The HTA Tool Box

by Vic Daniel, Ontario, Canada

Communication strategies are required foundations for any business or organization to succeed. Over many decades, hoof trimmers have been individualized mostly through our own stubbornness or success by our single minded view on the topic. For the past few years, the HTA Boards have been on a quest to build a collaborative vision for members to act upon. Welcome to the vision of the HTA Toolbox.

Its purpose to clarify and act as a reference for knowledge and best practices using the experience of the members in practical day to day application of their business.

The toolbox is designed to allow members to access peer reviewed methods, practices of work, and anatomy and lesions in format that the membership can understand. Communication can flow in a circle from trimmer to trimmer, trimmer to farmer, trimmer to vet, farmer to vet about matters relating to hoof care decisions. It contains three sections of knowledge.

1. Guidelines regarding trimming methods
2. Standards regarding anatomy and lesion identification
3. Policies reflecting best practices

The first centralized concept to discuss foot care was through the work of Dr. Raven Toussaint of the Netherlands with his Functional Method of Trimming published in the early 1980’s. As the housing models for modern dairy facilities dictated more and more hoof or claw care, it became evident that established hoof trimmers from pasture or tie stall dairy farms needed to look at this method for the free stall facility. This is not to say good trimmers could not perform their work to the advantage for the cattle in the environment they were exposed. However, there was no written trimming methods to give trimmers other options or methods to consider. Thankfully, the association has members who have filled this void. For the past seen years, Dr. Ladd Siebert has been working on the Kansas...
Adaptation, now available in a book. Randal White and myself, completed the White Line Atlas Method. All three passed review by the Accreditation Committee (now referred to as the Education Committee) and the Boards review. The current HTA Board position as well as past Boards is positive results count by using the right method for the right situation.

However, this is all a template for the association to proceed. As explained at the past conference, the drawers need to be filled with standards and policies. The Board has approved the creation of Action Groups. These groups will have one leader each and approx. 3-4 members. The Anatomy and Lesion Identification will be headed by Elbert Koster; Doug Johnstone will lead the Stockmanship Group, Philip Spence will head the Restraining equipment and safe animal handling and Chip Hendrickson will head the Safety group.

We are using this newsletter as a call for volunteers to help participate and get this toolbox complete for the 2016 conference. Please contact our Pres. Elect Jamie Sullivan, or Gail Oss our Executive Director if you wish to participate.

Looking forward to seeing your participation!
Trimmers Assemble During World Dairy Expo

by Skip Blake, Wisc.

As World Dairy Expo is the premier venue for the world’s top cows, it naturally brings together all sorts of affiliated dairy enthusiasts and related industry professionals. Hoof trimmers are no exception. This year’s expo was once again a meeting site for many hoof trimmers eager to look at new equipment and the latest supplies. Additionally, trimmers were invited to attend a hoof trimming clinic on a dairy located close to Madison.

I organized the hoof trimming clinic with the assistance of fellow trimmer Richard Weingart. The farm hosts were Shelly and Bob Johnson, who operate a dairy in Belleville, Wisconsin, just 20 minutes from the Expo. I’m a long time-trimmer who organized last year’s clinic as well as many other hoof trimming events. Richard is a past president of The Hoof Trimmers Association and is truly passionate about cows and hooves.

Trimmers and industry reps from five different states as well as Canada attended the clinic. The trimming started with Richard and me demonstrating on my right layover chute. After a dozen cows were trimmed, equipment changed and a new Extreme Pro left layover chute was used for the next batch of cows. Trimmers saw several grinders in action. They also watched blocks applied with recently developed glue adhesive. Two new topical treatments for hairy warts (digital dermatitis) were applied. Trimmers respectfully critiqued work and pointed out what they would do in like situations.

It's events like these that continue to motivate me and make me want to further my knowledge in trimming. In the past, I and many other trimmers were guarded and didn’t want to give away our tricks and the ideas we individually created. Nor did we want others to judge our work. With the advent of the Hoof Trimmers Association and events like these, we now share and learn from one another. And ultimately, we positively influence the dairy industry as a whole. We all have family and friends, but we don’t often get together and share experiences with others who do what we do. Working with and talking to other trimmers makes us feel as though we aren’t alone.

I would like to thank Richard Weingart for once again helping me with this clinic and all reps and fellow trimmers who attended. Although not an official Hoof Trimmers Association event, several board members who were attending the expo did show up and express their appreciation. Also, special thanks go to Shelly and Bob Johnson for allowing us to trim on their dairy. Stay tuned as we are already planning for next year’s clinic.

