GB Dairy Cattle Welfare Strategy 2018–2020
Animal welfare relates to an animal’s physical health and mental wellbeing, which is largely influenced by factors covered in this strategy.

Progress to date

The first dairy cow welfare strategy was launched in 2010, in recognition that as a sector – though we have progressed substantially – there was still much to do to improve the welfare of dairy cows in GB. The Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG) has taken the responsibility for the coordination and delivery of this strategy. Part of this responsibility is reporting on the progress the sector has made. A progress summary was published in 2011 and 2012. In 2014, an in-depth review of the welfare strategy was undertaken to incorporate new priorities.

Detailed reports on the progress made by the GB dairy sector in relation to cattle welfare were published in 2012, 2014 and 2016 (see www.CHAWG.org.uk). They provide evidence of the industry’s proactive approach to welfare improvement.

Industry initiatives

A variety of industry activities promoting greater engagement in mobility and improvements in foot health of the nation’s dairy cows is having a positive impact, resulting in a downturn in lameness levels. There continues to be year-on-year improvement in udder health performance, with an increasing percentage of British dairy cows receiving proactive mastitis control.

Industry consensus and harmonisation on a range of welfare outcome measures has assisted with the successful roll-out and uptake of these measures as part of farm assurance schemes (Red Tractor Assurance, Soil Association Certification and RSPCA Assured). The retention of bull calves on-farm remains high and a number of industry initiatives continue to champion improvements in calf health, welfare and survival. There is still room for improvement and we will continue to challenge ourselves to keep progressing in these areas.
CHAWG Dairy Cattle Welfare Subgroup

The Dairy Cattle Welfare Subgroup is a subdivision of the CHAWG which focuses on all aspects of cattle welfare applicable to the GB dairy industry. It is paramount that the dairy welfare strategy acknowledges and addresses the diverse production methods within the industry.

The Subgroup aims to reach a consensus on the key cattle welfare issues to be addressed and to deliver against the GB Dairy Cattle Welfare Strategy.

The aim is to develop workable strategies and initiatives to address the key priorities identified.

The Subgroup may identify the need for research to fill knowledge gaps and make recommendations to the CHAWG for further action.

The group has refined the strategy to eight priority areas in dairy cattle welfare. These areas are lameness, calves & youngstock, welfare outcomes, cow’s environment, promoting higher welfare, mastitis, fertility & breeding and body condition.

The purpose of this Subgroup is to achieve consensus on the key welfare issues to be investigated and fulfil the actions set out in the strategy as shown on the fold-out plan for 2018–2020.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact a representative at:

