0:00:09.040,0:00:13.840

Hello and welcome. You're listening to

0:00:11.040,0:00:15.839

episode 38 of Ear to the Ground,

0:00:13.840,0:00:17.440

the agricultural podcast brought to you

0:00:15.839,0:00:19.359

by Farming Connect.

0:00:17.440,0:00:21.520

This week we've got two very

0:00:19.359,0:00:23.920

impressive guests lined up for you.

0:00:21.520,0:00:25.199

One of them is a dairy farmer from Usk,

0:00:23.920,0:00:27.599

and the other is a farm

0:00:25.199,0:00:28.880

animal vet. Together, with the support

0:00:27.599,0:00:30.400

of Farming Connect,

0:00:28.880,0:00:32.320

they've been working on a project to

0:00:30.400,0:00:34.719

tackle foot health in cattle.

0:00:32.320,0:00:35.840

In just a year, lameness levels have

0:00:34.719,0:00:39.360

halved on the farm,

0:00:35.840,0:00:40.239

equating to a cost saving of over £25,000

0:00:39.360,0:00:41.920

a year,

0:00:40.239,0:00:43.360

a figure which was picked up in the

0:00:41.920,0:00:45.280

farming press recently.

0:00:43.360,0:00:47.600

Earlier this week, I had the

0:00:45.280,0:00:48.320

opportunity to discover how they managed

0:00:47.600,0:00:50.239

to do it.

0:00:48.320,0:00:53.920

It's a really practical and eye-opening

0:00:50.239,0:00:56.480

podcast and I hope you enjoy it.

0:00:53.920,0:00:58.879

My name is Sara Pederson and I'm a farm

0:00:56.480,0:01:01.280

animal vet. I've been working

0:00:58.879,0:01:03.600

in the dairy sector for nearly

0:01:01.280,0:01:05.519

16 years, but over the

0:01:03.600,0:01:08.320

last seven years,

0:01:05.519,0:01:09.280

I've been focusing more on feet.

0:01:08.320,0:01:12.400

0:01:09.280,0:01:15.200

Now, my job involves talking about feet,

0:01:12.400,0:01:17.439

trimming feet, treating feet and working

0:01:15.200,0:01:18.479

with farmers and companies to help reduce

0:01:17.439,0:01:21.600

lameness

0:01:18.479,0:01:23.360

across the UK and further afield.

0:01:21.600,0:01:25.040

Well, thank you Sara. One of those

0:01:23.360,0:01:27.280

farmers that you've been working with is

0:01:25.040,0:01:29.280

Russell Morgan. Russell, please

0:01:27.280,0:01:32.320

introduce yourself.

0:01:29.280,0:01:35.119

I'm Russell Morgan. We have a

0:01:32.320,0:01:36.400

family farm in Monmouthshire, near Usk.

0:01:35.119,0:01:40.240

We

0:01:36.400,0:01:42.159

milk 180 cows, and we are hoping to expand that

0:01:40.240,0:01:44.720

on a farm that's been in the family

0:01:42.159,0:01:47.040

since the 1940s.

0:01:44.720,0:01:48.640

Welcome Sara and Russell.

0:01:47.040,0:01:50.159

It's excellent to have you both

0:01:48.640,0:01:51.920

on this podcast and we're grateful that

0:01:50.159,0:01:53.040

you are able to spare some time to join us and

0:01:51.920,0:01:56.079

talk about

0:01:53.040,0:01:56.880

tackling lameness in dairy cattle. I

0:01:56.079,0:01:58.960

was really struck

0:01:56.880,0:02:01.200

by a statistic I read recently.

0:01:58.960,0:02:02.799

Approximately, one in three cows in Wales

0:02:01.200,0:02:04.159

is lame at any one time.

0:02:02.799,0:02:06.560

It's far more prevalent than I

0:02:04.159,0:02:08.560

thought, but despite its prevalence,

0:02:06.560,0:02:10.319

there are positive steps farmers can

0:02:08.560,0:02:11.920

take to improve lameness within their

0:02:10.319,0:02:14.239

herds. We'll come on to those

0:02:11.920,0:02:15.440

in just a moment, but first, Russell,

0:02:14.239,0:02:17.120

0:02:15.440,0:02:18.319

can you tell us a bit more about Graig

0:02:17.120,0:02:19.920

Olway farm? I know it's been in the

0:02:18.319,0:02:22.080

family since the 1940s.

0:02:19.920,0:02:24.239

Tell us a bit more about the dairy

0:02:22.080,0:02:27.840

enterprise that you run there.

0:02:24.239,0:02:32.160

We're using three Lely

0:02:27.840,0:02:34.400

robots which were installed in 2013.

0:02:32.160,0:02:37.680

It was a turning point back

0:02:34.400,0:02:40.000

then. We were

0:02:37.680,0:02:42.480

cutting cow numbers back with

0:02:40.000,0:02:46.239

the intention of going out of milk,

0:02:42.480,0:02:48.080

but I saw the light at the end of it

0:02:46.239,0:02:50.480

and decided, no we need to keep going

0:02:48.080,0:02:52.080

with this,

0:02:50.480,0:02:53.599

and we installed the robots, and we haven't

0:02:52.080,0:02:56.480

looked back since.

0:02:53.599,0:02:57.840

Gradually, over the years, it's been a

0:02:56.480,0:03:01.120

significant

0:02:57.840,0:03:01.840

effort on all parts of the team

0:03:01.120,0:03:03.440

to

0:03:01.840,0:03:04.879

improve the health, the welfare,

0:03:03.440,0:03:06.080

0:03:04.879,0:03:08.879

nutrition

0:03:06.080,0:03:10.800

and get the cows to where we want them

0:03:08.879,0:03:13.599

to be, which is at the top of their game.

0:03:10.800,0:03:15.440

Then,

0:03:13.599,0:03:16.480

lameness was probably the biggest part

0:03:15.440,0:03:20.080

of that

0:03:16.480,0:03:22.879

issue, and we had the opportunity,

0:03:20.080,0:03:23.920

18 months ago, to work with Sara. We'd

0:03:22.879,0:03:26.959

had various

0:03:23.920,0:03:29.519

contact with her previous to that

0:03:26.959,0:03:31.680

with the demonstration network.

0:03:29.519,0:03:34.799

We're a family farm

0:03:31.680,0:03:36.480

and our aim in it all is purely

0:03:34.799,0:03:38.239

health and welfare for the animals.

0:03:36.480,0:03:40.239

If the animals are happy animals and

0:03:38.239,0:03:40.799

healthy they're going to work well for

0:03:40.239,0:03:43.280

you

0:03:40.799,0:03:44.000

and make life easier and a nicer place

0:03:43.280,0:03:45.760

to work in.

0:03:44.000,0:03:47.200

It also adds to the bottom line.

0:03:45.760,0:03:49.599

We'll come on to some

0:03:47.200,0:03:51.040

quite striking figures that's been

0:03:49.599,0:03:52.159

reported in the farming press

0:03:51.040,0:03:53.760

recently and

0:03:52.159,0:03:55.280

the excellent progress that you've made

0:03:53.760,0:03:56.560

Russell, but picking up

0:03:55.280,0:03:58.720

on the fact that you're a Farming

0:03:56.560,0:04:00.959

Connect demonstration farm,

0:03:58.720,0:04:02.560

what made you want to become

0:04:00.959,0:04:03.920

one of the sites in the

0:04:02.560,0:04:06.400

Farming Connect demonstration farm

0:04:03.920,0:04:08.319

network? We've done a few little bits and

0:04:06.400,0:04:11.760

pieces with Farming Connect with

0:04:08.319,0:04:15.120

on-farm meetings, be it grassland

0:04:11.760,0:04:16.720

based meetings or livestock or maize

0:04:15.120,0:04:18.720

with Farming Connect

0:04:16.720,0:04:21.759

in the past,

0:04:18.720,0:04:24.800

and we were approached

0:04:21.759,0:04:26.720

to be a demonstration farm. I had

0:04:24.800,0:04:28.400

plenty of ideas in my mind of things

0:04:26.720,0:04:30.880

that we could do as projects.

0:04:28.400,0:04:32.240

I think Sara was one of the first

0:04:30.880,0:04:35.040

people

0:04:32.240,0:04:36.800

involved with it because that was our

0:04:35.040,0:04:40.000

number one priority i.e. the

0:04:36.800,0:04:42.160

lameness and mobility of the cows.