Skip Blake trims while Vic Daniel observes at the trimming clinic recently held during the World Dairy Expo in Madison.
Peaches, Sweet Tea and a Hoof Conference: Georgia, February 18-20, 2016

We hope you join us February 2016 for the Hoof Health Conference, organized by trimmer members and Georgia locals Chad Boyce and Owen Cooper, along with Jamie Sullivan and Mark Burwell. Besides the city, the area has many sights to see as well as dairy communities outside the city limits.

Sure, Atlanta is a commercial hub, but it’s also a sightseer’s dream. There are scenic parks like Piedmont Park, unique entertainment venues like Fox Theatre, plus one of the country’s best panda exhibits at the zoo. History buffs, shopaholics and night owls will likely all find something to pique their interests: from Civil War museums, to the boutiques in the Virginia Highland neighborhood and the bars of East Atlanta. Families flock to spots like the interactive Georgia Aquarium, Turner Field, and the World of Coca-Cola.

CNN Center: The headquarters of the CNN news network feature a handful of ways to try your hand at putting together the news. Here, you can sit behind an anchor desk, practice reading a teleprompter and even visit a special-effects studio to learning how a broadcast is produced. Brush up on CNN’s scheduled programming because you can even sit in on a live broadcast of one of the network’s on-air shows.

Georgia Aquarium: It features 80,000 animals, covering 500 species in five permanent exhibits. The beluga whales and new albino alligators are some of the most popular creatures you’ll find here. Penguins, sea otters, and giant octopi are also featured in this aquarium’s lineup.

While you’re here, it would be a shame (also difficult) to miss the Ocean Voyager exhibit, where visitors walk through an acrylic tunnel surrounded by huge whale sharks, manta rays, stingrays, hammerhead sharks and other fish.

World of Coca-Cola: Stop here if you’re a fan of the world’s most popular soft drink. Sitting near the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola is as it sounds: a museum dedicated entirely to Coke. Visits begin with exhibits on the drink’s history, followed by the real fun: a chance to taste samples of the drink from around the world.

Fox Theatre: The Egyptian-theme Fox Theatre is home to the Atlanta Opera and the Atlanta Ballet, but Broadway musicals and different bands also take the stage here. According to the theater’s website, the Fox hosts more than 300 performances a year.
Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site: For a glimpse of our nation's history, head to the Sweet Auburn neighborhood. There you’ll find the modest home where Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was born and raised. You can also head over to the Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King was once a pastor. And right next to King’s grave site, you’ll find the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, which displays engaging exhibits on the Civil Rights movement. These, along with several other landmarks and museums, are jointly considered a national historic site. Wear comfy shoes because the entire complex is spread out over several city block.

Piedmont Park: Adjacent to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens in Midtown, Piedmont Park is the perfect place to spend a lazy afternoon.

Turner Field: If you’re a fan of baseball, you can’t pass up a visit to Turner Field. Home of the Braves.

Atlanta History Center: Located in one of the trendiest neighborhoods of the city, the Atlanta History Center seeks to explore Atlanta’s past. The center’s primary facility is the Atlanta History Museum, with exhibits that span the region’s history, from Native American culture to life in the antebellum South. According to one TripAdvisor user, “The War between the States’ exhibit is wonderfully recorded. But don’t miss the Southern Arts as well.

Centennial Olympic Park: Sandwiched between the Georgia Aquarium and the CNN Center is the Centennial Olympic Park, a 21-acre patch of land that features lush paths of grass, artwork, pools and fountains. The park was originally built for the 1996 Olympic Games and was a centerpiece of the festivities; now, it’s one of the most visited areas of the city.

Stone Mountain: Standing tall in this 3,200-acre park is a massive quartz monzonite mountain etched with the images of three famous Civil War figures: Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. Visitors like to trek to the top of this “Stone Mountain” either on a sky ride or with a steep hike.

Atlanta Botanical Garden: The Atlanta Botanical Garden should be a plant lover’s first stop in the city. It covers a magnificent and beautiful 30 acres in the northern corner of Piedmont Park. Be sure to stop by the Fuqua Orchid Center, which features a huge variety of unique high-elevation orchids native to South America.

2015 Newsletters will continue to update you with conference information. Mark your calendars - we’ll see you there. (Article credit: USNEWS)

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Accreditation Committee Report to the Hoof Trimmers Association Membership Business Meeting, July 2014

by Vic Daniel, President

The Accreditation Committee was created by the Hoof Trimmers Association (HTA) Board from a motion at the 2008 HTA Membership Business Meeting. The goal of the committee is to enhance the communication skills and proficiency of hoof trimmers in order to achieve the protocol of hoof trimming as accepted in the strategic plan (2012). The committee was asked to prepare a credible education framework for the HTA Board to present to the membership.

