



Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Sustainability is described as

- enhancing farmer livelihoods,
- improving the wellbeing of people,
- providing best care for all our animals and
- reducing environmental impact

YOU ASK. WE ANSWER.

DAIRY MATTERS

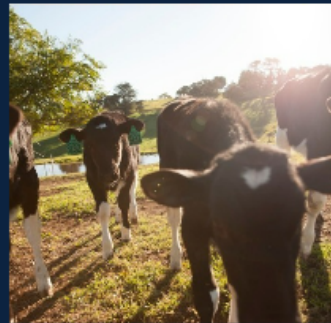
We know people have questions about dairy, so we're here to clarify. You Ask, We Answer is your chance to ask questions and get the answers you're looking for, from real experts. We've already answered some common questions you might have about dairy.



● All ○ Environment ○ Sustainable Diets ● Animal care ○ Dairy products ○ Health ○ People in dairy



Why do cows moo?



Do cows grieve for their calf once it is removed?



Why do some farmers euthanise healthy male calves?



What are the

One third of the most common questions from consumers are about calves




WHY CHOOSE

WHY JOIN

OUR IMPA



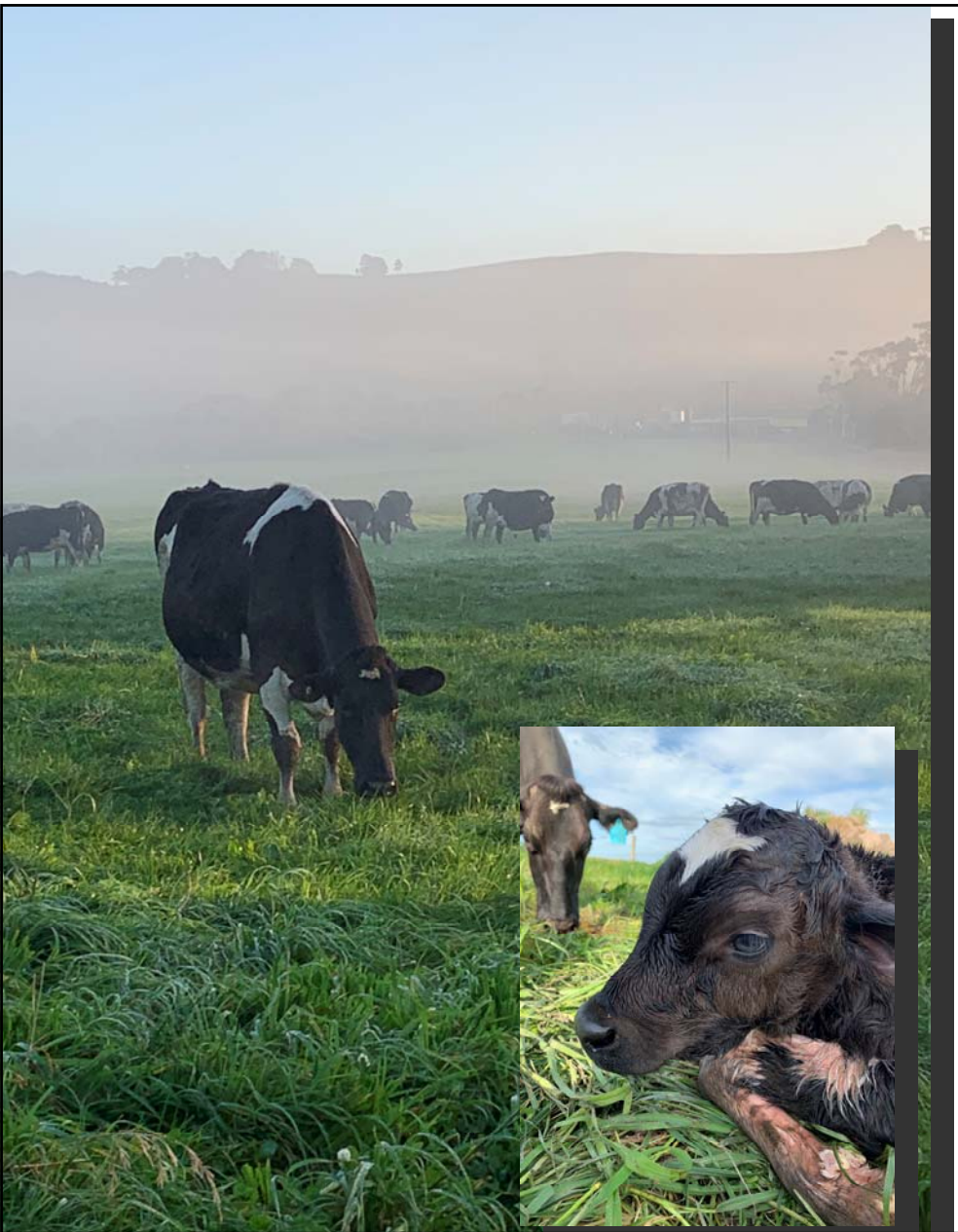
 28th Feb 2022

OUR TOP 4 QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR BETTER WELFARE FOR DAIRY COWS AND CALVES

Have you stood in the supermarket aisle, looking at the milk, yoghurt and cheese options, wondering which brand would be better for animal welfare?

Role of recording and evaluating calf traits for improved sustainability

M Michelle Axford



- Breeding values are highly effective tools to improve dairy cow performance
- Roughly one third of the total herd size are calves
- Calf rearing is costly and can be stressful
- The pre-calved animal is under-represented in evaluations
- 'It's too hard'

Research question

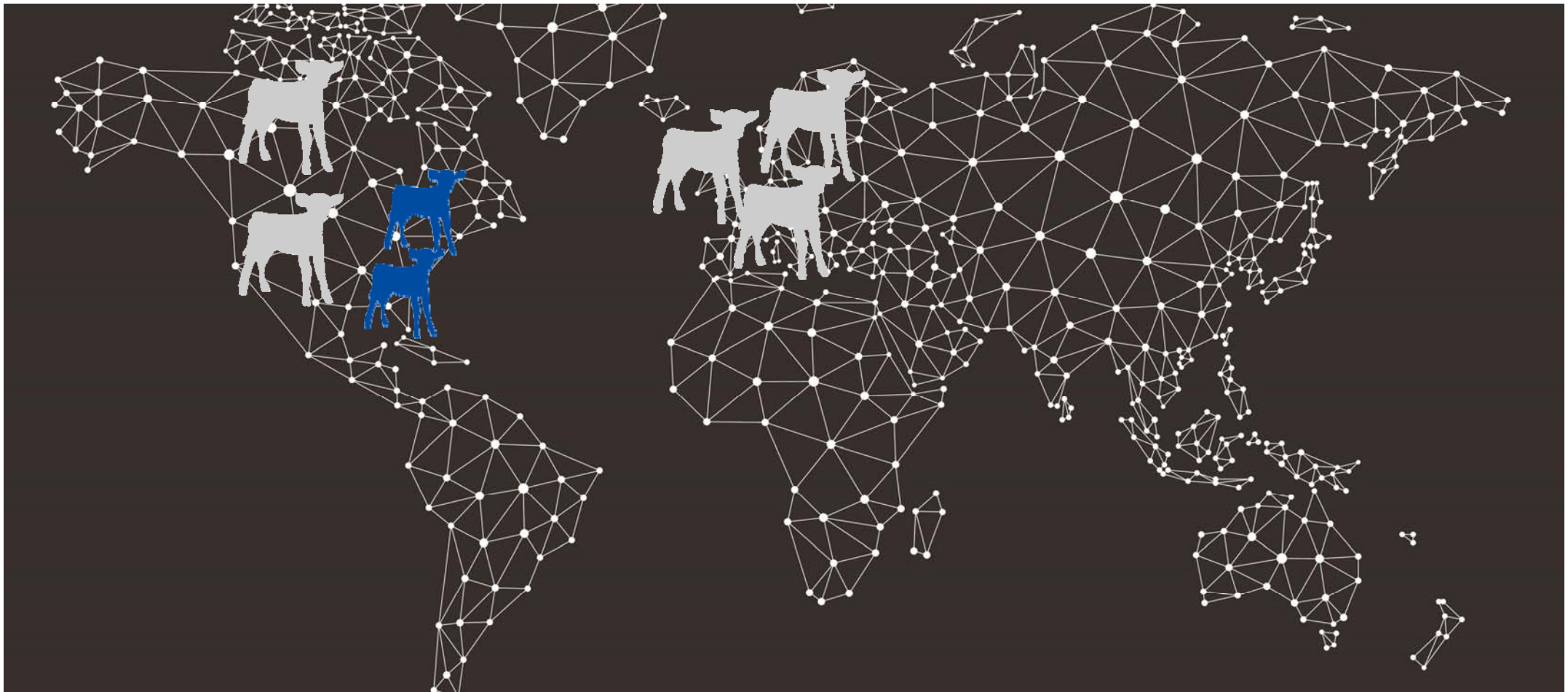
- Under what conditions is the measurement of genetic variation in calf vitality possible and practical?
- Why? Because there is value in improving calf welfare and making calf rearing less stressful for farmers.