0:04:40.000,0:04:43.600

Having looked back, it was a

0:04:42.160,0:04:45.280

good opportunity,

0:04:43.600,0:04:47.759

it was a nice opportunity to be able to

0:04:45.280,0:04:50.800

be involved with some of the best people

0:04:47.759,0:04:54.080

in the industry as far as

0:04:50.800,0:04:55.919

the issues that I wanted to address.

0:04:54.080,0:04:58.000

It was an opportunity that I couldn't

0:04:55.919,0:04:59.680

turn down. That's very good

0:04:58.000,0:05:01.360

to hear. Sara,

0:04:59.680,0:05:02.639

if I can refer back to that statistic I

0:05:01.360,0:05:04.160

shared right at the beginning, one in

0:05:02.639,0:05:04.639

three cows in Wales are lame at any one

0:05:04.160,0:05:07.759

time,

0:05:04.639,0:05:08.240

does that surprise you? Unfortunately

0:05:07.759,0:05:11.680

it doesn’t.

0:05:08.240,0:05:12.800

Lameness has been a huge challenge

0:05:11.680,0:05:16.400

within the industry

0:05:12.800,0:05:18.080

and we use that figure based on

0:05:16.400,0:05:19.520

the research that we've got from

0:05:18.080,0:05:21.919

studies that have been done

0:05:19.520,0:05:23.680

across the UK - looking at farms and

0:05:21.919,0:05:26.080

looking at the data and the proportion

0:05:23.680,0:05:28.080

of cows that are lame on farms.

0:05:26.080,0:05:29.919

We don't actually have a true figure for

0:05:28.080,0:05:31.840

Wales because we haven't mobility

0:05:29.919,0:05:33.919

scored every cow in Wales.

0:05:31.840,0:05:35.840

We can extrapolate from the research and

0:05:33.919,0:05:38.240

and that does suggest that one in three

0:05:35.840,0:05:39.440

cows are likely to be lame. It's

0:05:38.240,0:05:42.880

certainly what I see

0:05:39.440,0:05:44.720

on-farm as well, and I think that

0:05:42.880,0:05:46.160

one of the biggest challenges that we

0:05:44.720,0:05:48.479

have is

0:05:46.160,0:05:50.639

defining a lame cow.

0:05:48.479,0:05:52.000

Whenever I talk to farmers about

0:05:50.639,0:05:54.080

the proportion of cows that they have

0:05:52.000,0:05:56.160

lame on-farm they always say ‘well, your

0:05:54.080,0:05:57.280

lame is different to my lame’. I think

0:05:56.160,0:06:00.479

that's perhaps

0:05:57.280,0:06:03.520

one of the challenges that we have,

0:06:00.479,0:06:06.639

deciding on the definition of lame.

0:06:03.520,0:06:07.360

I think that Russell would agree

0:06:06.639,0:06:09.840

here, but

0:06:07.360,0:06:10.800

it's not just the obvious ones

0:06:09.840,0:06:12.240

that we need to

0:06:10.800,0:06:14.319

look for when we're talking

0:06:12.240,0:06:16.160

about lameness. It's those cows that

0:06:14.319,0:06:17.680

we might be tempted to give the benefit

0:06:16.160,0:06:19.600

of the doubt and say ‘well, actually

0:06:17.680,0:06:21.120

they're not quite walking right’. If a cow

0:06:19.600,0:06:23.280

isn't walking right, she's not productive

0:06:21.120,0:06:25.919

and we need to do something about it.

0:06:23.280,0:06:27.759

The key is to try and catch lameness

0:06:25.919,0:06:29.680

at the very early stages before it

0:06:27.759,0:06:31.440

becomes a real problem? Yes,

0:06:29.680,0:06:32.960

absolutely, and again I'll point to the

0:06:31.440,0:06:34.720

research which shows that the

0:06:32.960,0:06:37.120

earlier we detect a lame cow,

0:06:34.720,0:06:38.080

the better in terms of her chances of

0:06:37.120,0:06:40.160

recovery.

0:06:38.080,0:06:41.759

We have very good research

0:06:40.160,0:06:42.720

which shows that once the cow becomes lame

0:06:41.759,0:06:45.280

she's going to go lame

0:06:42.720,0:06:47.520

again and again and again and actually,

0:06:45.280,0:06:48.880

the majority of the lameness on farm

0:06:47.520,0:06:50.880

is actually historical.

0:06:48.880,0:06:52.400

It's been driven by previous

0:06:50.880,0:06:54.160

lameness. This is certainly what we

0:06:52.400,0:06:56.960

found at Graig Olway as well.

0:06:54.160,0:06:59.680

The majority of the lameness

0:06:56.960,0:07:01.680

that was contributing to that 40%

0:06:59.680,0:07:03.360

was

0:07:01.680,0:07:05.120

actually old problems.

0:07:03.360,0:07:06.960

What we need to do is almost draw a

0:07:05.120,0:07:08.960

line in the sand. We

0:07:06.960,0:07:10.400

need to manage those cows and we need to

0:07:08.960,0:07:11.599

manage them out of the herd at some

0:07:10.400,0:07:13.599

point in the future,

0:07:11.599,0:07:15.039

but also, we need to make sure that we

0:07:13.599,0:07:17.199

prevent new cases,

0:07:15.039,0:07:19.360

but crucially, detect lameness

0:07:17.199,0:07:21.120

at the very early stage.

0:07:19.360,0:07:23.199

That is one of the things

0:07:21.120,0:07:26.240

that has driven

0:07:23.199,0:07:28.800

the success at Russell's farm

0:07:26.240,0:07:30.560

because the early detection and the

0:07:28.800,0:07:32.160

treatment of those early cases has been

0:07:30.560,0:07:34.560

very crucial

0:07:32.160,0:07:37.120

and fundamental to the

0:07:34.560,0:07:38.720

changes that we've seen on the farm.

0:07:37.120,0:07:40.479

Russell, if I can bring you back in

0:07:38.720,0:07:42.240

there, perhaps you can share with us the

0:07:40.479,0:07:43.680

extent of the problem that you had, I

0:07:42.240,0:07:44.000

know you've been very open, and Sara

0:07:43.680,0:07:46.879

mentioned

0:07:44.000,0:07:48.160

that 40% of the herd was lame. Please explain a little

0:07:46.879,0:07:50.639

more about the challenges you were

0:07:48.160,0:07:52.080

facing with lameness in the herd?

0:07:50.639,0:07:53.840

It was one of the biggest things. It was

0:07:52.080,0:07:55.280

slowing cows down because we're

0:07:53.840,0:07:56.960

robotically milking.

0:07:55.280,0:07:59.440

The cows has free access to the

0:07:56.960,0:08:00.720

robots and

0:07:59.440,0:08:02.479

we were finding that they weren't

0:08:00.720,0:08:04.879

visiting, they weren't moving around the shed as

0:08:02.479,0:08:08.160

easily as they should be.

0:08:04.879,0:08:09.599

They weren't getting out. They

0:08:08.160,0:08:10.879

were going to food, they were going to

0:08:09.599,0:08:12.240

water but

0:08:10.879,0:08:14.400

they were doing the very minimum.

0:08:12.240,0:08:16.160

Then, we were finding we were losing

0:08:14.400,0:08:18.720

visits to the robots

0:08:16.160,0:08:20.639

which is where it all surrounds. And then

0:08:18.720,0:08:23.680

if you've got cows that are

0:08:20.639,0:08:25.120

in heat, they're not showing decent signs

0:08:23.680,0:08:27.520

of heat,

0:08:25.120,0:08:28.800

even if they're mildly lame. As Sara

0:08:27.520,0:08:32.080

mentioned,

0:08:28.800,0:08:34.000

it's the early, the subtle cases of

0:08:32.080,0:08:36.719

lameness that you've got to detect.

0:08:34.000,0:08:37.680

Catch them, treat them

0:08:36.719,0:08:40.959

0:08:37.680,0:08:44.240

before they become your

0:08:40.959,0:08:48.240

typical lame cow that's

0:08:44.240,0:08:51.440

hobbling around the shed, looks awful

0:08:48.240,0:08:53.680

and stopping those

0:08:51.440,0:08:57.040

0:08:53.680,0:08:59.920

chronically affected cows

0:08:57.040,0:09:01.440

at an early stage is crucial. Our herd is a

0:08:59.920,0:09:02.640

different herd now to what it was 12

0:09:01.440,0:09:05.120

months ago.

0:09:02.640,0:09:07.120

0:09:05.120,0:09:08.800

0:09:07.120,0:09:09.839

They are now moving

0:09:08.800,0:09:11.920

around the shed, they're a lot more

0:09:09.839,0:09:14.480

comfortable and a lot happier.