Initially, the committee examined the issue of wording regarding certification, licensing, or accreditation of hoof trimmers. Expert advice was sought from the veterinary profession. Executive Director Gail Oss, of the HTA, had insights and materials from other organizations forwarded to the committee for review.

Our findings were:

1. Accreditation is the wrong word to use, as it refers to building codes and organization agreements.
2. License is a regulatory concept under governmental purview.
3. Self-assessment is of no value. Research clearly shows the negative values of the quality of such measures.
4. Certification with training conveys the message of quality workmanship to the public.

Things to be aware of, from veterinarians we consulted:

- Trimmers cannot diagnose a lesion on an animal or recommend any medication or medical action for treatment.
- The best way to get around this is to establish a clear, direct veterinarian-client-hoof trimmer relationship and for the trimmer to gain validity of local regulations whether state, provincial, county, or prefect.

Committee summation:

The Hoof Trimmers Association does not have in its mandate, or articles of incorporation, or legal jurisdiction, the ability to license or lay claim to accreditation of its members.

However, it does have the ability to develop educational programs and workshops where certificates of knowledge completion can be given to a member wishing to advance their knowledge in a proposed educational platform. These programs will be presented to the membership under new business at this Business Meeting.

Current Status:

The Accreditation Committee is now renamed the Education Committee, which is under the responsibility of the president-elect, currently held by Jamie Sullivan. The committee members are Chip Hendrickson, Elbert Koster, Doug Johnstone, and Philip Spence.

These people will head up the action groups to fill in the trimmer toolbox shelves. We ask for your participation. To do so, contact Jamie.
Dave Horning was a dairy farmer first, growing up the oldest of four children, on a diary farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania. After his school years, Dave farmed in partnership with his parents. Along the way, in 1998, they sold first farm and purchased a new farm in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania, looking for more land and open spaces, which is how he ended up in north central Pennsylvania. For a little geography, Chester County is just west of Philadelphia. Sullivan County is just north east of Williamsport where the little league baseball World Series is played every year.

But after dairying full time for most of his life, Dave was feeling a little burned out, so in 2004 he decided to sell the cows. In the process of selling the cows, he was talking to his vet, who asked Dave what his future plans for a job were. Dave said he wanted to concentrate on the farm until the cows were sold and then see what would be ahead. That Tuesday evening, the Troy Large Animal Vet Clinic invited Dave to a meeting to talk about him coming to work for the clinic. He has been working for them ever since.

In the beginning, they thought Dave would work with large herd clients helping with vaccination and reproduction protocol. After a few months of interaction with the State Board of Veterinarians in Pennsylvania, this was tabled and the clinic asked if he would be interested in hoof trimming.

He soon found that the biggest obstacle in breaking into the hoof trimming business was that, at the time, there were eleven trimmers in the vicinity where he was living. Many of the other trimmers looked for ways to give a new trimmer’s reputation a black eye. Dave says those experiences caused him to think differently. Now, when he hears of a new trimmer starting up in his area, he contacts them, invites them to work with him for a day, and he tries to send work their direction whenever possible. This helps to boost confidence in the new trimmer who may be doubting themselves.

It was a slow start in the business for the first six months, but he says it was a great time for him to hone his skill as a trimmer. His goal has always been quality before quantity. When the county extension service put on a hoof care clinic, they invited local trimmers to take part. The clinic gave Dave an opportunity to share his knowledge and help the farmers as they were tasked with trimming the cadaver feet on hand. After that, the calls came, and they really never stopped coming.

The other thing Dave credits for helping him get started is his dairy background. He prides himself in being able to handle even the most difficult cows in the county. He tries to keep the noise level down and uses the cow’s natural instincts to help to convince her to cooperate. As time has gone by, he has consistently trimmed more cows and fixed fewer sore feet.

In 2005, when Dave came back from Dairyland Hoof Trimming School, he returned home with a new Comfort Chute he purchased from Carl Burgee. He used that chute...
until July of 2014, when he went to the Hoof Trimmers Convention in Milwaukee and then returned home from the dairy state with another new Comfort Chute. The upgrade on the new chute, with more bells and whistles and a hydraulic rear gate, has made the job easier and safer. (On his first chute he closed the tailgate manually, which, if the cow decided to reverse, became somewhat dangerous for the operator.)

