



HOOF HEALTH CONNECTION

A quarterly news magazine produced by the Hoof Trimmers Association, Inc.

A wide-angle photograph of a modern dairy barn. The barn has a high ceiling with exposed wooden beams and skylights. Rows of black and white cows are housed in metal stalls on both sides of a central aisle. A person in blue overalls and green boots is standing in the aisle, using a long-handled tool. The floor is covered with straw bedding.

**Issue 102
Summer 2020**

Photo Credit: Matthew Whitten © 2019

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

HOOF HEALTH
CONNECTION

ISSUE 102
Summer 2020



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Networking hoof trimmers, veterinarians, nutritionists, dairy producers, consultants and researchers around the globe to promote quality hoof trimming, provide educational opportunities on hoof care, and improve hoof health.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought extraordinary challenges in the way we manage our lives, our health, our workplaces and the business of hoof trimming, bringing with it an unsettling time for all of us in various ways.

With family around the world, all of whom are sharing and experiencing anxiety, I can only imagine how each of you must be feeling with concerns for loved ones that are isolated through this time.

As troubled as the world feels around us, for me, these circumstances have presented a sense that if we all do our part, for those of us out there on the front line or for those that stay at home, "Heroes to the Cause", if we continue to take the preventative measures to stay safe, together we can beat this.

There have been some inspiring, heart-warming sights, outside and inside my very own home. Lately, I heard the adage, 'connection takes commitment'. Personally, taking time learning and using webinar forum 'Zoom' or video conferencing and FaceTime with family, friends and colleagues are means for sharing in trials and successes. I see families taking walks and spending quality time together, taking a time out to stop and say hello to a neighbor, keeping the social distancing of course, but checking in to see if they're doing ok and if there is anything that they may need. Gratifying indeed, as this situation is very much a 'WE' thing as we as a people are all in this together and heartwarming to know that we care and take care of one another.

In these unprecedented times the HTA Board made the decision to postpone the July 2020 Hoof Health Conference slated to be held in Ohio. A great deal of consideration was given to circumstances surrounding the global pandemic and to the health and safety of those that were planning to attend. With the closure of international borders and the uncertainty of when they may reopen, stability of economies, airlines grounding aircraft and to when schools plan to reopen, the Board



Philip Spence
President, HTA

decided it would be in the best interests of our members and the association to reschedule the Hoof Health Conference and membership meeting, by transferring everything that was planned for this conference to the same venue at Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio to June 23-26, 2021.

With the HTA dealing with the here and now, and until we can hold our membership meeting, our bylaws require that the election of officers can only happen when membership can meet in person. The HTA Board members currently will continue to serve until the general meeting in June of 2021. We are currently working on a proposal to revise the bylaws to allow for electronic or digital meeting and decision making by the membership so that should we ever be confronted with similar circumstances in that we are restricted from holding large gatherings or prevented from traveling, HTA will be able to continue to move forward with elections and other business.

As you may be aware, economic and financial stresses have resulted from the current pandemic situation. HTA has experienced the same pressures. Our financial reserves



investments have suffered due to the current market circumstances, leading us to a hold situation. The Board is undergoing Covid-19 contingency budgeting, premising what best to do in increasing or maintaining income revenue and to reduce expenditure. To do that, the plan is, temporary suspension of some HTA programs, an effort to flatten the fluctuations in income, reallocation of funds in areas deemed best to create value for membership, such as utilizing webinars in the new website, and focusing on minimizing the deficit this year. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. We are in this together and remain strong and committed.

Stay Safe, healthy and well until we can meet again face to face.

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."
- Marie Curie (1867 - 1934)