0:09:11.920,0:09:15.760

We've done various other things.

0:09:14.480,0:09:18.880

It's not just the

0:09:15.760,0:09:22.080

treatment of lame cows but

0:09:18.880,0:09:25.680

that's the critical part and I

0:09:22.080,0:09:27.360

wish I got involved earlier. Sara, I

0:09:25.680,0:09:29.680

know you've spent quite a bit of time

0:09:27.360,0:09:31.440

calculating the cost of lameness to the

0:09:29.680,0:09:33.600

business and I think I'm right in saying

0:09:31.440,0:09:35.360

that it was in excess of £50,000 pounds.

0:09:33.600,0:09:37.360

It had various

0:09:35.360,0:09:38.959

knock-on effects, almost

0:09:37.360,0:09:40.959

hidden costs that you wouldn't

0:09:38.959,0:09:43.120

otherwise notice, indirect costs on the

0:09:40.959,0:09:44.480

business. Talk us through how you calculated

0:09:43.120,0:09:46.240

that staggering figure

0:09:44.480,0:09:47.760

of lameness, costing the business £50,000/year?

0:09:46.240,0:09:49.360

You're

0:09:47.760,0:09:50.880

absolutely right, a lot of these costs

0:09:49.360,0:09:53.680

are hidden and actually, when I

0:09:50.880,0:09:54.959

discuss costings with farmers,

0:09:53.680,0:09:56.800

typically

0:09:54.959,0:09:58.720

cost of lameness is seen as the cost of

0:09:56.800,0:09:59.279

a block or the cost of pain relief or

0:09:58.720,0:10:01.120

your time

0:09:59.279,0:10:02.959

treating the animal in the crush, but

0:10:01.120,0:10:04.640

there are huge knock-on effects in terms

0:10:02.959,0:10:07.279

of fertility and milk yield.

0:10:04.640,0:10:07.760

Culling is a massive effect of lameness

0:10:07.279,0:10:09.680

but

0:10:07.760,0:10:11.600

not necessarily a common one because

0:10:09.680,0:10:13.600

that cow might not be culled because

0:10:11.600,0:10:15.440

of lameness but because of

0:10:13.600,0:10:17.519

infertility which is

0:10:15.440,0:10:20.320

linked to lameness.

0:10:17.519,0:10:22.160

The way that we calculated the

0:10:20.320,0:10:22.720

figures at Russell’s was to use some of

0:10:22.160,0:10:25.839

the

0:10:22.720,0:10:27.680

new AHDB costings that are based on

0:10:25.839,0:10:29.279

a proportion of cows that we have as a

0:10:27.680,0:10:31.680

score two, which is lame,

0:10:29.279,0:10:32.880

and a score three, which is very lame. A

0:10:31.680,0:10:34.880

score two cow

0:10:32.880,0:10:36.320

is going to cost you £1.50 for

0:10:34.880,0:10:38.320

every day that she's lame,

0:10:36.320,0:10:40.320

and a score three cow will cost you

0:10:38.320,0:10:42.320

£4.50/day.

0:10:40.320,0:10:44.399

We simply use the proportion of the

0:10:42.320,0:10:46.560

cows who have scored a two and scored a three in the herd

0:10:44.399,0:10:48.160

to come up with the cost of lameness on

0:10:46.560,0:10:49.839

that day for that score.

0:10:48.160,0:10:52.079

Over time, the score will

0:10:49.839,0:10:54.959

decrease and we can then calculate

0:10:52.079,0:10:57.279

the 12 months costings.

0:10:54.959,0:11:00.720

That's how we managed to

0:10:57.279,0:11:02.800

save around £25,000. Originally,

0:11:00.720,0:11:04.320

with that level of 40%,

0:11:02.800,0:11:05.360

we'll talk about this

0:11:04.320,0:11:06.959

later, but

0:11:05.360,0:11:08.880

when we started the project, things got

0:11:06.959,0:11:11.440

a little bit worse to begin with

0:11:08.880,0:11:11.920

with 50% of cows suffering from lameness

0:11:11.440,0:11:14.800

last summer.

0:11:11.920,0:11:16.959

At that point, the

0:11:14.800,0:11:17.760

lameness was costing £50,000/year.

0:11:16.959,0:11:19.360

0:11:17.760,0:11:22.000

Now, we've brought that right

0:11:19.360,0:11:24.560

down resulting in a cost saving of £25,000.

0:11:22.000,0:11:25.440

That will continue to decrease

0:11:24.560,0:11:27.120

as we

0:11:25.440,0:11:28.959

progress and keep reducing the

0:11:27.120,0:11:30.480

lameness on the farm.

0:11:28.959,0:11:32.560

That figure really caught the

0:11:30.480,0:11:32.880

headlines in a recent article published

0:11:32.560,0:11:34.959

by

0:11:32.880,0:11:36.640

the Farmer's Guardian. Clearly, there’s

0:11:34.959,0:11:37.200

a lot of industry interest in what's

0:11:36.640,0:11:38.399

happening and

0:11:37.200,0:11:40.560

all the great work that's been done at

0:11:38.399,0:11:42.959

Graig Olway farm. Sara,

0:11:40.560,0:11:43.680

you mentioned mobility scoring there and

0:11:42.959,0:11:46.880

essentially,

0:11:43.680,0:11:49.360

a score of zero is good and three is bad.

0:11:46.880,0:11:51.200

Talk us through the various levels and

0:11:49.360,0:11:52.720

how you have to adjust your

0:11:51.200,0:11:55.120

treatment depending on the score of

0:11:52.720,0:11:56.240

the cow. We use the (0-3)

0:11:55.120,0:11:58.000

AHDB

0:11:56.240,0:11:59.279

system whereas a score of zero would be

0:11:58.000,0:12:02.160

your normal

0:11:59.279,0:12:03.839

walking cow. I often think of these as

0:12:02.160,0:12:05.440

our heifers, the heifers that have got

0:12:03.839,0:12:07.120

over calving. They're very sound on

0:12:05.440,0:12:08.399

their feet, very confident and

0:12:07.120,0:12:10.399

striding out.

0:12:08.399,0:12:12.399

Then, a score one cow,

0:12:10.399,0:12:13.680

which is not lame, would not walk

0:12:12.399,0:12:16.800

perfectly.

0:12:13.680,0:12:18.639

The score two cows are at the point where we

0:12:16.800,0:12:20.079

need to start intervening. That

0:12:18.639,0:12:22.560

would be your lame cow.

0:12:20.079,0:12:24.399

You can notice a foot that she's not

0:12:22.560,0:12:26.399

quite confident walking on, she might

0:12:24.399,0:12:28.160

have a slightly shortened stride

0:12:26.399,0:12:29.440

and she might have an obvious limp.

0:12:28.160,0:12:31.360

That's the key here,

0:12:29.440,0:12:32.480

all score two cows don't

0:12:31.360,0:12:34.320

look the same.

0:12:32.480,0:12:36.000

Like Russell said, we have subtle

0:12:34.320,0:12:37.200

lameness and then we have cows that are

0:12:36.000,0:12:39.040

obviously lame.

0:12:37.200,0:12:41.120

We really need to detect

0:12:39.040,0:12:42.800

those cows at that early stage

0:12:41.120,0:12:44.240

because they could escalate and

0:12:42.800,0:12:45.920

become worse which could result in a

0:12:44.240,0:12:47.200

score of three. Our score three

0:12:45.920,0:12:50.560

cows are those who have

0:12:47.200,0:12:52.320

classic arched back, very slow

0:12:50.560,0:12:54.720

and avoiding putting weight on the

0:12:52.320,0:12:57.360

affected leg or legs.

0:12:54.720,0:12:59.519

We have this scale and with each

0:12:57.360,0:13:01.440

category there is this range

0:12:59.519,0:13:03.120

where you pitch your difference

0:13:01.440,0:13:05.360

between score one

0:13:03.120,0:13:07.279

and score two, that's between our

0:13:05.360,0:13:08.240

essentially non-lame cows and our

0:13:07.279,0:13:11.600

lame cows.

0:13:08.240,0:13:14.000

If we

0:13:11.600,0:13:15.360

try to give the cows a

0:13:14.000,0:13:17.440

benefit of the doubt,

0:13:15.360,0:13:19.120

if we're not quite sure and we can

0:13:17.440,0:13:20.560

see a cow's not quite walking right, but

0:13:19.120,0:13:22.399

we think ‘oh you know, we'll leave her,

0:13:20.560,0:13:25.200

we'll give her the benefit of the doubt’,

0:13:22.399,0:13:25.920

what happens is the problem

0:13:25.200,0:13:28.800

progresses.