Dave’s goals? Help his farmers be successful in an ever-changing dairy environment and to try to give sound advice whenever asked. He says, on a regular basis, he is asked for his opinion—and it doesn’t always have to do with the farm or Dave’s business. Most often it has to do with life and being a good listener to help them through a tough time. This is an important part of his job; it helps Dave know that he is right where God designed him to be.

Dave is the father of four awesome children. Two boys and two girls. Lindsey, 20, and Luke, 19, both attend Lancaster Bible College. Lindsey is studying radio and TV broadcasting in her second year. Luke is a business major focusing on finance and management and also plays soccer. Lane, 16, is a high school junior, also playing soccer and made honorable mention defender for the high school league. Lisa, 14, is a freshman and played JV volleyball this year. She is interested in a career in interior home design. Dave says his wonderful children have no interest in hoof trimming because they say it is “boring and dirty.” (You’ve probably heard that before, if your kids have ever worked with you.)

Being part of the Hoof Trimmers Association has helped Dave accomplish all of this with fresh ideas and a connection with his profession. Every time he attends a conference, he makes new contacts and it allows him to catch up with old friends from all over our industry. You will always find Dave with a smile on his face and willing to help whenever needed. I am grateful to Dave for being a part of our organization.
My anticipation started at 5:00 am the Tuesday prior to the convention, as my daughter and I were bathing her sheep in preparation for the Tennessee State 4-H Exhibition. She was very excited and enthusiastic about her first time showing her sheep in the state show. I was just as excited for her. One of my concerns, however, was the time her class would conclude and if I would make it to the bus in Madison, Wisconsin, by its 8:00 a.m. departure time the next morning. In a perfect world, my daughter would have been holding her blue ribbon and kissing her daddy goodbye by noon. I would have just enough time to get her safely back home and if I hurried, could still get in half a night’s sleep in a hotel room somewhere along the way.

As it was, the ribbon didn’t come until 8:00 p.m., just in time for a long hard drive to catch a bus bound for the HTA Conference with no sleep. As I made the decision to forget sleep and attempt the drive, you can imagine that I had set the bar pretty high as far as my expectations for the HTA Conference. Somewhere around 2:00 a.m. on the morning of opening day, with 24 hours of no sleep—and most of them looking through a windshield—I briefly began to question my decision and considered looking for a hotel and forgoing the first day’s events. With my anticipation and enthusiasm for the conference mixed with the height of my expectations, I pressed on, still unsure if I would ever make it to the bus on time.

Amidst points of humor and frustration, I heard my phone dialing someone and scurried to retrieve it from my pocket before I woke someone at 2:00 a.m. Too late, it was Ms. Gail’s number, the HTA executive director. Knowing I would be meeting her for the first time in a few more sleepless hours, the only thing my sleep deprived brain could contemplate was how this was “not a good way to start things off.”

Arriving at the hotel just 20 minutes before the bus to the conference departed, I first saw Mark Burwell, director of the HTA, and the smiling face of non other than Ms. Gail among other friendly faces starting to gather outside the bus. Prior to boarding, I was welcomed with handshakes, coffee, doughnuts, and amiable conversation. My first impression far exceeded my already high expectations. Kudos to the welcoming committee!

My lack of sleep was soon dismissed, as I focused on the most important part of my journey to the HTA Conference: becoming better educated about my four-legged clientele and learning how to better apply the knowledge in my daily encounters with farmers and their livelihood, which they so graciously entrust to me. The primary speaker for the day was Dr. Döpfer, presenting invaluable information on “Digital Dermatitis & Legion Scoring.” Dr. Döpfer demonstrated both passion and enthusiasm for the subject, her research, and the delivery of her knowledge about the little monster we battle daily. The hoof trimmers present were attentive and interacted throughout the day, posing important questions that were answered with conclusive responses. The introductions, handshakes, and warmhearted conversations continued throughout the day and into the evening, making for a great day that unquestionably met my expectations.

With Day One in the bucket, I was not surprised to find that the presenters on Day Two also showed enthusiasm and a vast knowledge for their given topics. The open floor discussion was equally informative. What conference would be complete without the ever-popular trade show? The trade show was impressive, with just about anything a hoof trimmer could need, want, or imagine. There were better products for your medicine chest, better tools for your tool cell: 731-609-0112
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First Time Attendee to the Hoof Trimmers Association Conference

by Shane McCoy, Tenn.
box, and bigger and better chutes with built-in efficiencies making them more “user friendly.” Whether you work on cattle while they are standing or lying down, you couldn’t help leaving with anticipation for seeing those impressive chutes in action on Saturday. My second day at the conference concluded with more introductions, friendly conversations, and laughs provided by a local comedian. With my expectations exceeded yet again, Day Two was in the bucket.