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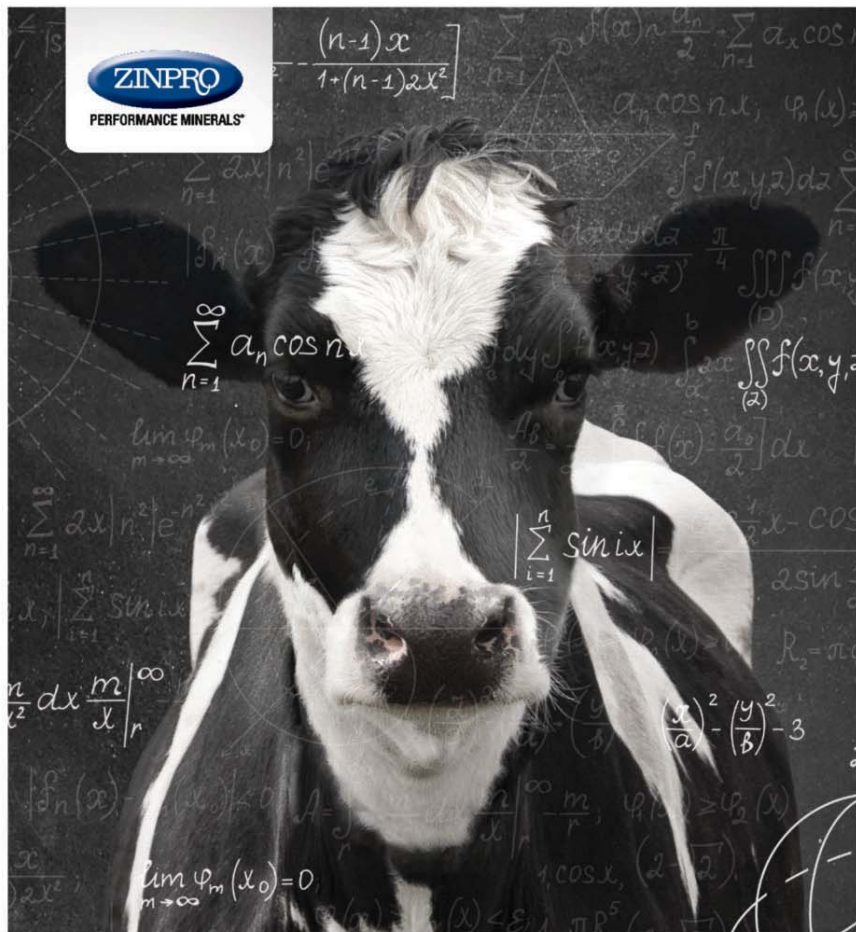
Reluctantly, but out of an abundance of concern for HTA members, their health, welfare, and economics, the Board of Directors has determined that the Hoof Health Conference scheduled for July 2020 must be rescheduled.

To that end, we have worked with the conference hotel to reschedule for **June 23-26, 2021**. While we hate that another year will pass before we can all be together to share and learn, we believe it is in the best interest of our fellow hoof trimmers as well as the association.

In the meantime, we are working on some different ways for us to spend time; share ideas, concerns and thoughts; and learn together. Be watching for some fun and exciting new programs coming your way soon.

Until then, be good to each other and stay well.





WE'VE DEVELOPED A FORMULA TO HELP MANAGE DIGITAL DERMATITIS. IT STARTS WITH SCIENCE.

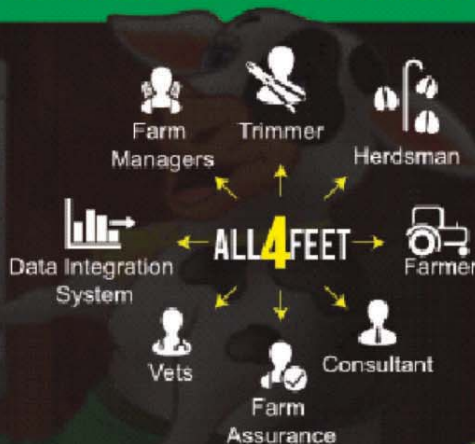
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RAY SMITH

May 29, 1966 - March 29, 2020

Mark Burwell



Ray only came to one Hoof Trimmer's convention and that was in Atlanta. His time there was used well as far as meeting trimmers far and wide. He went to pick up his last Appleton chute that he bought at the convention, which gave him ample reason to talk with everyone interested in our business. Many trimmers remember meeting and talking with Ray in Atlanta, and he became a person many people contacted when they had trouble with their chute, me included. Ray always enjoyed talking about ways to improve our work environment, as well as the cows well being while she was in our care. He was always concerned about every cow and treating her as if she were his own.

