

OABP / Dairy Guelph Spring Meeting 2026

EDPET: Early Detection and Prompt Effective Treatment

Dr Sara Pedersen
RCVS Specialist in Cattle Health and Production

FARM DYNAMICS

1

Early Detection and Prompt Effective Treatment (EDPET)

Early detection

- Defining lameness

Prompt Effective Treatment

- What impact does a delay have

What difference can it make?



FARM DYNAMICS

2

Early Detection

FARM DYNAMICS

3

Mobility Scoring

Why? The Benefits

Individual animal

- Early identification and effective treatment

Herd Level

- Identify trends and patterns to monitor success of prevention and treatment measures
- Consistently benchmark herd performance
- Farm assurance

National level

- Benchmarking and monitoring change over time
- Monitoring the success of regional interventions e.g. Welsh HerdAdvance

But what does this rely on.....?



FARM DYNAMICS

4

Defining Lameness

- Success of EDPET all depends on definition of a lame cow
- Detected too late:
 - EDPET fails
 - Producer loses faith
- Need to forget about the herd % and look at each individual cow
- "Scoring for the cow and not your processor"



FARM DYNAMICS

5

Signs of lameness: Which are most useful?

- Limp: Uneven weight bearing; non-weight-bearing; uneven dew claw drop; uneven rhythm
- Arched spine
- Slower walking speed
- Frequent stopping
- Shortened strides
- Soft foot placement (tenderness)
- Not tracking up
- Head nod (rising on painful foot)
- Low head carriage
- Feet wide/narrow (abduction/adduction)
- Heel- or toe-first foot placement
- Difficulty turning/rising
- Foot shaking
- Knuckling
- Stiff gait
- Swinging leg
- Twisting foot placement
- Gait consistency/inconsistency



FARM DYNAMICS

6

Signs of lameness: Which are most useful?

1. Limp: Uneven weight bearing; non-weight-bearing; **uneven dew claw drop**; uneven rhythm
2. Arched spine
3. Slower walking speed
4. Frequent stopping
5. **Shortened strides**
6. **Soft foot placement** (tenderness)
7. Not tracking up
8. **Head nod** (rising on painful foot)
9. Low head carriage
10. Feet wide/narrow (abduction/adduction)
11. Heel- or toe-first foot placement
12. Difficulty turning/rising
13. Foot shaking
14. Knuckling
15. Stiff gait
16. Swinging leg
17. Twisting foot placement
18. Gait consistency/inconsistency

FARM DYNAMICS

7

Subtle Signs for Earlier Detection

- Asymmetry in movement of dew claws
 - Those on affected leg don't descend to the ground as much – 'stiffer'
- Asymmetry in stride duration
 - One leg swinging through quicker than the other
 - 'Slow' leg is uncomfortable
- Shorter strides or a 'choppy' gait