0:13:25.920,0:13:29.519

She gets worse and will become an

0:13:28.800,0:13:31.839

0:13:29.519,0:13:34.160

obvious score two cow. We've missed the

0:13:31.839,0:13:35.680

boat. The cow’s chances of getting better are

0:13:34.160,0:13:37.920

much reduced.

0:13:35.680,0:13:39.360

When scoring, I always say that

0:13:37.920,0:13:41.199

we've got to look at it from the

0:13:39.360,0:13:43.760

cow’s perspective.

0:13:41.199,0:13:45.680

Russell’s partner,

0:13:43.760,0:13:46.880

Sarah is absolutely

0:13:45.680,0:13:48.959

excellent at

0:13:46.880,0:13:50.560

picking up those really subtle

0:13:48.959,0:13:52.480

signs of lameness.

0:13:50.560,0:13:54.720

We're not talking about an obvious limp.

0:13:52.480,0:13:57.120

We're talking about

0:13:54.720,0:13:58.560

not wanting to put the weight

0:13:57.120,0:14:00.480

fully through the leg,

0:13:58.560,0:14:02.240

looking at the dew claws. Are those

0:14:00.480,0:14:03.760

dew claws on the back of the foot going

0:14:02.240,0:14:05.120

all the way down to the ground?

0:14:03.760,0:14:07.120

If they're not, there is some

0:14:05.120,0:14:08.800

pain there. We've got to remember that

0:14:07.120,0:14:11.199

cows are very stoical. They

0:14:08.800,0:14:13.120

don't want to show any signs of pain.

0:14:11.199,0:14:15.120

If you think back to when they

0:14:13.120,0:14:17.120

evolved on the plains of Africa,

0:14:15.120,0:14:18.399

they were prey animals. They didn't

0:14:17.120,0:14:20.720

want to show signs of prey because

0:14:18.399,0:14:23.120

they'd be the lion's lunch the next day.

0:14:20.720,0:14:23.760

When a cow is starting to show signs

0:14:23.120,0:14:26.800

of pain,

0:14:23.760,0:14:29.040

even if very slight, we've got to act.

0:14:26.800,0:14:30.880

We can't wait because by the time it's

0:14:29.040,0:14:31.760

obvious, we've got a cow that's not going

0:14:30.880,0:14:33.279

to be productive

0:14:31.760,0:14:35.360

and it's going to have an increased risk

0:14:33.279,0:14:37.440

of leaving the herd.

0:14:35.360,0:14:39.920

Russell, clearly the mobility

0:14:37.440,0:14:42.560

scoring is a really important tool

0:14:39.920,0:14:44.240

in the fight against lameness

0:14:42.560,0:14:46.000

in dairy cattle, were you doing that

0:14:44.240,0:14:47.519

before you started the project or is

0:14:46.000,0:14:49.760

it something you've only started doing

0:14:47.519,0:14:52.959

relatively recently?

0:14:49.760,0:14:56.160

It was done

0:14:52.959,0:14:57.279

prior to the project but not as a matter of

0:14:56.160,0:14:58.720

routine.

0:14:57.279,0:15:01.440

It might have been done once a year,

0:14:58.720,0:15:04.399

four or five times a year,

0:15:01.440,0:15:05.760

but nowhere near to the level we're

0:15:04.399,0:15:09.279

doing it now.

0:15:05.760,0:15:12.560

A lot of milk contracts

0:15:09.279,0:15:15.440

are asking for a routine.

0:15:12.560,0:15:17.760

Red Tractor, that type of thing,

0:15:15.440,0:15:19.199

are asking farmers to routinely foot score.

0:15:17.760,0:15:21.839

0:15:19.199,0:15:23.600

But I feel a lot of farmers are

0:15:21.839,0:15:25.040

probably starting to see themselves

0:15:23.600,0:15:26.639

with

0:15:25.040,0:15:28.240

getting somebody in or doing the

0:15:26.639,0:15:31.680

scoring,

0:15:28.240,0:15:34.000

you're not picking up the true

0:15:31.680,0:15:34.959

level of the lameness in the herd.

0:15:34.000,0:15:36.720

From that

0:15:34.959,0:15:38.800

you're not getting your routine trimming

0:15:36.720,0:15:40.639

done or

0:15:38.800,0:15:42.560

trimming down at the right stage

0:15:40.639,0:15:44.959

with these early detected

0:15:42.560,0:15:45.839

cases. A lot of the cows that we

0:15:44.959,0:15:47.759

trimmed are ones which

0:15:45.839,0:15:50.480

my partner would have scored a

0:15:47.759,0:15:53.680

two. We don't find anything with them.

0:15:50.480,0:15:57.199

They're just taken into the trimming crush,

0:15:53.680,0:15:59.279

the foot is modelled out and

0:15:57.199,0:16:01.279

it's checked over. You might find a

0:15:59.279,0:16:01.839

subtle slight of bruising in the

0:16:01.279,0:16:03.680

foot

0:16:01.839,0:16:05.279

but it's purely just a quick trim and

0:16:03.680,0:16:06.880

they're back out and

0:16:05.279,0:16:09.360

we're getting the recovery rates that

0:16:06.880,0:16:10.959

Sara is looking at.

0:16:09.360,0:16:12.560

Then, pain relief is the next

0:16:10.959,0:16:14.639

level

0:16:12.560,0:16:16.399

if you start to find something and

0:16:14.639,0:16:18.240

you're picking this mobility

0:16:16.399,0:16:22.000

scoring up and

0:16:18.240,0:16:23.360

using it to its full extent at an early stage, and

0:16:22.000,0:16:26.160

that’s how I feel we're getting

0:16:23.360,0:16:28.160

results. I suspect the more you do it,

0:16:26.160,0:16:30.399

the better you become in spotting

0:16:28.160,0:16:31.279

those signs, particularly the early

0:16:30.399,0:16:34.160

signs which

0:16:31.279,0:16:34.639

Sara just mentioned. Sara,

0:16:34.160,0:16:37.600

0:16:34.639,0:16:39.519

what has been the real changing factors

0:16:37.600,0:16:40.959

that has had a massive impact at Graig Olway?

0:16:39.519,0:16:42.800

In a relatively short space of

0:16:40.959,0:16:44.560

time, you managed to halve the cost to

0:16:42.800,0:16:45.839

the business by improving lameness

0:16:44.560,0:16:47.519

and that's been done by a number of

0:16:45.839,0:16:49.360

different things. Give us a summary of

0:16:47.519,0:16:50.399

what has worked at Graig Olway that

0:16:49.360,0:16:51.360

could potentially work with other

0:16:50.399,0:16:54.240

farmers?

0:16:51.360,0:16:54.800

We tackled the main

0:16:54.240,0:16:57.759

cause

0:16:54.800,0:16:58.480

of lameness which was poor cow

0:16:57.759,0:17:01.600

comfort.

0:16:58.480,0:17:04.480

We use the AHDB Healthy Feet programme

0:17:01.600,0:17:06.240

to home in on the key areas

0:17:04.480,0:17:08.480

that we needed to focus on.

0:17:06.240,0:17:10.400

That came up as cow comfort,

0:17:08.480,0:17:12.079

particularly the comfort of the beds. Now

0:17:10.400,0:17:13.919

the cubicles themselves are very good.

0:17:12.079,0:17:14.720

The dimensions of the cubicles were

0:17:13.919,0:17:16.240

very good

0:17:14.720,0:17:18.559

for the size of the cows that are on

0:17:16.240,0:17:20.160

the farm, but the mattresses themselves

0:17:18.559,0:17:22.000

weren't comfortable enough and that was

0:17:20.160,0:17:24.319

impacting on the lying times.

0:17:22.000,0:17:25.520

Now, the longer the time a cow spends

0:17:24.319,0:17:28.160

on her feet

0:17:25.520,0:17:30.320

and not lying down, the increased risk

0:17:28.160,0:17:32.559

of bruising and

0:17:30.320,0:17:34.000

soul ulcers developing. That was one

0:17:32.559,0:17:36.559

of the key areas that we needed to

0:17:34.000,0:17:38.640

tackle last summer.

0:17:36.559,0:17:40.400

We're seeing the benefits of that

0:17:38.640,0:17:42.960

now. Then we also

0:17:40.400,0:17:44.160

have this impact of the early

0:17:42.960,0:17:45.520

detection.

