



Healthy Hooves in FNQ

March 2018



Despite torrential rainfall and a struggle to hear under the corrugated iron roof, a very successful Healthy Hooves workshop was held on Thursday 8th March in Malanda. Dr Bill Tranter facilitated the session that was very well attended with sixteen farmers and four service providers. The morning session focused on the prevention, management and treatment of lameness including identification of the causes of lameness. The following dot points contain some of the key learnings from the morning session:

- Normal walking behaviour allows cows to select a safe spot to place their front feet when walking. Cows are unable to do this when they are under pressure as a result of people, vehicles or dogs within their flight distance.
- Understanding the influence of dominant cows at the front of the herd. They generally do not walk any faster when pressure is applied at the rear of the herd.
- Understanding the difference between walking order and milking order. Their milking order is slightly different to the order in which they enter the milking yard. They need time and space to be able to rearrange themselves before they enter the bales.
- Allowing cows enough time to rest is important for hoof health.
- If a backing gate is used, it should only ever be used to take up the space vacated by the cows.
- Construction of professionally designed laneways which are maintained regularly.

The morning session also covered hoof anatomy, knife sharpening and a number of short videos available on the Dairy Australia website. A short lunch followed the morning session and participants moved to the yards at Tableland Veterinary Services for the afternoon practical session. Dr Bill Tranter demonstrated hoof trimming and application of hoof blocks on a number of lame cows. ■■