**‘I want more of
that bull.
His calves are
rippers.’**

Trait definition

- Stillbirth
- Mortality
- Calf vitality

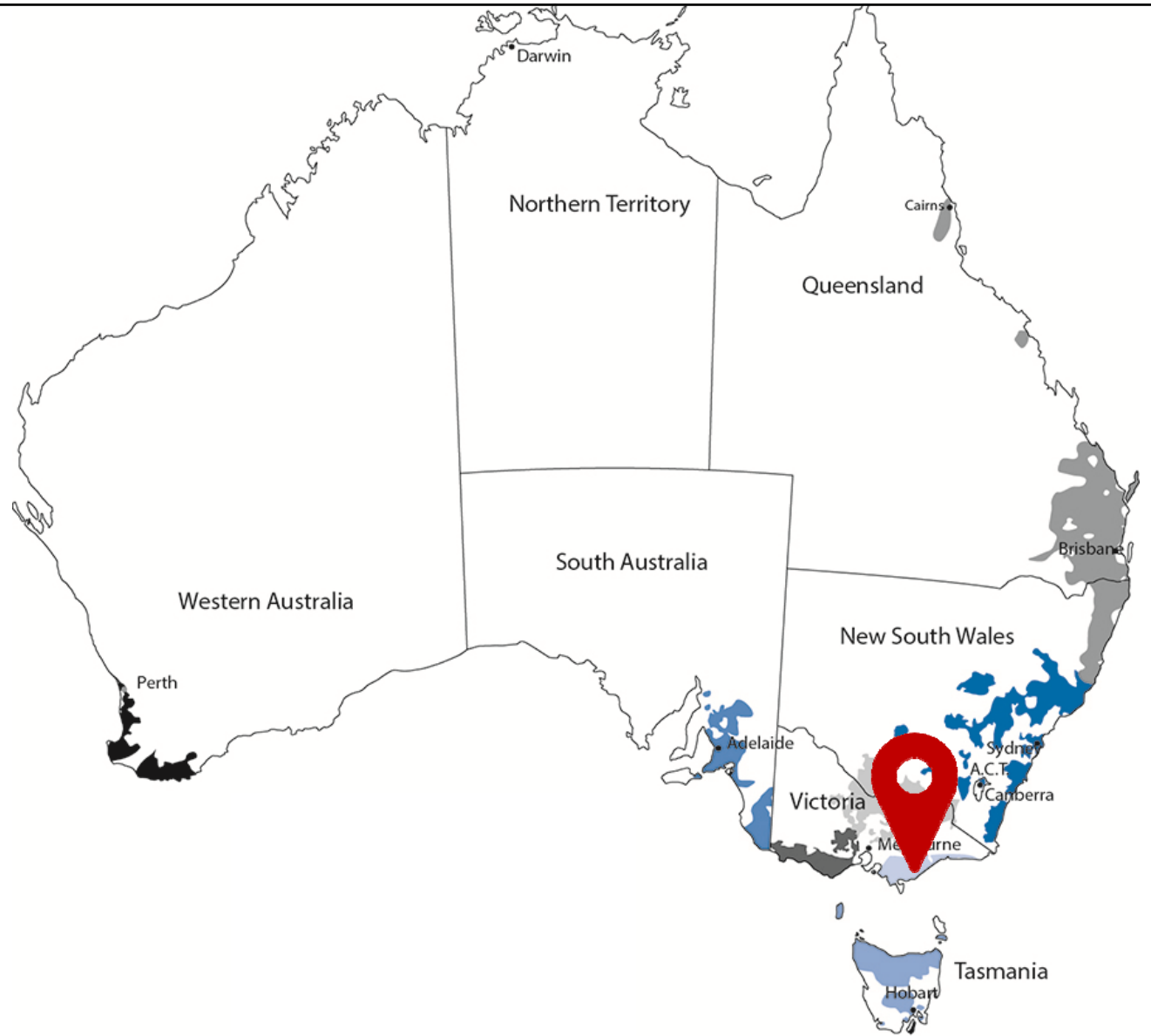
Calf stillbirth and survival are evaluated