I always tried to get Ray to go to HTA conventions after that, but he would not fly on a plane. He said if God wanted him to fly, He would have given him wings. I think this story tells a lot about Ray and where he came from. His father, Paul, and his mother, Virginia, were given a present by one of Ray's sisters and her husband several years back. The present was a trip out west to see the country where they traveled for a couple of weeks and many miles before reaching the west coast. On that trip Ray called his father on the phone to see what he thought of the trip. If you knew Ray well, he was always

looking for a clever way to approach a question. Paul's famous answer was that it was the only place he had ever been that he could see the whole train at one time. Ray laughed about that for quite some time; the apple didn't fall far from the tree. When I had the opportunity to travel to Delta, Utah as part of the trimming crew for the Nye family dairy, I thought of Ray's question and Paul's answer.

Ray's mother and father were 100 % American Indian. They were part of the Lumbee tribe in South Carolina. Ray was proud of his Indian heritage. He had incredible work ethic and was a machine when it came to the number of cows he could trim day after day. His temper was even and steady any time we worked together, except when the farmer's peacock attacked the bumper on his truck. He did get a little uptight that day!

Ray refused to get on social media when it first came out. However, when the World of Hoof trimming and Hoof Hearted came online, he was all in. He traveled for work most every day and was in a hotel several nights per week. He was a student of the Hoof Trimming business and read, researched and talked to those he could gain information from. The Facebook pages mentioned above were a natural fit for him. He conversed with people worldwide and as Skip Blake put it, he wasn't afraid to say it as he saw it. He contributed to questions asked by fellow trimmers, and added his own insights.

When Ray was diagnosed with cancer, he made it public. He journaled his steps to fight it, and most of it was hard to read. However, it was in true Ray Smith fashion in that it was real. It was to the point and it made all of us cheer for his recovery. Trimmers from all over the world came forward with support and raised money for Ray and his family. It was hard for Ray to accept everyone's generosity, because he was a man that always made his own way in life. He worked hard up until just months before his passing. It was a hard decision for him to give up his business, but he did what needed to be done in the end. It was common for Ray and I to talk on our way to our farms or on our way home at the end of the day. I'm really going to miss those conversations, as well as my friend and yours - Mr. Ray Smith.

P.S.: He wouldn't have liked the formality of Mr. but he earned it in my mind.



A LIFETIMES NOT TOO LONG

A TRIBUTE TO RAY SMITH

RIP Ray Smith you were a great hoof trimmer and mentor to our profession. Always saying how it was and always willing to share your knowledge. I was blessed to have you as a colleague and friend over the last few years. But i am happy to know you are cancer and pain free now. - *Jamie Sullivan*



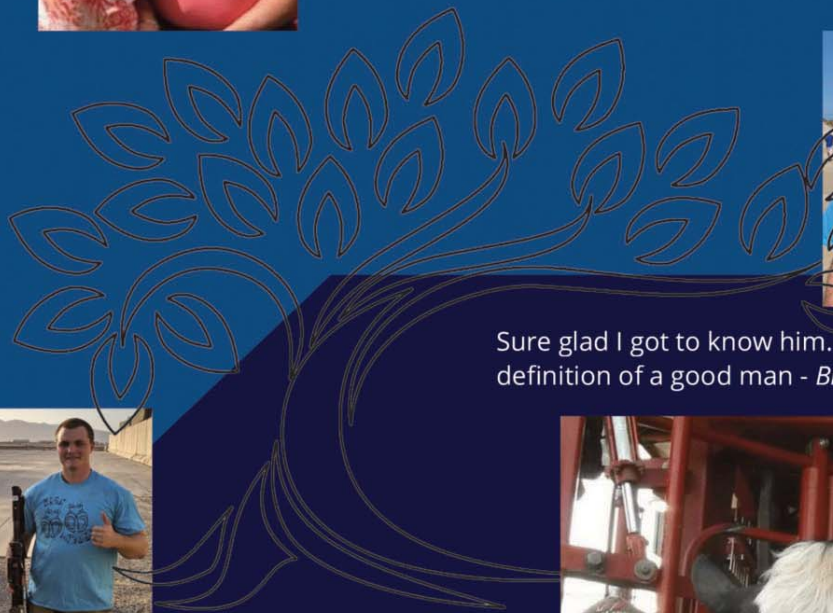
I've given it a lot of thought. They report over and over about hoarding, staying home, social distance, etc. in this mess.

But they don't speak much of how to lay a loved one to rest. How do you hold hands, hug and shed tears?

...I encourage all friends of my Brother, Ray Smith who are torn on the way to go.

