Enclosed with this issue of CowManagement is a 20-page supplement, 'Latest insights into dairy cow mobility from the 2024 Stride Survey', which goes into the results in more detail and contains information and advice from the initiative's partners.

Free events

The outcomes of the survey will be used to inform the wider industry to communicate clear actions to help producers take steps to reduce lameness in their herds, and to mitigate the costs and consequences of lameness to their businesses, starting with a series of six free farm events in July (see panel opposite).

Hosted on-farm at locations across the country, the events will have a strong emphasis on management to prevent foot-health problems from occurring, with workshops by the Stride partners covering a range of topics. In addition, Lallemand Animal Nutrition's Tony Hall will shine a spotlight of the importance of managing your cows' time to achieve better mobility.

Poor mobility continues to be a major health and welfare challenge facing UK producers. It impacts herd fertility, productivity, profitability and sustainability, and lameness losses contribute to the environmental impact of dairying. During the next few years Stride's partners will be working across the industry to help improve cow mobility and hoof health to reduce these consequences. | Visit www.stridemobility.co.uk/survey to download a full copy of the Stride report.