FARM DYNAMICS

8

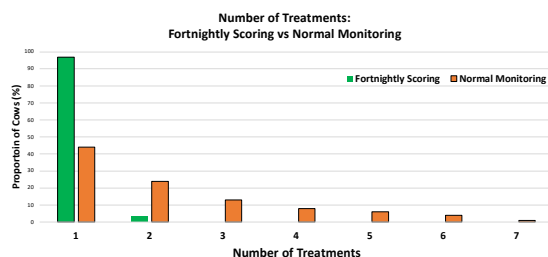
Prompt Effective Treatment

FARM DYNAMICS

9

The DCBT Early Detection Project

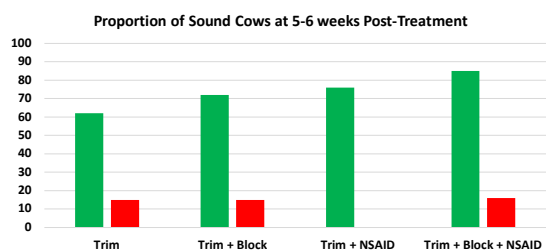
Results



FARM DYNAMICS

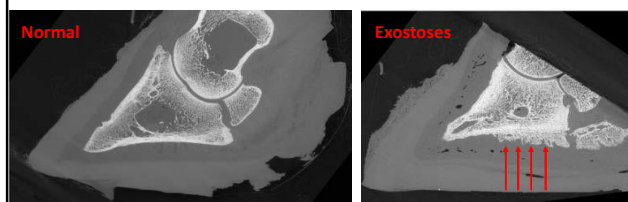
10

Claw Horn Lesions



FARM DYNAMICS

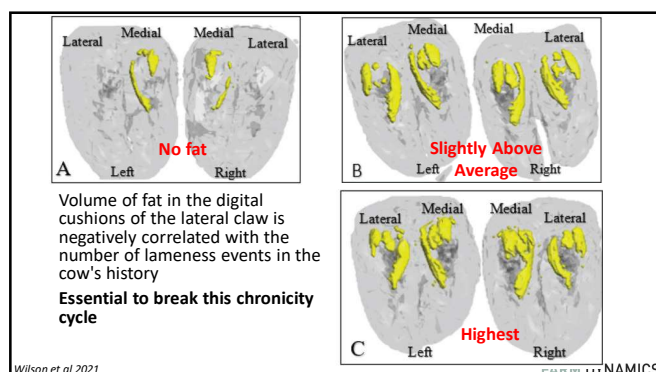
11



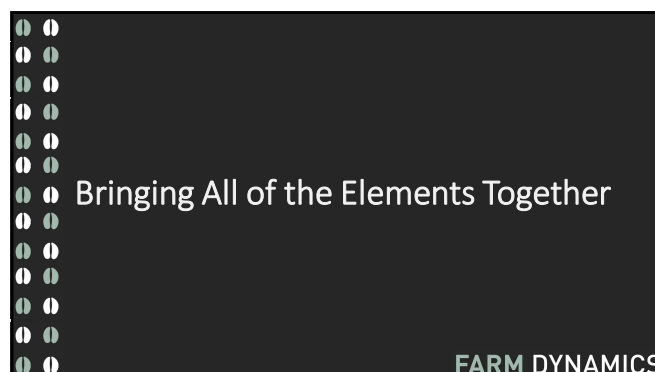
- Proposed that NSAIDs stop the formation of exostoses (Newsome et al. 2016)
- Cows with a history of lameness are more likely to go lame in the future... and the key drivers of lameness prevalence (Randall et al., 2018)

FARM DYNAMICS

12



13



14

Gold Standard Approach

Lameness Detection and Treatment

- Fortnightly mobility scoring (with daily surveillance)
- Treatment of new cases within 48 hours of mobility score (severely lame cows ASAP)
- Trim, block and NSAID for new cases of claw horn lesion
 - Adapt block choice to suit the cow
 - Recheck blocks after 5-6 weeks

FARM DYNAMICS

15

Mobility Scoring

Can we set targets?

- Score 3s: 0%
- Score 2s <10%
- First lactation: <5%

Set realistic targets that are achievable and steadily work towards them



FARM DYNAMICS

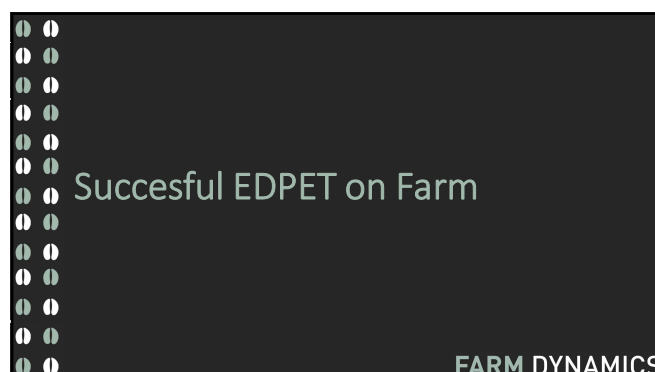
16

Trim/Inspection Protocols

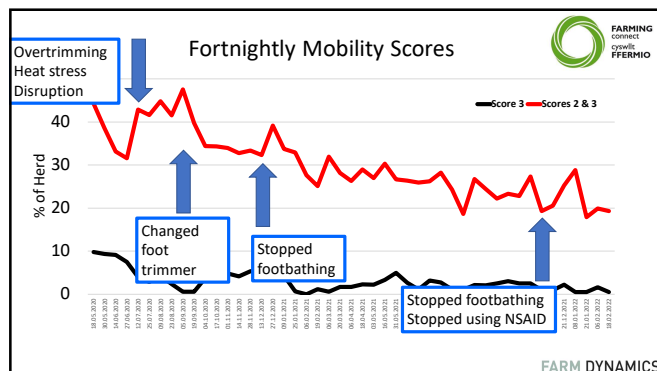
Routine Inspections: 8-10 weeks before calving 60-80 DIM - Block rechecks at 4-6 weeks - In calf heifers 8-10 weeks before calving	Treatment: DD: Licensed topical spray
From Mobility Scores: - New cases of lameness - Repeat cases - Chronic cases every 10-12 weeks - All severely lame cows (unless non-foot)	Claw horn lesions: - NSAID - Block (if possible)