Plant a tree in his honor and memory.

- *Brian Smith*



Sure glad I got to know him. The very definition of a good man - *Bill Kopperud*



"Ray was always eager to give good advice and sometimes tough but fair criticism. He always let you know how he felt... Thanks, Ray Smith, for teaching by example the things that matter." - *Skip Blake*



Been meaning to put a post up sooner in this group because i think this group was the only reason daddy had a facebook and no this group is full of people he thought very highly of but its been busy, im sure u all no about Ray Smith battle with cancer for the past 2 years its been a long hard road on him and all of us but as he said friday evening "were in the short rows now and thts when shit goes to breaking" he passed away Saturday at midnight all of his pain and suffering is completely gone and he is healed and in a better place. - *Tyler Smith*



From a Farmer's Perspective

Tessa McCormick, Four Winds Dairy, LLC

Not even two years ago I worked four jobs, was active on three committees, often found time to visit with the best tribe of friends a girl could ask for and had just begun seeing a man who would change my life. He is a farmer. Born and raised, cow manure in his veins, God-fearing, all-American farmer. This man I adored was tired, dirty, stressed. I could see it and I could sympathize, but I couldn't understand it, not really. He tried his damndest to keep me away from it. Protect me mayhap. The more he asked for my advice, my opinion, the more I wanted to be there to see, truly see, what it was I was helping with. Six months and a dozen arguments later I finally heard the words, "I need your help."

January 2019 he signed the paperwork to buy out his partner and take sole ownership to just shy of 2000 Holsteins. At the same time ownership changed, personnel changed, too. Five key people left all at once. The whole farm changed and it was the hardest thing in the world for me to see. His smile disappeared; his demeanor changed. In February, I started feeding calves. Fun Fact: I have NEVER set foot on a farm to work, had no idea how to take care of a calf, had zero knowledge of anything agricultural save for planting a garden. So obviously it was a piece of cake – no stress, no anxiety, easy-peasy. He asked one thing of me: "Don't let my babies die." The first two months were a blur of information - talking to the vet, reading up on medicines, absorbing everything I could from everywhere. What he didn't know at the time was he lit a fire in me and I took, "Don't let my babies die" as my mantra. I breathed it like it was oxygen. It was exhilarating and awful. I felt a love for these animals that I didn't even know could exist. We grew together as a couple but good God did we fight. IT took us quite some time to figure out that we were fighting for the same thing. The more I learned the more I wanted to do. I will forever bless and curse him for letting me take on more of this operation. Before I knew it, I was doing everything!

This past planting season the normal people were no longer part of the farm. This stubborn, wonderful farmer man decided he was going to do it and that's all there was to it. He did a stretch of three days straight in a tractor. I brought him food, clothes and contact solution. After 24 hours of only hearing from him when he needed me to drive out

and bring him something, I was almost convinced he had a Rexville girlfriend. I still didn't understand so much. Trying to understand all that was going on around me and keep up with the constant flow of information was excruciating. I started to question what this whole farming thing was about. Eventually, something in me clicked. I stopped worrying about failing him and started focusing on doing my best to retain. I didn't have to be perfect. I had to keep doing what I could and put in my 10,000 hours. Between the two of us we hired a whole new team and we all learned how to do this from the bottom. You couldn't tell at first, but things started to fall together. Looking back now you can see a slow progression of when we all started to breathe easier. Todd likes to say we don't just grow crops and cows. We grow people. He is absolutely and unequivocally correct. We have felons, parolees, people on probation. We have recovering addicts and people who like to drink instead of eat. Sounds like a recipe for disaster, doesn't it? Surprising thing is we have some of the hardest working, most grateful employees that any person could hope to have. I wish more people could see the things in them that we do. I'm also glad they didn't because then maybe we wouldn't have them.

He likes to say the farm was, "a vile beast that will consume your soul"; one of the biggest reasons he wouldn't let me help in the first place. It is true that it takes all your time and you never really get to breathe before it's on to the next thing. He was so wrong about it being vile, though. I'm not alone in the ag community when I say its magical. Watching the animals grow and thrive is rewarding all on its own. Seeing the growth and healing in the people, that is a most magnificent sight to behold. If I'd become a doctor like I wanted, I can't say with certainty that I would have helped as many people as I have in just this past year. All this stubborn farmer man of mine wanted to do was raise and milk cows like his parents before him. I didn't realize at the time how alluring and awe inspiring it was until I became a part of it. People like to say to us that they don't understand how you can work so hard and still get up every morning with the same amount of passion and dedication. Somehow you just do. Some say it's God. Some say it's stupidity. In truth it may be an equal amount of both. Whatever it is, I hope we never lose it.



