


Policy Case-Study: Improve lameness in UK beef cattle

1. Description of policy change	<p>The panel are asked to score two scenarios.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current beef production (all systems) with current average lameness mobility scores 2 and 3 2. Beef production with 3% average lameness mobility scores 2 and 3
2. UK animal populations affected (species, systems)	<p>Beef cattle including animals in beef suckler breeding herds, fattening and finishing beef units of various types including dairy-bred and suckler-bred cattle, bull beef etc. Animals include calves, cows and bulls.</p>
3. Current different main systems of production for that species (for example, Defra view on the named systems which currently exist for laying hens)	<p> 2022-06-01 Cattle Housing Data...</p> <p>* Please contact the Report authors should the link to these slides not work.</p>
4. Proportion of the different systems in the UK at current time and likely post-policy	<p>See slide above</p>
5. Likely impacts foreseen as a result of the policy change	<p>Reduced lameness.</p> <p>Actions farmers may take to achieve low levels of lameness (not mandated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early detection and prompt effective treatment • Regular mobility scoring • Identifying lesions and monitoring horn conformation • Improving standing/ walking surfaces, such as field tracks, the collecting yard and at feed barriers • Improving lying areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading housing e.g. slurry, flooring, handling facilities, bedding etc • Improving the welfare of cattle at pasture e.g. tracks to fields, poaching • Appropriate use of footbaths • Routine foot trimming • Improved tracks • Reduce infection pressure • Gentle handling/good handling facilities e.g. reduce sharp corners • Good nutrition and monitoring body condition score • Appropriate housing for lame animals. e.g. moved to straw yard / hospital pen
6. Any linked recent policy changes (are there any other policy changes or policy directions which may also impact this same area?)	Small grants are available for items which help with lameness e.g. automated footbaths (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-fetf-2023/annex-4-fetf-2023-animal-health-and-welfare-eligible-items#cattle)
7. Legal basis for current systems (of the system(s) under consideration) - e.g. if policy is for a change in stocking density, a statement of current regulation around stocking density	There are no legal requirements around lameness specifically, beyond the general requirements of the Animal Welfare Act to avoid unnecessary suffering.
8. Animal 'lifecycle' information specific to the system(s) under consideration – e.g relevant information on common management practices for the system(s) under discussion	X
9. Any other available detail about the policy	Data regarding the prevalence of lameness in beef cattle in the UK is lacking. Tunstall et al (2021) report that farmers tend to significantly under-estimate levels of lameness because the vast majority of farmers do not inspect their beef cattle and do not mobility score. Tunstall et al (2021) report lameness of 8.3% in finishing cattle (range 2% to 21%) and 14.2% in suckler cows (range 0 to 43%) from previous unpublished research (Tunstall, 2020 PhD thesis). Pedersen (undated) reports slaughterhouse inspections of finished cattle by the University of Liverpool which found that at least 20% of animals must have been lame prior to slaughter. Most had bruising on their feet, 18% had white line disease and 75% of feet had slurry heal with severe cases making up 25%.

	<p>Tunstall, J., Mueller, K., Grove-White, D., Oultram, J. and Higgins, H. (2021) Lameness in beef cattle: a cross-sectional descriptive survey of on-farm practices and approaches. <i>Frontiers in Veterinary Science</i> Vol 8 Frontiers Lameness in Beef Cattle: A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Survey of On-Farm Practices and Approaches (frontiersin.org)</p> <p>Tunstall, Jay (2020) Lameness in beef cattle: establishing a knowledge base. Unpublished PhD thesis. November 2020. University of Liverpool.</p> <p>Pedersen, S (undated) Lameness in beef herds. Farming Connect. Lameness in Beef Herds Farming Connect (gov.wales)</p>
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