Day Three was filled with edifying sessions, as I had come to anticipate. I enjoyed deriving a considerable amount of knowledge from the panel discussion. I also appreciated the amount of time that was allotted by the conference organizers for participants to interact with vendors. I was able to learn more about available products and how they might help me become more effective as a hoof trimmer. Following the sessions, panel discussions, and time to visit with vendors, we were treated to a trip to the Harley Davidson Museum and dinner. Although I am not a bike rider myself, I could not help but develop a new appreciation for Harley Davidson and what they have accomplished. It was awe inspiring to see how Harley Davidson bikes have changed over the years. The proverbial icing on the cake for an already fantastic day had to be our dinner with round-table-style seating, which allowed hoof trimmers from across the U.S. and Canada to start the evening as strangers and leave as friends by night’s end.

With Day Three in the bucket, I was eagerly anticipating Day Four. As a hands-on learner, I had been looking forward to the demonstrations and was not disappointed. The demonstrations with the chutes were eye opening. As Day Four closed quickly, this hoof trimmer had undoubtedly been well educated by attending the HTA Conference. I had one more decision to make: call it a day, or face another long sleepless drive in order to attend the banquet and auction. As a glutton for punishment, I opted for attending the banquet and forgoing sleep once again. It turned out to be a great decision, as the banquet proved to be yet another highlight of the conference.

This conference was important to me in that I expected to increase my knowledge of effective hoof care. After having attended the HTA Conference, I not only obtained a better education and understanding, I also have a pocketful of names, phone numbers, and business contacts of fellow hoof trimmers from across the country who I now call friends. What an incredible experience! I came away truly blessed by all of those introductions and conversations with such a great, enthusiastic group of people, which I am thankful to be a part of.
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There are all kinds of ways to do this job, but the goal is always the same: Get the work done, and do it safely, in a timely manner.

I started out pushing cows for my brother Richard in the summer of 2008. Based in southeastern Connecticut, he has customers all over that state, plus Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Pretty soon he had me swinging a grinder, and by the next summer I was filling in on the local jobs when he was out of town. In late 2009, when my wife and I moved to western Massachusetts for her work, I kept on working with him. Employment options just then were pretty bleak, and I was already covering a lot of miles, so I figured I’d be better off keeping the job I had. After a couple lean years, another nearby trimmer needed a hand. All of a sudden I was not only busier than I had ever been, but I had become an integral part of the operations of two of the busiest trimmers in southern New England. Now I travel five states in the East, not to mention going to central Utah twice a year for a whole-herd trim on my sister’s dairy.

In the past two years, many of the herds we trim have expanded, some dramatically so. Unfortunately, no one put more days in the year. The only way to keep up is to increase daily production. To do that, you need help.

People sometimes ask me when I’m going to get my own chute. I reply, “When it makes sense.” Right now, our area doesn’t necessarily need another rig on the road, and I don’t need the debt of a chute and a dually pickup to feel like a professional. I drive a fuel-efficient compact car, carry my tools in the trunk, and show up wherever I’m needed. I might not know where I’ll be working more than two days ahead of time, but I make a pretty good living. I have been very fortunate to have been offered so many opportunities, and I am immensely grateful for that. I’d either be starving or working some desk job if it wasn’t for the guys who call me up. But it’s a two-way street: If my schedule wasn’t so flexible, they would struggle to keep up with their customers. Whether out of loyalty or just plain stubbornness, these dairymen want their hoof trimmer. If there’s too much for one guy to do, he can bring others, but that’s as much branching out as they’re going to do.

It’s taken me a while to come up with a name for what I do. With a couple exceptions, the dairies on which I trim are not my customers, but neither am I an employee of the trimmers with whom I work.

“Front-foot guy?” There’s more to it than that.

“Hoof trimmer’s helper?” That’s what we call ibuprofen.