Cattle Health and Welfare Group
E: info@chawg.org.uk

For more detailed information about the further work and progress of this group, visit our website at: www.chawg.org.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Evidence source</th>
<th>Coordinated by</th>
<th>By when</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lameness</td>
<td>Reduce the prevalence of lameness, leading to improved welfare</td>
<td>• Improve prevention, recognition, treatment and control of lameness</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Healthy Feet programme, Foot trimming organisations (NACFT, ROCFT, Cattle Hoof Care Standards Board)</td>
<td>Dairy Cattle Mobility Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue to implement mobility scoring as the industry-recognised lameness indicator</td>
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<td>• Identify and communicate the availability of relevant support programmes and encourage uptake</td>
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<td>• Support the activities of the National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers (NACFT), Register of Cattle Foot Trimmers (ROCFT), the Cattle Hoof Care Standards Board and the Register of Mobility Scorers (ROMS)</td>
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<td>• Promote anti-inflammatory (pain relief) treatment in cases of lameness</td>
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<td>Calves and youngstock</td>
<td>Improve the survival and growth rate of youngstock and increase % of calves</td>
<td>• Raise awareness to farmers for the need to improve calf management through joined-up KE activity</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Calf to Calving Initiative, Breeding organisations, British Cattle Movement Scheme (BCMS)</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>that make it into the milking herd</td>
<td>• Ensure all calves are managed across the supply chain to meet agreed industry practices and promote enhanced feeding programmes of youngstock.</td>
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<td>Increase the % of dairy bull calves retained in the industry</td>
<td>• All farmers to record</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>– Stillborn calves</td>
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<td>– Reasons for death/culling of youngstock</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage regular monitoring of growth rates</td>
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<td>• Encourage selection of polled sires to replace disbudding</td>
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<td>• Encourage uptake of appropriate use of sexed semen to reduce the number of male calves</td>
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<td>• Encourage the use of pain relief (analgesics) during castration and disbudding</td>
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<td>• Encourage development of markets for dairy bul calves such as bull beef and rose veal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage proactive calf health planning</td>
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<td>Welfare outcomes</td>
<td>Evaluate animal-based welfare outcome measures on-farm</td>
<td>• Support the activities of assurance schemes that observe and record welfare outcome measures</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy, Farm assurance schemes, Farm consultancies, Milk buyers and retailers, Veterinary practices</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage farmers and vets to discuss welfare outcome measures as part of the herd health plan review</td>
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<td>Cow’s environment</td>
<td>Ensure the comfort of the environment is appropriate to meet the needs of</td>
<td>• Assess the extent of implementation of key ‘comfort’ indicators in practice and promote further as necessary</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy, Farm assurance schemes, Farm consultancies, Milk buyers and retailers, Veterinary practices</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the cow</td>
<td>• Analyze gaps on resources currently available; develop and promote resources as appropriate</td>
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<td>• Develop clear and consistent messages on cow flow, feeder design, stock densities and the importance of hygienic and comfortable lying areas</td>
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<td>• Demonstrate continuous improvement in cow comfort</td>
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<td>Continuous welfare</td>
<td>Demonstrate a positive ‘welfare trend’ and provide a basis for future</td>
<td>• Demonstrate current high levels of welfare and continually strive for improvement</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy, Farm assurance schemes, Farm consultancies, Milk buyers and retailers, Veterinary practices</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>improvement</td>
<td>investment and activity</td>
<td>• Regularly review and publically report progress towards aspirations</td>
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<td>• Raise awareness of dairy cow welfare as a relevant issue for dairy farmers’ businesses</td>
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<td>• Encourage investment in projects dedicated to advancing dairy cattle welfare practices</td>
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<td>• Support research and activities in promoting welfare</td>
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<td>• Promote the current high levels of welfare to consumers through education and awareness-raising activities</td>
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<td>Mastitis</td>
<td>Improve udder health, leading to a reduction in mastitis and improved</td>
<td>• Encourage and promote active prevention, recognition and control of mastitis</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy, Milk buyers and retailers, Farm assurance schemes, Veterinary practices</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>welfare</td>
<td>• Incorporate mastitis control in herd health plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Publish year-on-year udder health data</td>
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<td>• Publish numbers of farms and cows that have received mastitis control through an industry mastitis improvement programme</td>
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<td>• Communicate and encourage uptake of best practice dry cow management</td>
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<td>Body condition</td>
<td>Cows at an appropriate body condition for stage of lactation</td>
<td>• Provide greater access for farmers, farm staff and advisers to cow nutritional information</td>
<td>AIC, Milk buyers and retailers, Farm assurance schemes</td>
<td>AIC, Milk buyers and retailers, Farm assurance schemes</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>• Continue to encourage farmers to appreciate the importance of body condition score (BCS) management as a driver for dairy cow nutrition</td>
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<td>• Evaluate, coordinate, promote knowledge and effective protocols for improving nutrition on-farm</td>
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<td>• Continue to promote best practice transition cow management</td>
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<td>• Increase the number of professionally registered nutritionists</td>
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<td>Fertility and breeding</td>
<td>Move positively towards a calving interval of 400 days</td>
<td>• Liaise with industry to access fertility data that can be aggregated and reported annually</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy, Milk buyers and retailers, Farm assurance schemes, Veterinary practices</td>
<td>AHDB Dairy Steering Group</td>
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<td>• Promote genetic indices and tools that support informed breeding decisions via the industry</td>
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<td>• Breeding societies, Farm assurance schemes, Milk buyers and retailers, Veterinary practices</td>
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