There are too few farms left in this country. Too few who work so hard to make so little. Many of our local farms have closed up. It breaks my heart to know that the ones like us who loved to farm and loved their animals had to give it up. It can be blamed on a hundred factors – drop in milk prices, tax increases, not enough young blood to carry on the work, the cost of everything has skyrocketed, the zealots with their nut juice, the spreading of misinformation about the dairy industry in general. Thanks a bundle (insert celebrity name here). But how do you dissuade the stigma? The most rewarding beautiful things about this life are often the intangible. The ones that fail to have a string of words that truly convey what it is. I fear the magic that is agriculture will never be genuinely felt by people that don't live it. We are incredibly lucky to be where we are located. This community does have a pretty great grasp on this industry. Our school has done so much for future farmers by learning about it young. Many of the children here either grew up on or have been taught about the roots and history of farming. We will continue to take part in career day, Ag week and a handful of other things to keep the truth and the importance of this way of life. The first and last nine week marking periods of the school year we get to host a

student twice a week for future job placement. An apprenticeship of sorts. Doing this lets you take a step back and see your day from a fresh perspective. Touring the farm, explaining the rotary parlor, seeing the methane generator, watching the hoof trimmer, naming a new born calf they got to see enter the world. All these things that we often take for granted are brought back to us with fresh eyes. It reminds you how impressive it all is. It's hard to stay positive with all that's going on in the industry. It's incredibly difficult to keep your chin up and carry on.

I was tasked with writing this by our hoof trimmer. Just write something, he says, make it personal. I've done that and I'm glad I did. Thank you, Steve Wunderlich, I needed this. The people who read this, please indulge me in a favor. Tell your friends and neighbors to keep farming, continue to keep the faith, don't you dare ever feel like you aren't worthwhile. Feeding the American people is one of the most noble endeavors anyone could ever ask to undertake. We are the backbone of this country. You are important and you matter. My hat's off to all of you stinky, tired, wonderful humans. I hope God blesses you and yours. You aren't alone and you're not forgotten.



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Results from the Foot Trimming Hygiene Questionnaire

Amy Gillespie, BVMS, MSc DipECBHM, MRCVS



Research has shown that there is a risk of transmitting digital dermatitis during foot-trimming and work is needed to address this risk. In 2019, a questionnaire was carried out to gauge current industry practices for maintaining good hand and hoof knife hygiene during foot trimming. The questionnaire was answered by 135 cattle foot-trimmers, farmers and veterinary surgeons.

Respondents reported working on 4,869 farms and estimated they were trimming 22,192 cows between them every week. They also estimated that 3,555 (73%) of their farms were affected by DD. Hygiene measures used for handwashing and knife cleaning, and the frequency of application, were categorised according to whether transmission of DD is likely to be prevented.

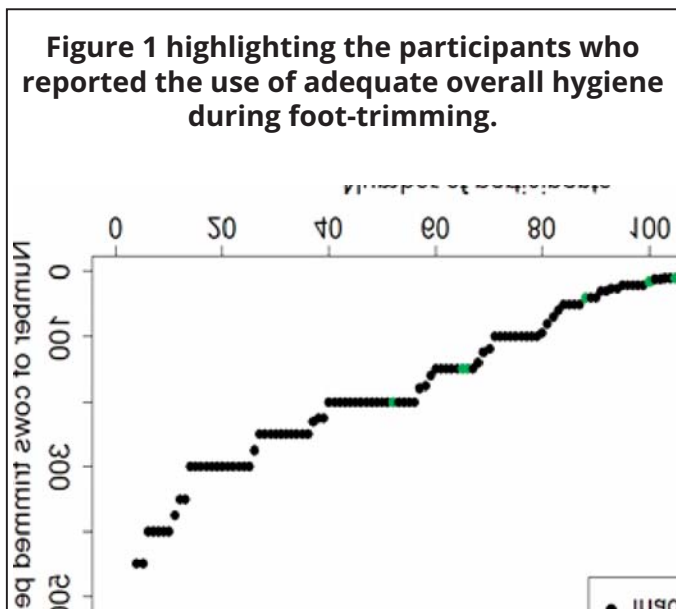
Ten different hygiene measures were reported for handwashing, and 12 for hoof knife cleaning. These were classified as “Adequate” if a cleaning or disinfection agent was used (as opposed to water only, paper towel or sawdust). “Handwashing” was also considered adequate if the respondent reported changing gloves. The different types of measures used for hand hygiene were adequate in 60.7% of cases, whilst measures for knives were adequate in 81.1% of cases.