But then a while back, I was driving to a farm, listening to some of my favorite music, when Steve Earle’s “Mercenary Song” came on. That’s what to call it, I thought—mercenary hoof trimming!
Recent Research: A randomized trial to evaluate the effect of a trace mineral premix on the incidence of active digital dermatitis lesions in cattle


A balanced, parallel-group, single-blinded randomized efficacy study divided into 2 periods was conducted to evaluate the effect of a premix containing higher than typically recommended levels of organic trace minerals and iodine (HOTMI) in reducing the incidence of active digital dermatitis (DD) lesions acquired naturally and induced by an experimental infection challenge model. For the natural exposure phase of the study, 120 healthy Holstein steers 5 to 7 mo of age without signs of hoof disease were randomized into 2 groups of 60 animals. The control group was fed a standard trace mineral supplement and the treatment group was fed the HOTMI premix, both for a period of 60 d. On d 60, 15 steers free of macroscopic DD lesions were randomly selected from each group for the challenge phase and transported to an experimental facility, where they were acclimated and then challenged within a DD infection model. The same diet group allocation was maintained during the 60 d of the challenge phase. The primary outcome measured was the development of an active DD lesion greater than 20 mm in diameter across its largest dimension. No lesions were identified during the natural exposure phase. During the challenge phase, 55% (11/20) and 30% (6/20) of feet were diagnosed with an active DD lesion in the control and treatment groups, respectively. Diagnosis of DD was confirmed by histopathologic demonstration of invasive Treponema spp. within eroded and hyperplastic epidermis and ulcerated papillary dermis. All DD confirmed lesions had dark-field microscopic features compatible with DD and were positive for Treponema spp. by PCR. As a secondary outcome, the
average DD lesion size observed in all feet was also evaluated. Overall mean (standard deviation) lesion size was 17.1 (2.36) mm and 11.1 (3.33) mm for the control and treatment groups, respectively, with this difference being driven by acute DD lesions >20 mm. A trend existed for the HOTMI premix to reduce the total DD infection rate and the average size of the experimentally induced lesions. Further research is needed to validate the effect of this intervention strategy in the field and to generate prevention and control measures aimed at optimizing claw health based on nutritional programs.


2014 HTA-AABP Research Grant Recipient and Proposal:
Evaluating the effect of 2 different hoof trimming techniques on dairy cow well-being and performance

Personnel: Project Director: Dr. Gerard Cramer, University of Minnesota.
Collaborators: Dr. Nigel Cook, University of Wisconsin, Dr. Sarah Wagner North Dakota State University.

Summary:
Lameness is a painful, prevalent disease in the US dairy industry. Regular functional hoof trimming to remove overgrowth and rebalance the claws is commonly viewed as an essential part of a lameness prevention program and is regularly practiced by the US dairy industry. Unfortunately, there is very little scientific evidence on which to base recommendations for either timing or technique of hoof trimming and the goal of this project is to provide sound scientific evidence for this. This will be accomplished by recruiting four commercial dairy farms that will enroll a total of 1200 2nd lactation animals at time of dry-off in 2 different treatment groups. Cows in each treatment group will be hoof trimmed with one treatment group being trimmed using an adapted technique to reduce the forces on the foot. Each treatment group will contain 600 animals and followed until they are 150 DIM. Our objectives of evaluating the technique of hoof trimming will provide evidence for preventive practices that will reduce animal stress and improve animal well-being through reduced lameness.

Project Goals, Hypothesis and Objectives:
Based on the widespread use of hoof trimming in the US dairy industry ((US), 2009) and the lack of evidence for the effectiveness of hoof trimming technique, the goal of this project is to evaluate 2 methods of hoof trimming.

The overall hypothesis of this project is that by modifying the functional trimming technique of dairy cows the incidence of foot lesions and lameness will be reduced, thereby improving longevity, well-being and productivity.

The specific objective of this project is to:
Compare the effects of 2 different methods of functional hoof trimming on hoof lesion incidence, lameness, and culling risk.
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Hoof Health Articles in the Media

September and October were busy months for the media and hoof health featuring the Hoof Health Conference and many of our members and contributors. Please visit www.progressivedairy.com, or our social media pages (Facebook, Twitter) to read these articles.
Safety Considerations

Generally, when hoof trimmers gather we discuss research, trimming, processing, and other matters that relate to our business. However, I think it is time to include issues pertaining to safety around our work areas on farms and on days when we promote our business in public venues.

At our association conferences, we pause to remember those who passed away. Their passing generally is due to age or illness. It is tragic when we have to remember a young member who was killed by accidently tripping and taking a fatal head injury. This happened a few years ago and though no one was around to see what happened, the end result remained the same—a widow and children without a father.

This past year I and a few other trimmers have noticed a trend in some of our clients becoming a bit too familiar being around our equipment, or children being left unattended for just a few minutes. With the purchase of my new chute, I decided that a safety demonstration was in order at each farm. I tell my clients and their staff what the machine will do, demonstrate the mechanical action of the machine without an animal, and then tell everyone to watch as I process three animals.

I make three points very clear to my clients.