FARM DYNAMICS

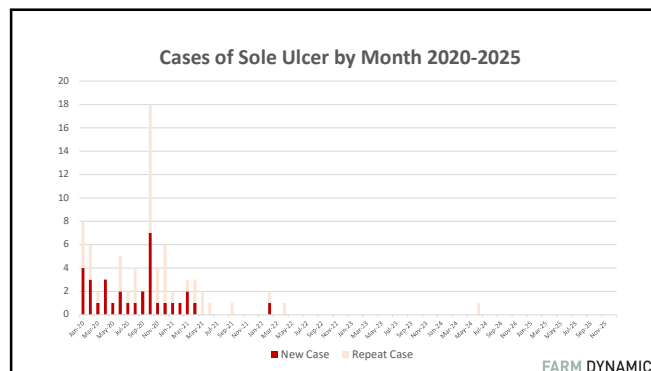
17



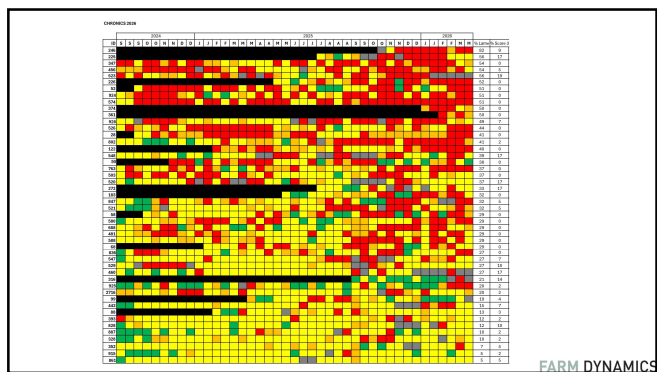
18



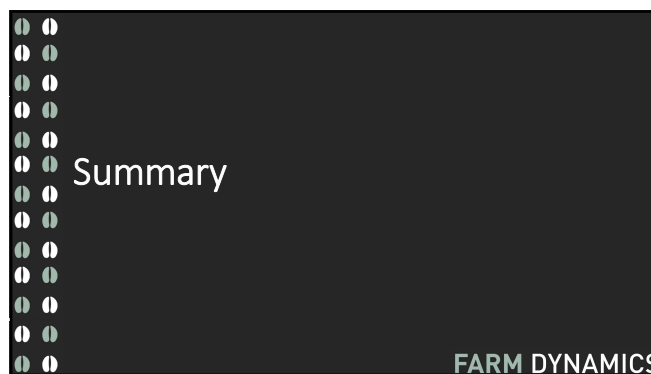
19



20



21

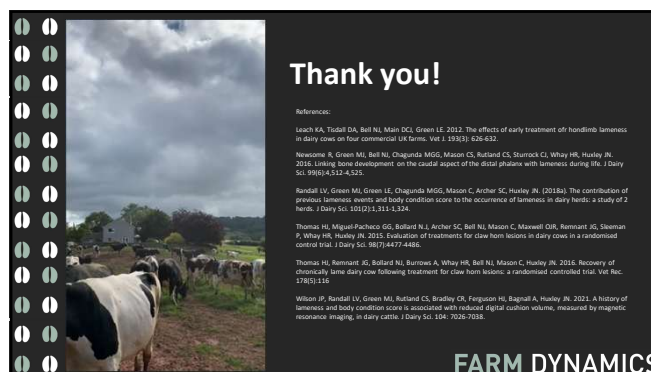


22

Making EDPET work

- Find a dedicated person in house or external who will consistently score regularly
- Focus on the individual not the herd
- Intervene with the correct protocols
- Use the data generated to monitor
 - Are we picking cows up at the right time?
 - Are we being sensitive enough?
 - What can we do to prevent lameness
- Regardless of the farm type, system, breed EDPET will be beneficial to all

23



24