“Adequate” frequency was defined as being carried out at least after trimming of DD affected animals.

Handwashing was adequate for 18% of respondents and knife cleaning was adequate for 21%, (whilst 55% and 56% respectively reported that no hygiene measures were undertaken).

Handwashing and knife cleaning practices were further assessed considering **both frequency and efficacy** to define whether *overall hygiene* was “Adequate” or “Inadequate” for preventing DD transmission for each participant. (Figure 1). Thirteen participants reported adequate overall hygiene (9.6%) and were collectively responsible for 2.7% of cows trimmed. (Only 4 were trimming more than 15 cows per week). There is a strong trend that most of those who trim a significant number of cows’ feet are not taking hygiene precautions that would be adequate to prevent spread of DD (Figure 1).

Encouragingly, the hygiene measures used by participants were mainly effective, especially for hoof knife cleaning. The frequency of application, however, is often inadequate and for half of respondents was



absent. Ideally equipment should be disinfected between feet or at least between animals.

In case you missed the disinfection protocol we have developed it is available here for free download: <https://ahdb.org.uk/reducing-spread-of-DD>.

Second Foot Trimming Hygiene Questionnaire

A follow-up questionnaire has been launched to gauge awareness of hygiene recommendations, and to gather information regarding the barriers to implementing improved hygiene practices in the industry. Most importantly, we would like to know whether you have any suggestions for further improvements and where you would like us to direct future research.

Please visit our website (link below) and take a few minutes to answer our questions- your responses are important for helping to tackle digital dermatitis! https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/infection-and-global-health/research/bovine-digital-dermatitis/follow_up

We are offering a prize draw as a thank you to all those taking part- don't forget to fill in your email address on the survey if you want to be entered!



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Reflections on 55 Years of My Professional Hoof Trimming Career

Peter Kudelka

What follows is a short treatise on what I have seen out in huskings as I practiced hoof trimming dairy cattle from my beginnings until the present. A lot has been learned by observation and practice and does not have any formal scientific proof behind me but might be of interest.

As I started to trim feet in the middle of the seventies I certainly learned about how little I knew about dairy cattle hoof trimming but I did know what I did not know and I knew how to ask questions and had to learn to not only look but to see and keep my mouth shut. At that time there was very little knowledge among the dairying fraternity but more and more with the Universities and the feed companies and the ability to get the necessary education out to the farms was a slow process at the best of times. The service industries had to learn who the innovative dairy farmers who would try new things and then let them spread the new innovative ways to doing things. This included nutrition, equipment in the barn and out, housing, and the dealing with hired help.

The most obvious to me was Urea to add protein to the diet of dairy and beef. The premise was from the University of Guelph in 1967 that you could feed Urea to beef but never more than 5% to dairy cattle. It was many years later that I learned the truth of this one and it had a direct effect on the number of corkscrew claws that we ran into at the time.

Not only was the feeding having to change but also the milking equipment, the livestock housing along with the nutrition. When my father wanted to change and try some new sweet feed regimen from Purina, he was not able to get it done locally but had to go to a small private mill 40 miles away. Equipment was much smaller, most air lines in barns were under an inch and a quarter and suction at the teat end was much higher than it is today.

By the end of the eighties a number of things were going to start to happen in the dairy industry at the farm level. Not only were the size of the herds getting larger but the large amount of high protein from alternate sources slug feeding; we saw a lot of cows living with acidosis. We were also starting to see digital dermatitis. Farmers were tending to feed less and less fiber and more hotter proteins, attempting to increase production but to the detriment of the cow. Hoof trimmers as a whole were getting more support from veterinarians but support from nutritionists was still a few years away. Starting in 1994, educational opportunities were starting to happen for hoof trimmers and it started for me in Florida at the North American Veterinary Conference and continued for the next number of years. In 1996 the Hoof Trimmers Association was formed and hoof trimmers started to meet. As the years passed, we began to recognize each other, establish a common vocabulary, and most importantly learn from each other.