0:17:44.160,0:17:47.440

Russell mentioned there that with a lot of

0:17:45.520,0:17:50.080

these cows you could

0:17:47.440,0:17:50.640

see a visible lesion

0:17:50.080,0:17:53.440

because

0:17:50.640,0:17:54.160

at an early stage, the

0:17:53.440,0:17:56.080

0:17:54.160,0:17:57.840

bone in the foot began to

0:17:56.080,0:17:59.360

pinch underneath. That cow is just

0:17:57.840,0:18:01.280

starting to feel the pain

0:17:59.360,0:18:03.679

and it is a question of a quick model

0:18:01.280,0:18:05.280

out if they're painful, test them

0:18:03.679,0:18:06.880

with hoof testers and use block

0:18:05.280,0:18:09.120

and pain relief.

0:18:06.880,0:18:09.919

Like Russell said, as the cows go out

0:18:09.120,0:18:11.600

of the crush,

0:18:09.919,0:18:13.440

the blocks come off and we're seeing

0:18:11.600,0:18:15.120

much better results

0:18:13.440,0:18:17.520

in terms of the cow’s

0:18:15.120,0:18:19.440

recovery. It's a cumulative effect.

0:18:17.520,0:18:21.360

We've tackled the early detection and

0:18:19.440,0:18:22.320

treatment but we've also tackled the

0:18:21.360,0:18:25.280

prevention.

0:18:22.320,0:18:27.440

The main thing was the cows’

0:18:25.280,0:18:29.360

comfort with the mattresses.

0:18:27.440,0:18:30.799

One thing that we do need to tackle that

0:18:29.360,0:18:32.320

we're currently having

0:18:30.799,0:18:35.360

discussions about at the moment

0:18:32.320,0:18:36.320

is heat stress. Last summer, we saw a

0:18:35.360,0:18:38.640

big increase

0:18:36.320,0:18:40.160

in lameness during the hot weather.

0:18:38.640,0:18:41.760

Again, because the cows are just standing

0:18:40.160,0:18:42.000

up, they don't want to lie down because

0:18:41.760,0:18:44.080

they

0:18:42.000,0:18:45.600

get too hot, like we do if we lie

0:18:44.080,0:18:46.880

on a beach. I'm sure that's something

0:18:45.600,0:18:48.880

that we all want to be doing at the

0:18:46.880,0:18:49.520

moment, go off somewhere and lie on a

0:18:48.880,0:18:51.679

beach and

0:18:49.520,0:18:52.960

enjoy the warmth, but the

0:18:51.679,0:18:55.120

problem is cows can heat

0:18:52.960,0:18:56.400

up to the point of where

0:18:55.120,0:18:59.039

they need to get

0:18:56.400,0:19:00.240

up otherwise they overheat. When it's

0:18:59.039,0:19:03.039

very hot,

0:19:00.240,0:19:04.720

cows are up on there feet

0:19:03.039,0:19:06.480

more often. We lose around three hours of

0:19:04.720,0:19:08.559

lying time a day

0:19:06.480,0:19:11.039

and that does impact on the feet as

0:19:08.559,0:19:14.000

well. We need to make sure

0:19:11.039,0:19:15.679

this summer that we

0:19:14.000,0:19:16.960

do have measures in place which will

0:19:15.679,0:19:19.360

reduce the impact

0:19:16.960,0:19:20.480

of heat stress on the cows as well.

0:19:19.360,0:19:23.520

We're looking at lots of different

0:19:20.480,0:19:26.080

options with regards to that at the moment.

0:19:23.520,0:19:27.760

What about foot bathing? Is that a

0:19:26.080,0:19:29.840

key part in the

0:19:27.760,0:19:32.000

work you were doing to tackle

0:19:29.840,0:19:33.919

the lameness? Yes, I almost forgot about

0:19:32.000,0:19:35.760

digital dermatitis because

0:19:33.919,0:19:37.200

that was a historic problem

0:19:35.760,0:19:39.200

and is something that we've really

0:19:37.200,0:19:41.760

sort of put to bed now.

0:19:39.200,0:19:43.760

Digital dermatitis was coming up as

0:19:41.760,0:19:45.360

one of the most common lesions while

0:19:43.760,0:19:47.360

trimming.

0:19:45.360,0:19:49.280

We put the

0:19:47.360,0:19:50.960

whole herd through the crush

0:19:49.280,0:19:52.799

and we did what we call a blitz

0:19:50.960,0:19:55.039

treatment where we treated

0:19:52.799,0:19:57.039

all the cows which had active lesions

0:19:55.039,0:19:57.520

all at the same time. Over three days,

0:19:57.039,0:19:59.280

0:19:57.520,0:20:01.039

all cows were individually

0:19:59.280,0:20:03.280

treated in the crush.

0:20:01.039,0:20:04.320

That massively

0:20:03.280,0:20:06.400

reduced the

0:20:04.320,0:20:08.080

infection pressure on the farm.

0:20:06.400,0:20:09.679

Now,

0:20:08.080,0:20:11.280

because DD doesn't live in the

0:20:09.679,0:20:12.960

environment for very long,

0:20:11.280,0:20:14.400

we reduced the

0:20:12.960,0:20:16.480

environmental risk, we

0:20:14.400,0:20:18.480

reduced the environmental pressure and

0:20:16.480,0:20:21.039

then our foot bathing regime

0:20:18.480,0:20:22.720

had much more of an impact as well.

0:20:21.039,0:20:25.039

Russell was already foot bathing,

0:20:22.720,0:20:26.960

but the problem was that there were so

0:20:25.039,0:20:29.520

much DD in the herd that it was just

0:20:26.960,0:20:30.159

overwhelming the foot bath. But since

0:20:29.520,0:20:32.159

doing the

0:20:30.159,0:20:33.360

protocol, the three days of blitz

0:20:32.159,0:20:35.679

treatment and

0:20:33.360,0:20:37.360

tweaking the foot bathing regime,

0:20:35.679,0:20:40.720

0:20:37.360,0:20:41.600

we have very rarely seen any new cases.

0:20:40.720,0:20:43.440

0:20:41.600,0:20:44.720

If we think about the severity of

0:20:43.440,0:20:46.880

lesions,

0:20:44.720,0:20:48.640

when we started the project, we were

0:20:46.880,0:20:50.000

seeing lesions that were sort of 2-3cm

0:20:48.640,0:20:53.280

0:20:50.000,0:20:55.600

wide on the back of the heel.

0:20:53.280,0:20:57.520

Now, when we see a DD case, it's very

0:20:55.600,0:20:58.240

unusual if it's more than around 0.5-1cm

0:20:57.520,0:21:01.600

0:20:58.240,0:21:02.320

in diameter. Not only are

0:21:01.600,0:21:04.880

we seeing

0:21:02.320,0:21:05.600

fewer DD cases but also, those that we

0:21:04.880,0:21:08.720

do see are

0:21:05.600,0:21:11.120

much less severe as well.

0:21:08.720,0:21:12.559

That's had a big impact

0:21:11.120,0:21:14.240

across the herd.

0:21:12.559,0:21:16.080

Russell, I'm sure you're delighted to

0:21:14.240,0:21:19.520

see the progress that's been made

0:21:16.080,0:21:21.360

by all these actions? Yes,

0:21:19.520,0:21:23.520

there have been times in the past 12

0:21:21.360,0:21:25.280

months where myself and Sarah have seen an increase,

0:21:23.520,0:21:28.320

especially during the summer of last year.

0:21:25.280,0:21:30.320

It was a

0:21:28.320,0:21:32.159

head in hands moment and we were thinking ‘what

0:21:30.320,0:21:33.760

are we doing? What are we doing wrong?

0:21:32.159,0:21:36.159

Why are we not

0:21:33.760,0:21:38.960

seeing any results?’. There were

0:21:36.159,0:21:41.600

various different reasons,

0:21:38.960,0:21:42.320

but it’s still early days, it's not

0:21:41.600,0:21:44.559

going to be a quick fix.

0:21:42.320,0:21:45.919

Any farmer who's got any kind of

0:21:44.559,0:21:48.400

lameness issue

0:21:45.919,0:21:50.000

or has had a historic lameness issue,

0:21:48.400,0:21:51.919

it's not a quick fix.

0:21:50.000,0:21:53.520

You can't expect things to change overnight

0:21:51.919,0:21:56.480

just by trimming alone.