1. When I am trimming, I am accountable to the animal’s safety in the chute, and I operate the machine to counteract animal attitude that may compromise its safety. As such, I cannot react to people trying to “help,” or as I prefer to call it, interfere, with my attempt to keep the animal from hurting itself.

2. I cannot see 360 degrees around the chute. I am completely blind to the far back left corner when I am at the right front foot of the animal. So when I release, I do not see said corner, which contains an automated side gate that keeps the entering animal focused on the open head gate.

3. It is the farm’s responsibility to ensure that visitors to the farm keep back from the processing area until such time as I am aware of them, for said reasons in points one and two.

Well that’s all well and good until somebody still does not understand, or thinks “I can outsmart this situation, and I will just take a shortcut to go behind the chute entrance.” That’s when they can get hit or hurt. Now you have to deal with an accident. In our province,
Workman’s Safety Insurance Board gets involved, and the first thing you bet they are going to ask in their investigation is: “Were there any warning signs for the machine or work area?”

So I decided to purchase three signs from my local trophy shop, costing me just under $50, and I installed them on my chute. Everyone sees the signs. The yellow-striped “Stay back 1 meter or 3 feet” sign protects my liability from someone getting hit by the gate, and the “Keep all hands and arms out” protects my blindside. They are not perfect, but at least I can show a degree of diligence on my part.

Putting safety tape around gates that are used around chutes in public venues is another good idea I heard from another trimmer. What have you done to help keep your work area and your financial well-being safe?

Wisconsin Weekend Get-Away

HTA members Skip Blake and Justin Addy are busy working on finalizing the agenda for the 2015 Wisconsin Weekend Get-Away, tentatively at Best Western in Tomah Wisconsin Feb 21, 22 2015. Questions? Call Skip at 608-393-1371 or Justin at 320-200-1221.

Wisconsin and Minnesota organizers have held the Wisconsin Weekend Get-Away for Hoof Trimmers every February (except during Hoof Health Conference years) since 1999. Originally developed by member and Get-Away pioneer, Bill Neumann, the Get-Away has been a relaxing weekend event for over 100 trimmers and family members each year. Vic Larson and Jim Oveson organized this for several years beginning in 2009, followed by Lee Carlson and Skip Blake. Thank you to Skip and Justin for continuing the Wisconsin tradition.
Topical Treatment of Claw Lesions in Dairy Cattle: Part 1 – Survey of Hoof Trimmers and Veterinarians on Treatment Practices

by J.K. Shearer DVM, MS

Introduction

The Iowa State University lameness research group was awarded a grant in September 2012 to study topical treatment of claw lesions in dairy cattle. Sponsors of the grant were the Hoof Trimmer’s Association (HTA) and the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP). Research proposals were reviewed by members representing each organization and ranked according to their scientific merit and relative significance to the dairy and/or beef industries. Following notice of the award, we began preparing our Inter-institutional Animal Care and Use Approval (IACUC) application forms and since we had planned to survey bovine practitioners and members of the Hoof Trimmer’s Association (HTA), Federal regulations required that we also file our project with Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of studies involving human subjects. Final approvals were received in December 2012 which coincided with funding for the project which was received in January 2013.

Part 1 of this 2-Part study was a survey designed to document treatment practices used by hoof trimmers and veterinarians to treat claw lesions. Specifically, we were interested in the methods of corrective trimming used, types of topical treatments applied, use of wraps or bandages and the application of foot blocks. Information on treatment practices of veterinarians and hoof trimmers was obtained from an online questionnaire using the web-based program, SurveyMonkey® (www.surveymonkey.com). This program was chosen because it allowed participants to remain anonymous. The questionnaire was publicized on AABP’s email list serve (AABP-L) and on AABP’s website under “QuickLinks”. Hoof trimmers were informed of the survey and how to participate via the HTA newsletter and an announcement at the HTA biannual meeting in February 2013. Participants had access to take the survey from February 23 to May 6, 2013. The following is a summary of the findings from this survey.

Response Rate and Organizational Affiliation

A total of 345 people responded to the survey, of which 196 (64%) identified themselves as members of AABP, 111 (36%) as members of HTA, 9 as having membership in both organizations, and 29 providing no information as to affiliation with either of these organizations. A total of 307 respondents were included in the final analysis.

Training in Foot Care

People acquire the knowledge and skills for conducting their work in a variety of ways. The majority of veterinarians (80%) indicated that their knowledge about foot care was part of their veterinary education, 34% developed or refined their skills and understanding through experience and attendance at various continuing education programs, and 9% cited additional training from attendance at a formalized foot care program. Training cited by hoof trimmers included the following: 65% apprenticeship with another trimmer, 41% professional hoof care training program, and 30% learning primarily through experience.

