

Belleville Hoof Trimming Clinic Draws A Large Crowd

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In the push for higher and higher milk production per cow, dairy producers often walk a fine line between maximizing profits and risking animal health. Unfortunately, farmers often share that path with a lame cow. When hoof trimmer Paul Neer from Belleville, Mifflin County, began noticing more and more cows with sore feet, he organized a prevention and awareness clinic.

He enlisted the help of Michael Lormore, a veterinarian with Monsanto, and Christopher Canale, director of Technical Services with Agway, to talk about foot health through rumen health. It's a sore subject farmers are growing more concerned about — over 250 people showed up.

"I've been a hoof trimmer for over eight years," began Neer. "In the last year and a half, foot trouble has virtually exploded. We hoof trimmers, veterinarians, milk haulers all depend on the dairymen. When I see this kind of trouble, it's time to talk about prevention and awareness."

Research shows that laminitis is one of the most significant sources of lameness in dairy cattle. Laminitis is an inflammation in "one of the narrow thin parallel plates of soft vascular sensitive tissues that cover the flesh within the wall of the hoof." Nutrition is recognized as a major cause.

"It's all about rumen function," says Lormore. "Good feedbunk health. Laminitis is metabolic and is far more expensive than an in-

fection. Regular foot trimming is an important part in managing a herd. Laminitis will be a big problem in the next 10 years, as we push toward 35,000-pound herd averages and get feed into the cows for energy. Laminitis will be a major problem."

Canale agrees. "Through management technology and strategy — nutrition, forages, health and cow comfort — we can control rumen health. Taking care of the rumen can help feet. It's a disease of management."

In laymen's terms, the problem can begin with when a cow is fed excessive fermentable carbohydrates, finely chopped forage, and slug grain. Some metabolic and digestive disorders, hormonal changes, and infectious diseases can add to the problem, as well as environmental aspects such as lack of or little bedding, hard stall surfaces, lack of exercise, or too much exercise on improper surfaces.

According to Dr. J.E. Nocek of the Spruce Haven Research Center in Union Springs, New York, carbohydrates make up approximately 70 to 80 percent of the dairy cow's ration. The level and availability in a cow's ration can have significant impact on rumen metabolism. Increases in the amount of concentrate or fermentable carbohydrates decreases saliva production, an important factor in neutralizing acids produced by ruminal fermentation.

A related study came to this conclusion: "Cows fed high concentrates had more lameness, of



Paul Neer leads discussion about the need for hoof trimming to keep dairy animals in good physical condition.

greater severity and duration, with sole lesions being the major problem. However, cows fed more grain produced 3.2 kg more milk/day with .06 percentage units higher milk protein."

High levels of rumen degradable protein has been shown to increase lameness and laminitis in several studies conducted in the late '80s and early '90s.

As for forages, particle length is required to ensure proper rumen function. In an evaluation conducted at Penn State, Jud Heinrichs concluded that "Reduced forage particle size has been shown to decrease the time spent chewing and cause a trend toward decreased rumen pH. When cows spend less time chewing, there is a decrease in the volume of saliva

produced needed to buffer the rumen."

Nocek concludes, "Nutrition and laminitis are linked through imbalances in carbohydrate nutrition: overload of ruminally fermentable carbohydrate in conjunction with inadequate effective fiber. The sub-clinical phase of both disease processes is most costly and damaging because they are often dismissed for other problems, allowing the disease to progress to an irreversible chronic phase. Since the highest incidence of laminitis is detected during the first 30 to 40 days post-partum, it is also associated with the occurrence of infectious and metabolic diseases, as well as environmental stress. It is important to profitably manage acidosis and laminitis since both are a consequence of

maximizing energy intake, milk production, and found in well managed herds. Critical areas of management include: feeding and management practices, attention to cow comfort, routine hoof trimming (twice/year), maintenance of adequate body condition, etc."

As news of the hoof-trimming clinic spread, families filled the auction area at Kish Valley Dairy Sales in Belleville, owned by Sherm Glick. Paul Neer introduced retired classifier Paul Miller who spoke about breeding strength back into herds. The group then moved outside for hoof trimming demonstrations on several cows with various foot problems. Neer urged farmers to learn the difference between warts, corns, and foot rot and to look for hemorrhaging.

Jersey Production Nominations

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — Entries for the Leading Living Lifetime Production awards are due in the office of the American Jersey Cattle Association by March 1, 1998.

DHIR records only are eligible. Minimum production levels for nominations are 150,000 pounds milk and/or 7,500 pounds fat and/or 5,000 pounds protein.

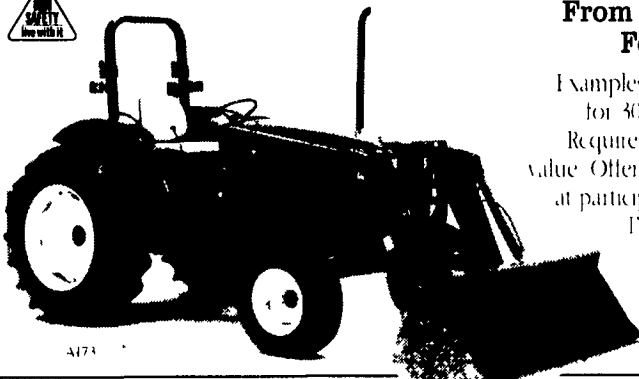
Cows alive as of December 31, 1997 are eligible for the contest.

Leading Living Lifetime winners for 1996 are, for protein, Glen Meadows Maple Sweetness owned by Glen Meadows Farm, Fultonville, N.Y., with 9,636 pounds; for milk, Maplerow Mercury Aron-PTL-P, owned by Peggy A. Bennett, Albion, N.Y., with 268,070 pounds; and for fat, Maplerow Mercury Aron-PTL-P, owned by Peggy A. Bennett, Albion, N.Y., with 12,305 pounds.

The Lifetime Milk trophy is sponsored by Ogston Farm, Columbus, N.J.; the Lifetime Fat trophy is sponsored by High Lawn Farm, Lenox, Mass.; and Edyvean Farm, Hughson, Calif., is sponsoring the Lifetime Protein award. In addition, awards will be given to the second through 10th place

milk, fat, and protein winners.

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