0:21:53.520,0:21:58.559

The digital dermatitis was an easy fix.

0:21:56.480,0:22:00.320

As Sara said, it was much

0:21:58.559,0:22:02.159

hard work for three days. We did a

0:22:00.320,0:22:05.679

blitz treatment across the herd

0:22:02.159,0:22:08.240

but no different to

0:22:05.679,0:22:09.679

any other major work on the farm

0:22:08.240,0:22:11.679

0:22:09.679,0:22:13.039

and we saw immediate results.

0:22:11.679,0:22:16.400

0:22:13.039,0:22:19.600

In terms of chronically lame, it requires

0:22:16.400,0:22:22.960

great effort by all members of the team,

0:22:19.600,0:22:26.240

huge amount of effort

0:22:22.960,0:22:28.960

and we have seen the results. But,

0:22:26.240,0:22:30.559

hopefully, in 12 months to

0:22:28.960,0:22:33.600

two years’ time

0:22:30.559,0:22:35.200

we should be at the optimum level. I'm a lot

0:22:33.600,0:22:36.080

happier about this than I was

0:22:35.200,0:22:38.159

last summer

0:22:36.080,0:22:40.159

when it was a head in hands

0:22:38.159,0:22:42.080

moment. Sara, on

0:22:40.159,0:22:44.240

many occasions, rang me and said ‘what are we doing? Why

0:22:42.080,0:22:47.600

aren't we getting any results?’,

0:22:44.240,0:22:50.720

and she'll back me up on that.

0:22:47.600,0:22:53.200

Yes,

0:22:50.720,0:22:54.080

it was very challenging especially when things

0:22:53.200,0:22:55.600

0:22:54.080,0:22:57.919

weren’t moving in the right direction.

0:22:55.600,0:23:00.559

Russell was doing absolutely everything

0:22:57.919,0:23:02.640

that I was asking him to do in terms of

0:23:00.559,0:23:05.520

investing in the new mattresses,

0:23:02.640,0:23:08.080

the fortnightly scoring

0:23:05.520,0:23:10.320

and putting the cows through the crush,

0:23:08.080,0:23:12.320

and when you're following that

0:23:10.320,0:23:14.640

advice, you don't expect lameness

0:23:12.320,0:23:16.320

to go in the opposite direction.

0:23:14.640,0:23:19.360

I think that was

0:23:16.320,0:23:21.280

a very difficult point and like Russell

0:23:19.360,0:23:22.159

said, tackling

0:23:21.280,0:23:24.320

lameness is not easy and

0:23:22.159,0:23:26.000

this is where the data

0:23:24.320,0:23:27.760

has very much helped us

0:23:26.000,0:23:30.880

to drive decisions.

0:23:27.760,0:23:32.720

We found that we had

0:23:30.880,0:23:34.400

cows that weren't recovering

0:23:32.720,0:23:36.640

properly after receiving treatment.

0:23:34.400,0:23:39.440

We were detecting them, we were

0:23:36.640,0:23:41.039

treating them with the best practice protocols,

0:23:39.440,0:23:42.720

the blocks and the pain relief,

0:23:41.039,0:23:44.559

but we weren't seeing the results.

0:23:42.720,0:23:45.600

It was discovered in the

0:23:44.559,0:23:47.200

data that this was due to a

0:23:45.600,0:23:48.640

combination of factors.

0:23:47.200,0:23:50.240

Obviously, we had the influence of heat

0:23:48.640,0:23:52.080

stress. We changed the beds. There was a

0:23:50.240,0:23:53.440

lot of disruption in the shed and cows

0:23:52.080,0:23:56.400

weren't lying down.

0:23:53.440,0:23:56.880

We also had a few concerns as well

0:23:56.400,0:23:58.960

with regards

0:23:56.880,0:24:00.880

to the techniques that we'd be

0:23:58.960,0:24:02.880

using on the feet as well as

0:24:00.880,0:24:04.320

trimming and treatment.

0:24:02.880,0:24:06.799

We had some very difficult

0:24:04.320,0:24:09.200

decisions to make last summer

0:24:06.799,0:24:10.880

in terms of the trimming

0:24:09.200,0:24:13.520

and the treatment side of things.

0:24:10.880,0:24:14.000

But now, with the changes that we've

0:24:13.520,0:24:16.240

made,

0:24:14.000,0:24:17.600

we've started working with

0:24:16.240,0:24:19.440

another trimmer and

0:24:17.600,0:24:20.640

everything's starting to

0:24:19.440,0:24:24.000

to come together.

0:24:20.640,0:24:24.799

This is why it takes time.

0:24:24.000,0:24:27.600

0:24:24.799,0:24:29.600

The effects aren't seen immediately.

0:24:27.600,0:24:31.039

It's very hard.

0:24:29.600,0:24:33.039

When it comes to lameness, it is a long haul

0:24:31.039,0:24:35.200

because a lot of these cows are lame

0:24:33.039,0:24:37.919

and you can't do much about them.

0:24:35.200,0:24:38.960

We can manage them, but we're not

0:24:37.919,0:24:42.240

going to be able to

0:24:38.960,0:24:43.919

cure them. It is

0:24:42.240,0:24:46.720

a long haul like Russell said,

0:24:43.919,0:24:48.799

and there will be ups and downs, but I

0:24:46.720,0:24:50.799

think that the key thing is

0:24:48.799,0:24:53.279

that we've maintained communication

0:24:50.799,0:24:54.960

throughout. We have a Whatsapp group

0:24:53.279,0:24:55.679

for everybody involved in feet on the

0:24:54.960,0:24:57.760

farm

0:24:55.679,0:25:00.240

and we share everything so that everybody's

0:24:57.760,0:25:01.600

aware of what's going on. I think

0:25:00.240,0:25:02.559

that's been very helpful

0:25:01.600,0:25:04.559

particularly

0:25:02.559,0:25:06.159

last year when it was

0:25:04.559,0:25:06.720

very difficult to actually get out onto

0:25:06.159,0:25:08.320

the farm.

0:25:06.720,0:25:09.919

That was a challenge in itself

0:25:08.320,0:25:12.080

because

0:25:09.919,0:25:13.520

I would have liked to been there but I wasn't

0:25:12.080,0:25:14.480

able to because of

0:25:13.520,0:25:17.039

lockdown.

0:25:14.480,0:25:17.840

It was looking

0:25:17.039,0:25:19.600

at the data,

0:25:17.840,0:25:22.000

continuing that communication and trying

0:25:19.600,0:25:23.440

to find out what was happening,

0:25:22.000,0:25:25.520

why we weren't seeing the results that

0:25:23.440,0:25:26.320

was crucial.

0:25:25.520,0:25:28.240

0:25:26.320,0:25:29.760

Again, changes have been made

0:25:28.240,0:25:30.960

and now things seem to go

0:25:29.760,0:25:32.400

in the right

0:25:30.960,0:25:34.000

direction, and they will continue

0:25:32.400,0:25:34.880

to go in the right direction.

0:25:34.000,0:25:36.720

0:25:34.880,0:25:38.400

With lameness, it's a big ship to turn but

0:25:36.720,0:25:39.760

once you've turned it, once you're going

0:25:38.400,0:25:42.159

in the right direction, it's full

0:25:39.760,0:25:43.679

steam ahead.

0:25:42.159,0:25:45.440

As you mentioned there, it is a

0:25:43.679,0:25:47.919

long term journey but the earliest

0:25:45.440,0:25:48.640

you start, the better and

0:25:47.919,0:25:50.799

implementing

0:25:48.640,0:25:53.039

scoring and early detection clearly has

0:25:50.799,0:25:54.880

been a massive part of the project.

0:25:53.039,0:25:56.640

Russell, what advice would you

0:25:54.880,0:25:57.520

give to farmers who may be looking to

0:25:56.640,0:25:59.600

do this but

0:25:57.520,0:26:01.279

seeing it as a challenge, as a barrier

0:25:59.600,0:26:05.039

potentially?

0:26:01.279,0:26:05.760

The initial getting over that

0:26:05.039,0:26:08.480

0:26:05.760,0:26:09.440

fortnightly scoring. It's not a

0:26:08.480,0:26:12.559

quick job,

0:26:09.440,0:26:13.760

especially the way that we're milking

0:26:12.559,0:26:15.520

with the robots.