Restraint Systems and Equipment Preferences

The type of restraint and equipment used varies significantly between trimmers and veterinarians. Most veterinarians (61%) reported using manual restraint (ropes) for foot work and only 10% indicated working on a hydraulic chute restraint system (standup chute or tilt table). In contrast (and as expect-
ed), none of the hoof trimmers reported using a manual restraint system; but 6% reported using a manual standing chute, 45% a hydraulic standing chute and 49% used a tilt table. When asked about the primary tool used for foot care, 91% of trimmers reported using an angle grinder compared with only 16% of veterinarians. Veterinarians (52%) reported that their primary trimming tool was a hoof knife compared with 4% of trimmers. Routine trimming is the more important role for hoof trimmers, whereas veterinarians are more likely to work on lameness disorders.

Corrective Trimming Techniques

Philosophies differ on approaches to the corrective trimming of claw lesions in cattle. Some are quite conservative removing only enough to permit drainage of an abscess – rarely actually making contact with the corium, others are quite aggressive and have little fear of causing moderate damage and hemorrhage of corium tissues, and still others remove all loose and necrotic horn but carefully attempt to avoid causing hemorrhage and damage to adjacent healthy tissues. Our survey indicated that 68% of veterinarians reported removing all loose horn adjacent to the lesion without causing it to bleed, compared to 86% of hoof trimmers (P < 0.01). In fact, current literature would favor the latter technique favored by trimmers consisting of the removal of loose, necrotic horn and related tissues without causing damage to healthy tissues peripheral to the lesion. One explanation for seemingly more aggressive approach by veterinarians is that they tend to work on some rather complicated kinds of problems from time to time and may have interpreted this question somewhat differently than was intended by the investigators. Nonetheless, it appears that the majority of people in both groups are using techniques consistent with available literature.

Foot Block Use by Veterinarians and Hoof Trimmers

Few things do more to relieve pain and promote recovery from claw lesions than the application of a foot block to the healthy claw. Seventy-six percent of veterinarians reported routine application of a foot block to the sound (healthy) claw when treating sole ulcers compared to 86% of hoof trimmers (P < 0.05). Sometimes a person may elect not to use a block if they are able to achieve sufficient weight relief on the injured claw by transferring weight bearing to the contralateral healthy claw. A practical argument as to why hoof trimmers may be more likely to use foot blocks than veterinarians might be that blocks are more easily applied when the operator has good restraint of the foot and proper equipment to prepare claws for block application.

Topical Treatments, Milk Withholding and the Need for Analgesic Therapy

Some of the most interesting findings were those regarding the use of topical treatments on claw lesions. Topical medications for ulcers and abscessed claw horn lesions were used by 59% of veterinarians and 53% of hoof trimmers. The medication used most frequently was the soluble powder form of tetracycline or oxytetracycline (used by 48% of veterinarians and 81% of hoof trimmers). Of course the logical follow-up question is what about withholding milk? The majority of survey participants did not recommend withholding milk following topical treatment with tetracycline or oxytetracycline. And finally, what is the perception of trimmers and veterinarians with regard to pain associated with claw lesions (in particular, sole ulcers). The survey found that both groups agreed that sole ulcers were a painful condition, but the majority of veterinarians did not recommend analgesics for the treatment of sole ulcer lesions. There are probably good reasons for this; one is the lack of available information on effectiveness of analgesics for these conditions; and secondly, the pain associated with claw lesions is a more complicated type of pain that may not be particularly susceptible to analgesic therapy.

The survey has provided key information on treatment practices applied by hoof trimmers and veterinarians throughout North America. In behalf of my colleagues at Iowa State University, thank you for your participation and interest in this study. In a future article I will explain our findings from Part 2 of this study and share thoughts on where we believe future research efforts should be directed.
Equipment For Sale

Riley-Built 2007 F-350
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Calendar

Jan. 6-8, 2015
Keystone Farm Show, Pa. Volunteers needed for the booth.

Feb. 1, 2015
Article and ad deadline, March newsletter

Feb. 10-12, 2015
World Ag Expo, Tulare. Volunteers needed for the booth.

Feb. 21-22, 2015

Feb. 20-22, 2016
Hoof Health Conference 2016, Atlanta GA.
www.hooftrimmers.org

If you have an event to add to the calendar, please email or call the office at the contact information on the back cover of this newsletter.

Hoof Trimmers Association Inc.
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Active Membership - $135 USD | Introductory Membership - $25 USD
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- John Gardner

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