

**Country Roads Vet Svc
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October 2009 Lameness

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Lets talk about lame cows....

Lame cows can be a major problem on the dairy farm. National studies show that at any given time, 30% of the cows in our national herd are lame. This is seen by consumers as an animal welfare issue. Lame cows are an eyesore for anyone that might visit your dairy farm. In this newsletter issue, we will discuss how to properly examine lame cows, how to diagnose and treat the common causes of lameness, and how to prevent lameness on your farm.

Examining Lame Cows

90% of all lameness is in the hoof so we need to be able to examine the foot of the cow safely. We also need proper tools which include a SHARP hoof knife, ropes, hoof blocks and glue, and medicated foot wraps. There are three ways we can safely look at the foot of the cow:

- 1— Hoof trimming chute or table
- 2— Ropes to lift and tie foot with a block and tackle or pulley.
- 3— Sedate the cow and use ropes to cast her down on her side.

If you need instruction on how to examine your cows for lameness, please contact your veterinarian. After restraining the cow, use your hoof knife to scrape off the bottom sole of the hoof until it is white and clear. Examine behind the heel bulbs and between the toes.

Preventing Lameness

1. *Facilities.* Sore hocks, sore feet, and swollen legs are all signs of problems with your facilities. Ask us to evaluate your facilities to decrease lameness rates.
2. *Ration.* Acidosis leads to sole abscesses. Your veterinarian and nutritionist can work through your ration to evaluate if acidosis is causing lameness.
3. *Not hoof trimming.* Cows hooves grow continually and a major cause of lameness is not doing routine preventive trims. All cows need trimmed twice a year.
4. *Manure buildup.* Caked feet can lead to foot rot.
5. *Contagious lameness.* Foot warts spread on the dairy between animals and can be prevented with proper management.



Let's treat this lame cow today!

Special points of interest:

- Lameness is a major problem on many farms
- Diagnosing the cause of lameness is important for a successful outcome
- Most lame cows do not need a foot wrap
- Carve out the hoof completely to open up an abscess
- Foot rot needs antibiotic shot
- Cows with a swollen foot usually need surgery
- We support STATE ISSUE 2

Foot Warts

Raised red hairy painful bump on back of foot below heel bulbs. Usually on back feet.

Treatment:

Wrap foot with tetracycline bandage. Remove in 3 days!

If wart is also infected, consider antibiotic shot with Ex-cenel or Excede.

Sole Abscess

Soft spot on sole of hoof that is diagnosed by carving out with hoof knife.

Treatment:

Completely dig out soft spot with a WIDE shelf for complete drainage. DO NOT WRAP FOOT! Put block on good toe. Consider Flunixin IV for pain or if swollen.

Foot Rot

Between toes. Smelly and infected area that looks like skin between toes has been cut

Treatment:

DO NOT WRAP! Always give an antibiotic injection (Excede, Excenel, LA200). If swollen give Flunixin for 1-3 days. Always give Flunixin IV.

Common Causes and Treatments of Lameness

Problems that can occur.....

Improper treatment

Diagnosing the cause of lameness and following the treatment guidelines will help you properly treat your lame cows. Cows with foot rot always need an antibiotic shot. Abscesses need carved out completely so they drain. Finally....do not overuse foot wraps. Most lame cows DO NOT need foot wraps and in fact many conditions get worse if you wrap them. If a cow does need wrapped (wart), make sure you remove it in 3 days.

Delaying Treatment

If the foot is severely swollen or the cow has been lame for many days, it is likely that the infection is in the joint inside the hoof. No antibiotics are going to help these cases. The only solution is surgery of the foot—either drainage or amputation which is successful in many cases.

Not trimming

Every dairy either needs to hire a hoof trimmer or have a trim chute so that all cows get trimmed at least twice a year. Not performing routine trims causes the foot to become misshapen and can lead to abscesses.

Cow Comfort

Facilities and stalls that injure cows or make it difficult to stand up or lie down is a major cause of lameness and culling. If you have a lot of lame cows, sometimes minor adjustments can make major impacts on cow comfort. Ask us!



Severe swelling of foot....needs surgery!

Improper medication use

1. Always give Flunixin IV. Flunixin is the second largest meat residue in cull dairy cows. A single IM injection has a minimum 30 day meat hold and more than one injection has a 60+ day meat withhold. Ask us to show you how to properly administer Flunixin to avoid residues.
2. Our first choice for foot rot is Excede. It is easy to administer, effective and lasts 5 days with one dose.
3. Using antibiotics for sole abscesses does not work! You need to first carve out the sole on all cows that are lame.

Pictures of common foot diseases

Hairy Heel Wart/Foot Warts



Behind heel bulbs



Sole

Dig out sole to drain

Abscess/Sole Ulcer



Between toes

Reminder about scheduling farm calls

Please call us for calls before 10 am so that we can plan our driving routes and be efficient with our fuel....we pass this savings on to you by not increasing our trip fee! We strongly recommend that all dairy farms be on a monthly herd check schedule. If you are not on a routine schedule, then we ask you call us 2 weeks in advance for a herd check. If you need to cancel your herd check, please give us at least 2 days notice so that we can get another farm scheduled

Saturdays

We do not charge extra for Saturday calls before 10 am. We prefer not to do herd checks on Saturday but regular calls on Saturday are not an emergency. Our office is closed, but if you need a vet on Saturday, please call the vet on call for a regular sick cow call...there is no extra fee!



Give us a call if you have any questions.

Phone Numbers

Office 419-962-4344

Fred cell 419-606-3558

Dave cell 419-606-3557

Ellen cell 419-571-6767

Always call the office FIRST to see who is on call or to see if a vet is in the office for your question.

Ohio ISSUE 2

Issue 2 is a ballot issue that establishes a Livestock Care Standards Board. This is a farmer friendly ballot initiative that our clinic supports and we encourage our dairy producer clients to spread the word and try to get this ballot issue passed. The livestock care standards board would be created by the state and is composed of 13 members representing producer groups, veterinarians, academia, consumer groups and a local humane society representative. Several states, with the financial backing of the animal rights group the Humane Society of the United States, have passed ballot initiatives that restrict certain agricultural practices. The HSUS has publicly stated that Ohio is next in their sights and Ohio Farm Bureau is attempting to pass our own ballot initiative before the HSUS can put their version on the ballot.

Issue 2 would be farmer friendly because it would look at common ag practices, food safety, animal welfare, and production issues. It would ensure that animals are well cared for an farmers are not economically hurt by ridiculous measures from a group that is based outside of the state with no farm experience. If you would like more information about ISSUE 2, contact your local farm bureau. Our clinic also has literature and we may be able to get signs for your yard if you are interested in showing your neighbors that your dairy



Issue 2 is on the Ohio Ballot November 3rd, 2009. Our clinic supports ISSUE 2.

supports ISSUE 2. We also encourage you to consider voting for this issue before HSUS makes the rules for us!

Thank you for your business

We are all hoping for better times in the future. We appreciate the hard work our dairy farmers do everyday to provide consumers with safe, delicious, and nutritious dairy products. We enjoy working with all of you and appreciate your business.

Services we offer

1. Reproductive ultrasound
2. Timed AI hormone programs
3. Fetal sexing 60-85 days
4. Herd records analysis
5. Nutrition consultation and ration balancing
6. Sick cow treatments and training
7. On farm surgery
8. Embryo transfer
9. 24 hr Emergency services
10. Calf health programs
11. Hospitalization of sick calves for IV fluids
12. Milk culturing
13. Complete milking system analysis
14. Facilities evaluation and design

