

# TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

**Improving mobility is a complex challenge with numerous interactions including nutrition, genetics, housing, diagnostics, and actions to treat problems.**

With this in mind, clear allocation of responsibilities for managing hoof-health issues and having a relevant plan are vital to making sustained improvements in mobility.

The 2024 Stride National Mobility Survey highlighted that a wide range of people were seen to be responsible for the management of hoof health.

Quite often the role is allocated to an external contractor who may not be best placed to assess all the factors affecting mobility and ensure early identification and treatment of affected animals.

## HOW WELL IS MOBILITY MANAGED ON YOUR FARM?

Improving mobility is not an overnight fix and requires a holistic and sustained approach to deliver success. This begins with adopting a structured approach and our survey showed this is an area that could be improved on many farms. Everyone in the team, both staff on-farm and external advisers and specialists, will have responsibilities, but someone must be ultimately responsible for driving improvements in mobility.

Complete the checklist to see how big an opportunity there is to increase management focus in your herd to achieve better mobility and where improvements could be made.

	YES	NO
Is overall responsibility for managing mobility clearly allocated to someone in the team?		
Do they know their responsibilities and what is expected?		
Do all members of the team (internal and external) know who has responsibility for mobility?		
Do all members of the team (internal and external) know what is required of them in helping manage mobility?		
Do you have a clear plan for improving mobility, and has this been communicated to the team?		
Are full mobility and hoof-health records kept and used to set improvement benchmarks?		
Are there clearly understood targets for improving mobility?		
Are all staff trained to carry out their role in improving mobility?		
Have you set and communicated protocols for managing all aspects of mobility and foot health?		
Are there clearly understood ways to report mobility issues for attention?		
Has a budget been assigned to the mobility improvement plan?		
Have targets for improvement been set – are these: Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound?		

**Every question answered 'no' represents an opportunity to improve herd mobility management.**



# BENEFITS OF BETTER ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Allocating responsibility to a member of the on-farm team can make them feel empowered and enthused, particularly if someone with a keen interest in mobility is chosen
- ✓ Allocation of a budget could result in an improved return on investment
- ✓ Clear targets can increase engagement from all team members, delivering better results
- ✓ Good communication of progress can motivate the whole team
- ✓ Progress in improving mobility will be accelerated
- ✓ Emphasis on prevention rather than treatment can improve staff morale – no one likes dealing with bigger/chronic problems
- ✓ Preventing problems becoming too serious can help release time for other tasks
- ✓ Make time for constructive reviews of how the plan is working and, where required, make modifications to ensure continued progress

## HOW TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Having decided who will have overall responsibility for managing mobility and foot health, what is the best way to begin the process of reducing mobility issues and improving foot health?

### 1 YOU NEED A PLAN

What are the achievable targets you will set out to achieve? Are they SMART?

What rate of improvement are you looking for and what will be the financial benefit of achieving it?

Estimating the annual cost of lameness issues and how much this can realistically be reduced, can help producers to make informed budget-setting decisions to both manage issues and invest in improvement.

What is in the plan and how will it be communicated?

How will it be communicated to the team to ensure 'buy-in' and commitment. It must be about improvement, and avoid creating a blame culture.

### 2 WHAT DIAGNOSTICS WILL BE USED?

How will you assess current performance to identify the specific causes of poor mobility to help determine the actions to take? Are mobility scores available for review?

What records will be kept and shared? Farm records? Foot-trimmer records? Vet records?

### 3 ENSURE STAFF ARE APPROPRIATELY TRAINED

All staff need to be trained in their element of the plan. This may include mobility scoring, foot trimming or something practical like footbath management.

