



CEDAR GROVE VETERINARY SERVICE NEWSLETTER



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ASSESSING A HERD HOOF-TRIMMING PROGRAM

A good hoof-trimming program is an essential component of lameness prevention on dairy farms. Cows that are solid on their feet and legs will produce more milk, get bred back faster, and last longer in the herd.

However, did you know that poor trimming techniques can be sometimes worse than not trimming feet at all? Most hoof trimmers are very well qualified, experienced, and trained; but, it is important for farmers to have some knowledge about how to evaluate their hoof trimmers so they only keep the good ones around. The following info should not be seen as a "how-to" of hoof trimming. Rather, it is a guide to some of the common hoof trimming errors that do cattle harm if not prevented.

1.) Excessive removal of the outer walls of the hoof

Excessive removal of the wall is commonly seen when hoof trimmers don't use their grinders appropriately. It is perfectly acceptable for hoof trimmers to round out the end of the toes, but they should not be removing any horn from the side of the hoof near the heel. Taking too much of the outer walls of the hoof can cause increased risk of white line disease.

The most telling sign of this problem is the presence of grinder tracks on the outside of the hoof away from the toe.



2.) Trimming toes too short

For most mature Holstein dairy cows, the distance from the coronary band (point where the haired skin and hoof meet) to the toe should be a minimum of 3 inches. A toe that is trimmed too short will lead to thin soles. This leads to cracks in the hoof along the white line.



3.) Excessive trimming of the heel of the inner claw of the rear foot

The rear feet of many dairy cattle on large farms tend to become worn easily due to living on concrete surfaces. An important aspect of hoof trimming is to transfer weight from the heel of the outer claw to the less worn inner

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ANTIBIOTICS?

Excede

Use: Excede is on label to treat for:

- Metritis/uterine infection
- Bovine respiratory disease due to *Mannheimia*, *Pasteurella multocida* and *Haemophilus somnus*
- Foot Rot

Dose: 1.5 mL per 100lbs body weight at the base of the ear

Dosing: For treatment of acute metritis, two doses should be given, the repeat dose is administered in the opposite ear approximately 72 hours following the initial dose.

For BRD and foot rot a single dose is administered

Special Notes:

- Safe for use in pregnant animals
- No milk withhold, 13 day meat withhold
- Do not give in the neck, administer per label directions

claw. It is important that hoof trimmers preserve the height of the inner claw and this can be observed by making sure there is no evidence of trimming on the heels of the inner claw.

4.) Excessive removal of the inner wall of the inner and outer claw

As previously discussed, a good hoof trimmer will shape the toe to provide the best weight bearing surface for the cow. This often includes something called modeling. Modeling involves

shaping the inner parts of the claws to distribute weight. However, a hoof trimmer should avoid excessive modeling that extends to the tip



Figure 1: Modeling

of the toe.

5.) Trimming the sole too thin

A healthy sole should be at least 7mm thick and not give under firm pressure with a hoof tester. Thin soles will predispose the cow to white line cracks and toe ulcers. The best way to assess this is to measure sole thickness before and

after trimming to determine whether thin soles are due to the environment or the hoof trimmer.

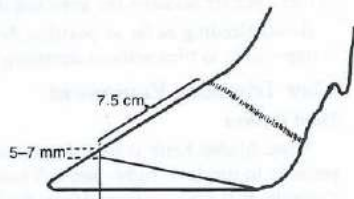


Fig. 1: Cut the length, spare the heel, apex 5-7 mm thick.

6.) Trimming the sole of the claws to be concave rather than flat

When a cow stands on concrete with concave soles, the claws will be pushed apart. This will increase weight transfer to the inner portion



of the hoof and predispose the cow to sole ulcerations. The best way to evaluate this is to examine recently trimmed cattle with a flat, straight object to determine if the hoof is trimmed flat.

7.) Shortening of the toe without reducing of the sole thickness

Overgrowth of the toe should be removed by shortening the toes and thinning the sole. However, a common error is to shorten the toe and not address the sole thickness. This does nothing to correct weight balance and leaves overgrown sole horn in the toe region of the claw. To detect this problem, a farmer must observe how a hoof trimmer approaches cows with longer toes.

Overall, most hoof trimmers should not commit any of these errors. However, knowledge is power. Using the information provided here will make farmers more aware of what should be done during the hoof trimming process. It also can be used to start a dialogue with your hoof trimmer about what he is doing and seeing when he is working on the cattle. It is only by working together with a qualified hoof trimmer that a farmer can hope to reduce lameness in the herd.

Tail Docking Ban-Effective January 1st, 2017

As many farmers are aware, the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) set January 1, 2017 as the target date to eliminate the practice of tail docking in US dairy herds that participate in the FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) program. So how does this ban exactly affect farmers? It is by no means a law or something that the USDA/FDA are actively going to be seeking out on farm visits. Instead it will be enforced through the FARM animal welfare program that many cheese/butter/milk plants use to evaluate their clients. If you don't pass the FARM program, you essentially will not be able to ship milk. Therefore, even if you don't agree with the ban—which approximately 68.8% of farmers don't—failure to comply will affect a farm's ability to sell their product.