Pilot

5 Holstein herds
Spring 2020 calving

3 scored calf vitality



Herd recruitment

- are **passionate** about **calf health**
- can deliver electronic records of
 - pedigree (sire and dam)
 - calving date, calving ease, fate, sex
 - illness through to weaning
 - deaths through to mating
 - vitality score all dairy calves before 1 month of age
- can deliver data through a Herd Test Centre or as an electronic spreadsheet
- are willing to provide feedback and be interviewed for project communications
- Breeds include Holstein, Jersey, Reds and their crosses. Beef x dairy calves that die can also be sampled.





Kerrie Okely

January 21, 2018 · 🌐



Anybody else's calves acting stupid tonight? Or is it just mine?

5 Comments

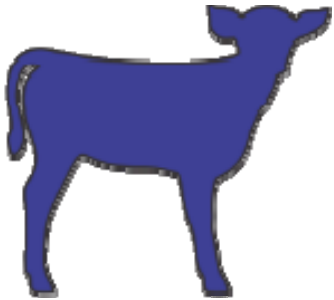
Like

Comment

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Calf vitality scoring prototype

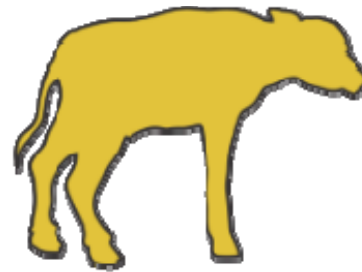
Ripper/Great



Good



Dull/Sick/Dud



Dead



Mortality, stillbirth and calf vitality in 3 pilot herds

	Herd A	Herd B	Herd C	Overall
Mortality				
Observations	228	127	151	506
Mean (\pm SD)	0.114	0.354	0.020	0.146 \pm 0.354

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Mortality				
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Mean (\pm SD)	0.114	0.354	0.020	0.146 \pm 0.354
Stillbirth				
Observations	228	127	151	506
Mean (\pm SD)	0.079	0.307	0.020	0.119 \pm 0.324

	Herd A	Herd B	Herd C	Overall
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Vitality				
Observations	203	98	151	452

