

Hoof Trimmers Share Talents At Clinic

DAVE LEFEVER

Lancaster Farming Staff

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Talk to 10 hoof trimmers and you might hear 10 different opinions on the best methods for keeping cows' feet in good shape.

But hoof trimmers have a lot to teach each other, according to Nelson Nolt of Nelson & Sons hoof trimmers, Myerstown.

Nolt was one of several dozen hoof trimmers, including a number from other states and Canada, who participated in a hoof trimming clinic last week at the Lebanon Expo Center.

Several hundred local dairy farmers also attended the event, which was organized by trimmers from the area and sponsored by various agribusinesses.

Nolt said that much can be learned in a gathering of hoof trimmers where each one has a chance to have his work critiqued by others in the group.

At a hoof trimmers' field day that preceded the larger event, Nolt joined a group of about 15 hoof trimmers for the purpose of exchanging ideas and improving skills.

"I loved it," Nolt said of the information exchange. "Everyone had their own opinions."

The importance of hoof trim-



George Lowery, Pierpont, Ohio, makes a point about hoof trimming at the clinic last week. Lowery has been trimming hooves for 50 years.

ming has come more and more into the spotlight in recent years because of the increasing number of cows that spend most or all of their time on concrete.

"If you keep them trimmed on a regular basis, you can get two or three extra lactations out of them," Nolt said. "It pays."

According to Dale Herr, one of

the organizers of the clinic, the fact that hoof trimming is an unregulated industry mean that farmers and hoof trimmers alike need to learn what good foot care entails.

In addition to a number of hoof trimmers demonstrating their trade at the clinic, veterinarians Arlen Mills and Gary Brumble spoke about hoof diseases and demonstrated good foot care by using cadaver hooves.

Nelson Weaver, a dairy farmer from Manheim, said he found the sessions useful, especially on the topic of vaccines for foot problems such as hairy warts.

Dan McFarland, Penn State ag engineer, was also on hand to talk about facilities and cow comfort issues.

Using live cows, hoof trimmers demonstrated their work on a variety of types of equipment, including tilt tables and upright chutes.

There is some debate about whether or not tilt tables are more stressful on the animals than upright chutes.

Herr cited a study reported recently in Hoard's Dairyman that showed animals demonstrate little difference in stress levels between the two methods.



Chip Hendricksen, Perry, N.Y., demonstrates hoof trimming in a vertical chute.



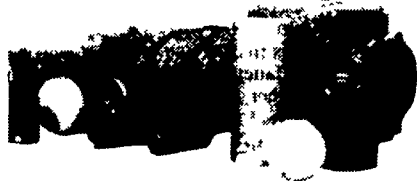
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