0:26:13.760,0:26:16.880

With a traditionally milked herd,

0:26:15.520,0:26:19.919

which would be through a parlour,

0:26:16.880,0:26:22.400

a system that we used to use,

0:26:19.919,0:26:24.000

when milking in

0:26:22.400,0:26:25.120

the parlour, all the cows are entering and leaving

0:26:24.000,0:26:27.279

the parlour in a single file, and

0:26:25.120,0:26:29.760

I'd imagine that this would ease the job of

0:26:27.279,0:26:30.880

scoring, it would be a more straightforward task.

0:26:29.760,0:26:35.360

0:26:30.880,0:26:37.760

But you have to get on with it.

0:26:35.360,0:26:39.679

No one likes to see

0:26:37.760,0:26:41.679

a lame cow,

0:26:39.679,0:26:43.520

and the benefits will pay for

0:26:41.679,0:26:46.000

themselves in the long run.

0:26:43.520,0:26:48.400

As Sara said, the cost, the

0:26:46.000,0:26:49.039

headline costs that were included in the articles,

0:26:48.400,0:26:51.440

I

0:26:49.039,0:26:53.279

couldn’t believe that we were losing

0:26:51.440,0:26:55.919

£50,000/year,

0:26:53.279,0:26:57.039

but when you begin to

0:26:55.919,0:26:58.799

drill into the

0:26:57.039,0:27:00.080

figure,

0:26:58.799,0:27:02.000

0:27:00.080,0:27:04.799

we're a high yielding herd.

0:27:02.000,0:27:05.760

Cows are averaging between 36-39

0:27:04.799,0:27:08.960

litres a day.

0:27:05.760,0:27:11.120

The

0:27:08.960,0:27:12.640

figure that Sara has is 5

0:27:11.120,0:27:14.559

litres of milk a day, and a

0:27:12.640,0:27:16.400

lame cow will easily lose 5

0:27:14.559,0:27:18.880

litres from that average

0:27:16.400,0:27:19.600

of milk a day. That's your easy

0:27:18.880,0:27:21.919

profit

0:27:19.600,0:27:23.760

bottom line in the tank, not forgetting the costs

0:27:21.919,0:27:27.840

that’s associated with it.

0:27:23.760,0:27:30.000

0:27:27.840,0:27:31.200

Reduce that lameness. Our target is below

0:27:30.000,0:27:34.080

10%.

0:27:31.200,0:27:35.840

If we can achieve that target, it's going

0:27:34.080,0:27:36.880

to be a lot nicer place to create a nicer environment and

0:27:35.840,0:27:39.200

the animals are going to be a lot

0:27:36.880,0:27:39.760

happier. You've just got to get on with

0:27:39.200,0:27:42.000

it.

0:27:39.760,0:27:43.679

It was something I didn't want to do. We

0:27:42.000,0:27:47.039

had a

0:27:43.679,0:27:48.080

few incentives as

0:27:47.039,0:27:50.559

part of the demonstration

0:27:48.080,0:27:51.440

project. We've had Sara’s time involved

0:27:50.559,0:27:55.760

with it as well as

0:27:51.440,0:27:58.000

the AHDB Healthy Feet programme.

0:27:55.760,0:28:00.000

It has worked and to those who

0:27:58.000,0:28:02.320

do it properly, I haven't

0:28:00.000,0:28:04.399

heard many negative stories about it.

0:28:02.320,0:28:06.159

Sara, what are the next steps? What

0:28:04.399,0:28:07.279

are the future targets and aims for the

0:28:06.159,0:28:10.720

project?

0:28:07.279,0:28:13.679

The next step this week

0:28:10.720,0:28:15.760

is to sort out ventilation

0:28:13.679,0:28:16.559

for the summer in order to

0:28:15.760,0:28:18.080

avoid

0:28:16.559,0:28:19.760

some of the heat stress. We are releasing

0:28:18.080,0:28:21.520

the cows onto pasture

0:28:19.760,0:28:23.039

during the summer to try and alleviate some

0:28:21.520,0:28:25.440

of the heat stress, and

0:28:23.039,0:28:27.120

we want to get systems in place and

0:28:25.440,0:28:29.279

we're looking at some new and

0:28:27.120,0:28:32.240

innovative ways of doing that.

0:28:29.279,0:28:33.039

That’s our primary targets for

0:28:32.240,0:28:35.039

now,

0:28:33.039,0:28:37.120

and then it's just keep

0:28:35.039,0:28:39.679

looking at the data, keep looking at what

0:28:37.120,0:28:40.559

the data and the trimming records are

0:28:39.679,0:28:42.720

showing us

0:28:40.559,0:28:44.559

and letting that drive us

0:28:42.720,0:28:46.960

in terms of future

0:28:44.559,0:28:48.080

decisions. For instance, white

0:28:46.960,0:28:50.080

line on the farm

0:28:48.080,0:28:51.840

has not been a problem. We very

0:28:50.080,0:28:53.039

rarely see white line but

0:28:51.840,0:28:55.840

some cows were

0:28:53.039,0:28:57.279

slipping and injuring themselves and therefore,

0:28:55.840,0:28:59.600

we decided that it would be

0:28:57.279,0:29:00.960

beneficial to put grooving in.

0:28:59.600,0:29:02.799

This is where it's really

0:29:00.960,0:29:04.880

important to use all the data

0:29:02.799,0:29:06.320

to

0:29:04.880,0:29:08.080

drive and focus

0:29:06.320,0:29:10.240

where we need to go because

0:29:08.080,0:29:11.600

every single farm is different.

0:29:10.240,0:29:14.159

Russell mentioned about AHDB - Healthy Feet

0:29:11.600,0:29:14.799

programme, and that

0:29:14.159,0:29:17.279

focuses

0:29:14.799,0:29:18.240

on where you need to target for

0:29:17.279,0:29:21.200

the best return

0:29:18.240,0:29:22.000

on your investment and time.

0:29:21.200,0:29:24.559

Reducing lameness requires

0:29:22.000,0:29:26.320

a lot of time and investment

0:29:24.559,0:29:29.360

and

0:29:26.320,0:29:31.760

I

0:29:29.360,0:29:32.559

have to say that Russell and his team

0:29:31.760,0:29:35.039

have been

0:29:32.559,0:29:36.159

absolutely phenomenal. They've

0:29:35.039,0:29:38.000

taken it on board

0:29:36.159,0:29:40.559

and they've done everything possible.

0:29:38.000,0:29:42.559

0:29:40.559,0:29:43.600

It's not a question of deciding

0:29:42.559,0:29:45.919

what you have to do,

0:29:43.600,0:29:47.600

you actually have to do it and I think

0:29:45.919,0:29:49.919

that’s part of the biggest barrier.

0:29:47.600,0:29:51.360

We've had a few nudges along the

0:29:49.919,0:29:53.120

way which has helped us to make those

0:29:51.360,0:29:55.919

decisions and actually act

0:29:53.120,0:29:57.200

but that's the key thing, and like you

0:29:55.919,0:29:59.760

said, the earlier you start,

0:29:57.200,0:30:01.679

the better. All the excellent

0:29:59.760,0:30:04.080

progress that has been made and

0:30:01.679,0:30:04.720

achieved at Graig Olway with

0:30:04.080,0:30:07.760

Russell

0:30:04.720,0:30:10.000

and the family have led to an extension

0:30:07.760,0:30:12.399

and a new project through the EIP.

0:30:10.000,0:30:15.120

Sara, tell us more about that. We've

0:30:12.399,0:30:18.880

got an EIP project which started

0:30:15.120,0:30:21.360

back in October of last year. The

0:30:18.880,0:30:22.000

project is looking at ways of

0:30:21.360,0:30:24.880

0:30:22.000,0:30:25.440

improving lameness across a group

0:30:24.880,0:30:27.840

of

0:30:25.440,0:30:29.440

farmers in South East Wales.

0:30:27.840,0:30:31.120

24 farms have enrolled with the project

0:30:29.440,0:30:32.960

and we're looking at different

0:30:31.120,0:30:35.039

ways of knowledge exchange

0:30:32.960,0:30:37.279

or different ways of sharing ideas and

0:30:35.039,0:30:39.120

making improvements on farms.

0:30:37.279,0:30:41.039

Not every farmer

0:30:39.120,0:30:41.679

would want me on their farm every

0:30:41.039,0:30:44.080

fortnight

0:30:41.679,0:30:45.520

talking about feet. They might like to

0:30:44.080,0:30:47.919

use a different approach.