### 4 HOW WILL YOU MONITOR PROGRESS AND SHARE RESULTS

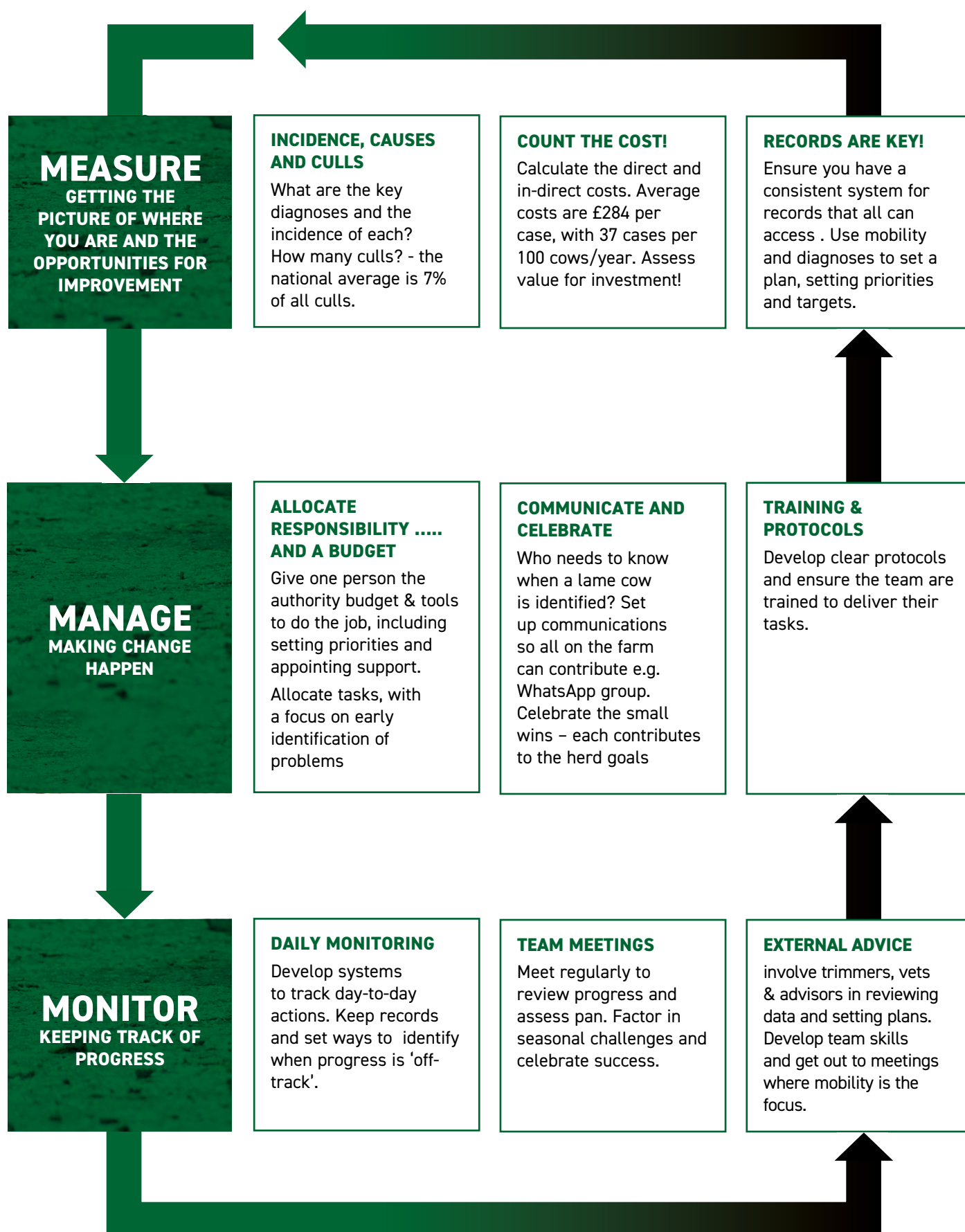
What are your KPIs and how will you communicate these?





# THE MODEL TO IMPROVE MOBILITY

Adopting a structured approach of Measure: Manage: Monitor can provide the framework to achieve a sustained improvement in mobility and foot health. The diagram shows some of the factors to consider and include:



# CONCLUSION

## Improving mobility brings significant benefits.

It will reduce costs and increase productivity. It will help reduce culling rates. It will improve animal welfare and can motivate the farm team. Improving mobility should be a priority on all farms – improving on current levels is achievable for all herds.

Taking a more structured approach to managing mobility could be the one single action which will initiate a sustained reduction in foot health issues, reducing the negative financial impact on the farm business.

The starting point must be clear allocation of responsibilities and support for the person given the opportunity to improve mobility. Giving them the authority and budget to make decisions will help increase the focus

on mobility and can help motivate the whole team to take a more proactive approach. This in turn will help improve the ROI on investment in mobility improvements.

Don't hide mobility issues – it's a challenging problem for all herds. Make cow lameness a topic for regular discussion and encourage everyone to bring forward ideas and to take pride in identifying problems and delivering improvements.

Is it time to rethink how you manage mobility on your farm?



## TOP TIPS

- 1** Assign responsibility for management of mobility and foot health to a member of the on-farm team and ensure all farm team members and external advisors know their roles in improving mobility
- 2** Develop a clear plan for improving mobility which addresses the key issues. Communicate the plan to all involved and celebrate progress
- 3** Implement a process of measure: manage: monitor to deliver sustained improvements in mobility and foot health.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Kingshay**

Providing Evidence-Based Livestock Solutions



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## Our website



In association with **cowmanagement**

[www.stridemobility.co.uk](http://www.stridemobility.co.uk)