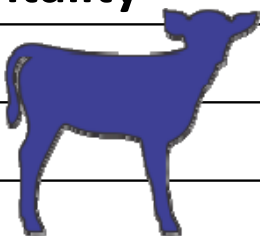
Herd A

Herd B

Herd C

Overall

Vitality



Observations

203

98

151

452

Score A

0.241

0.765

0.146

0.323

Score B

0.714

0

0.728

0.564

Score C

0

0.235

0.086

0.080

Score D

0.044

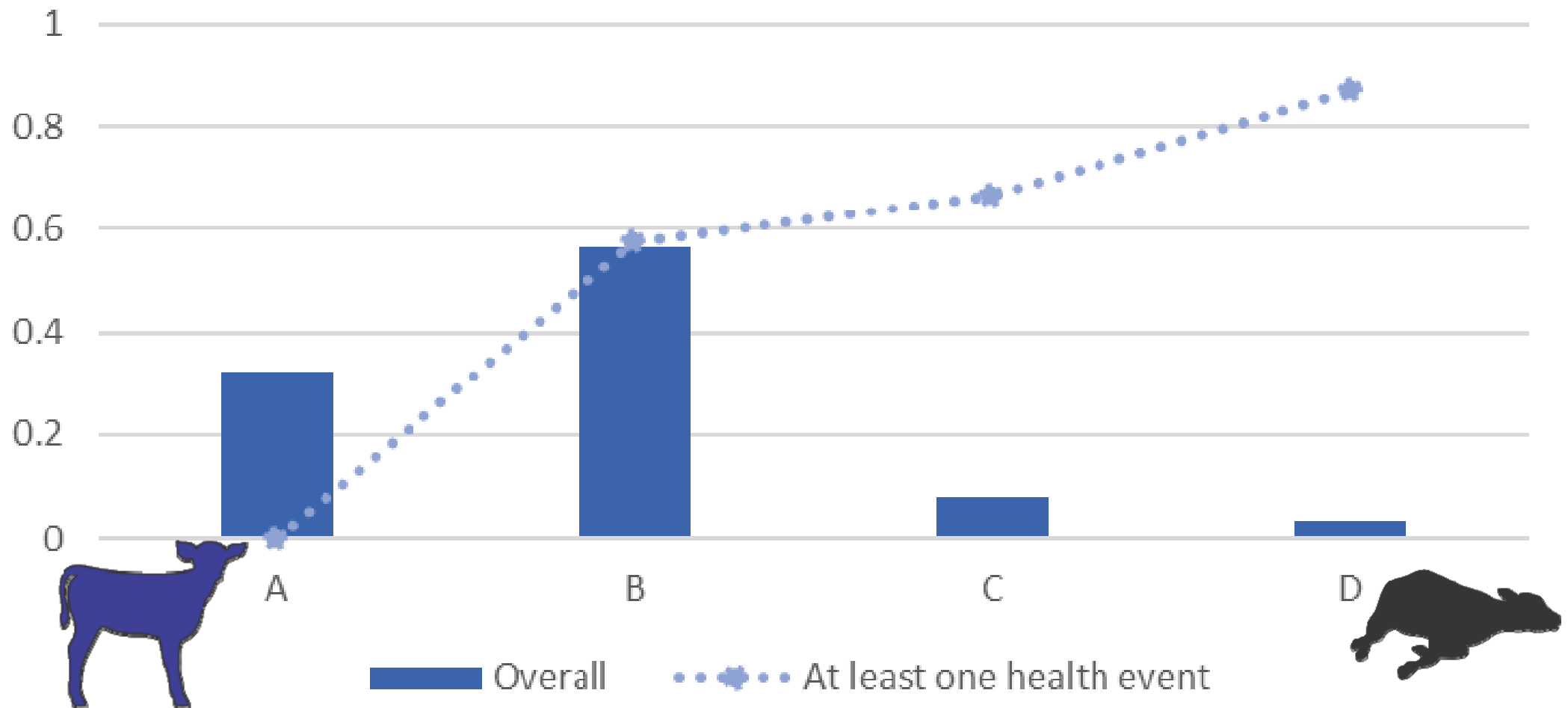
0

0.040

0.033



Mean proportions of calf vitality scores and recording of illness in 3 pilot herds



Ponderings from pilot herds



A calf vitality score
made sense to pilot
farmers



Early indications are that
it is strongly linked to
health events



Could it be a useful tool
to increase participation
in calf recording?

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