0:30:45.520,0:30:48.720

Some of the things that we're

0:30:47.919,0:30:52.000

looking at

0:30:48.720,0:30:55.200

is essentially, whether farmers

0:30:52.000,0:30:58.559

respond better to one-to-one advice or

0:30:55.200,0:31:00.480

whether they would benefit more by using a

0:30:58.559,0:31:02.399

different approach such as

0:31:00.480,0:31:03.120

farmer-led action groups. This is

0:31:02.399,0:31:06.000

where

0:31:03.120,0:31:07.039

a group of farmers come together on

0:31:06.000,0:31:09.279

one farm

0:31:07.039,0:31:10.960

and it’s very much a farmer driven approach.

0:31:09.279,0:31:12.559

Rather than me advising what

0:31:10.960,0:31:15.200

should be done on the farm,

0:31:12.559,0:31:17.200

the idea is that from the group you

0:31:15.200,0:31:19.440

receive a practical input

0:31:17.200,0:31:21.600

in terms of how they would do complete things. They’re

0:31:19.440,0:31:23.279

learning from each other.

0:31:21.600,0:31:24.880

Also, we do have discussion groups where

0:31:23.279,0:31:26.799

an advisor might

0:31:24.880,0:31:28.240

advice you on some certain aspects, but this group will allow

0:31:26.799,0:31:30.559

farmers to learn from their peers.

0:31:28.240,0:31:31.519

Those are the two different types of

0:31:30.559,0:31:33.360

knowledge exchange

0:31:31.519,0:31:35.600

that we have in place.

0:31:33.360,0:31:37.519

Also, we have a combination of both groups.

0:31:35.600,0:31:39.200

One group

0:31:37.519,0:31:40.799

is using the one-to-one approach, and

0:31:39.200,0:31:41.519

another is an action group, but there is a third

0:31:40.799,0:31:42.960

group

0:31:41.519,0:31:44.880

which uses a combination of both.

0:31:42.960,0:31:47.120

0:31:44.880,0:31:48.799

One of the reasons why I'm very

0:31:47.120,0:31:50.480

excited about Russell’s involvement with

0:31:48.799,0:31:53.440

this project is that

0:31:50.480,0:31:55.039

when we're doing the action groups,

0:31:53.440,0:31:55.679

Russell will be the key person which will provide advice and information

0:31:55.039,0:31:57.919

0:31:55.679,0:31:59.600

because he has experience of

0:31:57.919,0:32:02.080

tackling lameness. The rest of the

0:31:59.600,0:32:03.919

group can benefit from his experience.

0:32:02.080,0:32:06.000

0:32:03.919,0:32:08.240

Following the progress of that project will be fascinating and

0:32:06.000,0:32:10.080

we may invite you back, both of you,

0:32:08.240,0:32:10.960

to talk about some of the findings and

0:32:10.080,0:32:12.720

see which

0:32:10.960,0:32:14.159

of those knowledge transfer methods were the

0:32:12.720,0:32:16.159

most effective

0:32:14.159,0:32:17.360

when it came to tackling

0:32:16.159,0:32:19.039

lameness.

0:32:17.360,0:32:20.399

However, there is one

0:32:19.039,0:32:21.919

final question that I would like to ask to you

0:32:20.399,0:32:24.080

both. It is a question

0:32:21.919,0:32:24.960

that we've been asking to all our guests on Ear

0:32:24.080,0:32:27.120

to the Ground

0:32:24.960,0:32:28.159

this year. How would you

0:32:27.120,0:32:30.320

describe

0:32:28.159,0:32:31.679

a successful farmer? If I could start

0:32:30.320,0:32:33.679

with you Russell.

0:32:31.679,0:32:35.679

Everybody has a different idea

0:32:33.679,0:32:38.960

or an assessment of success, but in

0:32:35.679,0:32:42.240

your view, what makes a successful farmer?

0:32:38.960,0:32:43.679

Wanting to go back and do it every

0:32:42.240,0:32:45.120

day.

0:32:43.679,0:32:47.440

Wanting to get out of bed without the

0:32:45.120,0:32:50.960

aid of drink or drugs

0:32:47.440,0:32:52.640

and just turn up, have a happy

0:32:50.960,0:32:54.640

environment for people to work in,

0:32:52.640,0:32:56.640

a happy environment for the cows.

0:32:54.640,0:32:58.399

As I said before,

0:32:56.640,0:33:00.080

if the cows are happy and healthy

0:32:58.399,0:33:03.360

they'll do their job and then,

0:33:00.080,0:33:06.559

it’s a nicer place for myself to work in,

0:33:03.360,0:33:09.600

the team and the family.

0:33:06.559,0:33:13.039

0:33:09.600,0:33:14.159

That just makes it all easier and a

0:33:13.039,0:33:17.200

nice place to be.

0:33:14.159,0:33:19.120

Success

0:33:17.200,0:33:20.799

is not a financial thing. It will come

0:33:19.120,0:33:21.840

if everything else is in the right

0:33:20.799,0:33:23.519

place.

0:33:21.840,0:33:25.279

Certainly, success can be measured in

0:33:23.519,0:33:26.799

many ways.

0:33:25.279,0:33:29.039

Sara, over to you. What's your

0:33:26.799,0:33:31.200

definition of a successful farmer?

0:33:29.039,0:33:32.960

I think a successful farmer is one

0:33:31.200,0:33:35.120

that isn't afraid to change,

0:33:32.960,0:33:36.399

isn't afraid to take a leap of faith, try

0:33:35.120,0:33:38.480

something different,

0:33:36.399,0:33:39.679

and also realise when something

0:33:38.480,0:33:42.159

might not be going right

0:33:39.679,0:33:43.840

and then to act appropriate and change it.

0:33:42.159,0:33:46.880

Someone who's

0:33:43.840,0:33:49.600

constantly looking to evolve, improve

0:33:46.880,0:33:51.919

and strive forward in terms

0:33:49.600,0:33:52.880

of herd health and also the business.

0:33:51.919,0:33:55.279

Well, we've had two

0:33:52.880,0:33:56.559

fantastic answers, and

0:33:55.279,0:33:58.640

what's brilliant about that question is

0:33:56.559,0:34:00.000

each and every answer is different.

0:33:58.640,0:34:02.240

Everybody has a slightly different take

0:34:00.000,0:34:03.279

on it. But for today, I'm afraid that's

0:34:02.240,0:34:05.360

all we have time for.

0:34:03.279,0:34:07.039

Sara Pedersen and Russell Morgan,

0:34:05.360,0:34:07.919

thank you ever so much for joining us.

0:34:07.039,0:34:09.040

It's been

0:34:07.919,0:34:11.280

very interesting and I've

0:34:09.040,0:34:12.720

learnt a lot about the ways in which

0:34:11.280,0:34:13.839

you could tackle lameness and

0:34:12.720,0:34:15.599

indeed, the huge

0:34:13.839,0:34:17.440

financial savings you can make when you

0:34:15.599,0:34:19.440

get it right, and it is a long-term

0:34:17.440,0:34:21.760

journey. But with any long-term journey,

0:34:19.440,0:34:23.280

the earlier you start, the better.

0:34:21.760,0:34:24.399

Thank you both once again.

0:34:23.280,0:34:25.839

From Farming Connect,

0:34:24.399,0:34:27.919

all the very best for the future with

0:34:25.839,0:34:30.800

the project and thank you for joining us

0:34:27.919,0:34:30.800

on Ear to the Ground.

0:34:31.200,0:34:34.800

If you would like more information about

0:34:32.960,0:34:35.440

the support available through Farming

0:34:34.800,0:34:37.280

Connect,

0:34:35.440,0:34:39.040

then please contact your local

0:34:37.280,0:34:39.679

development officer or the Service

0:34:39.040,0:34:42.639

Centre

0:34:39.679,0:34:43.119

on 08456 000 813.

0:34:42.639,0:34:46.000

0:34:43.119,0:34:48.159

We've reached

0:34:46.000,0:34:49.919

the end of yet another episode.

0:34:48.159,0:34:51.679

We'll be back in two weeks with

0:34:49.919,0:34:53.679

plenty more to talk about,

0:34:51.679,0:34:56.159

but in the meantime, don't forget to hit

0:34:53.679,0:34:58.640

subscribe on whichever platform you use

0:34:56.159,0:35:00.320

to keep notified of all new episodes of

0:34:58.640,0:35:02.079

Ear to the Ground.

0:35:00.320,0:35:04.000

On behalf of the team at Farming

0:35:02.079,0:35:05.680

Connect, myself, Aled Jones,

0:35:04.000,0:35:17.839

would like to thank you for listening, and goodbye for

0:35:05.680,0:35:17.839

now.

0:35:24.640,0:35:26.720