Changes producers made to improve dairy cow welfare

129 farmers made 163 changes to improve 16,300 dairy cows’ welfare

28% of farmers made improvements to tracks and walkways

- 28 farmers installed/improved tracks to prevent poaching and lameness
- 10 farmers improved concrete walkways to reduce injury
- 7 farmers installed rubber matting in the parlour, collecting yard or feed face to reduce sole ulcers

13% of farmers increased space and access to resources

- 11 farmers extended walkway, loafing and lying areas for better cow flow and positive social interactions
- 6 farmers increased feed and water trough space for better access to resources
- 4 farmers reduced stocking rates to create more space and access to resources

21% of farmers improved cow comfort

- 14 farmers built new housing
- 6 farmers improved cubicle design
- 5 farmers changed bedding material to sand or sawdust
- 5 farmers installed mattresses
- 4 farmers increased the amount of cubicle bedding

9% of farmers improved housing

- 7 farmers improved ventilation
- 5 farmers installed grooming brushes
- 3 farmers improved lighting for a more natural, even distribution
8% of farmers improved lameness prevention and treatment

8% of farmers further improved cow welfare

7% of farmers improved the prevention of mastitis

6% of farmers improved calf welfare

10 farmers started routine trimming or improved trimming facilities

4 farmers employed a lameness reduction programme including early detection and treatment of lame cows

6 farms improved stock keeper training

4 farmers started using cow based indicators (welfare outcomes)

4 farmers started cross breeding for increased hybrid vigour

6 farmers improved targeted mastitis treatment

5 farmers improved cluster and teat hygiene at milking

6 farmers provided new or improved housing

3 improved ventilation, and infection control to reduce pneumonia and diarrhoea

NB Data was collected from 129 farmers between October 2013 – November 2014 where a total of 163 changes were made, ranging from 1-3 changes per farm. The total number of cows affected by changes is 16,300 (average herd size 126, range 4-500 cows).

Have you considered making similar changes?

Contact Jess and Kate to discuss and share your ideas or for more information and support animalwelfareadvisor@assurewel.org