I have always felt that most of the problems in the dairy could be solved by the nutritionist but the real problem was that there was no money by correcting the problem that way. Feeding more fiber was creating a healthier cow but not increasing the cow's production. Through the 1980's & 1990's crude protein in dairy feed rations was 18% to 19% which by 2000 proved to be way too high to keep the cow healthy. At one client I saw remarkably less digital dermatitis and found out about feeding kelp, black earth and a Shaklee product Basic H that broke down surface tension on food. This was the beginning of a continuing line of education. With this line of thinking I also began to realize how depleted of micronutrients our field crop land had become as they had been mined out and how important it was to get these micronutrients back into the diet. I would go on to sell myself on the benefits of these products (probiotics). At another client who was in trouble I



suggested the kelp but it was way too expensive. Talking with the nutritionist, who suggested the introduction of zinc methionine, brought an inexpensive result that turned the herd around in less than three months. I began to think in terms of detoxifying cows using either kelp, black earth, or dry hay. Clients barely believed that they could detoxify themselves let alone their cows. Urea has been a really big irritant to me. For many years I looked at everything in what the dairy cow was being fed and after a trip to an upscale herd in Quebec where I walked in and every cow was gaunt gutted and the udders of all, even the fresh cows, were either shaded blue or grey and the feet were a mess. The cows were averaging 37 kilos and on the very edge of staying healthy. I asked the client if I could take feed samples and he agreed and so I did. I sent it to the person I knew could get the testing done and many weeks later he told me that it had been tested and the feeds had come back .067 of the grain rations when it should not be over .02 of the grain rations. This information was passed to me verbally as the testing agency would not write a written report. Bingo!! I had my answer and it worked for me. This herd would go on to average 40 plus kilos a couple of years later and be a lot healthier. On my travels I was told that the only feed an animal gets that a farmer should not taste test was corn gluten meal and suddenly I had a pretty good idea of how they were putting urea into the feed and some of the issues around the

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mixing of small amounts into cattle rations. An aside was the fact that if you found a herd that was having a problem with salmonella there was always a broken bag of corn gluten meal around. I would later learn from an English Veterinarian that the feeding of Urea predisposes the skin to being receptive to skin health problems. The mixing of feed is an issue that has seen very little attention. If you go to a bulk food store and buy a couple of gallons of Smarties put it into your mixer and feed it than collect a bushel of feed from three places along the bunk, count the smarties and you can see how effective your mixer really is.

Now I start talking to nutritionists and I get the runaround that the issue is everything from leaky gut to natural urea already in the stomach. Rumensin was another product that I had a lot of issues with as I saw a lot of foot deformity in young stock. I never spoke against it but I did believe in not using it 24-7. Not all protein sources are created equal, the issue becomes from hotter proteins that they are more soluble and easily taken up and they go into the feet as a burst and zinc methionine or kelp allows the pickup of these hot solubles to be taken up evenly into the foot. God bless Zinpro and Zinc Methionine! The other big issues that I had as I started out was cracked heels. Originally my treatment of hooves has been the use of chlorine, Gentian Violet for cracks and rot; iodine crystals and turpentine for proud flesh ulcers. On this issue of cracked heels, I did not agree with Chuck Guard. And while we differed in this thinking, I did not challenge him that he was wrong. At a later meeting I was able to sit down and discuss our different views of the problem at the time. What is really interesting is that for the most part we have seen very little of cracked heels that we saw in the 50's, 60's & 70's in tie stall barns but other problems came along. I was very slow to take up bandaging and even slower to start blocking. Initially I was taught how to trim to leave the problem toe higher to let the other toe carry the weight.

There have been many new products, too numerous to mention, that have been much safer to use. Tetracycline has been one that is over-used and the profession is generally moving away from it. Blocks and glues have come a long way and certainly have a place in the treatment of problems, especially on the pain management side. One area

that I have a great deal of problem with is the foot bath. For me it does not work as effectively as I would like to see it do mainly because it is not managed properly in most places. The two old time products promoted were copper sulfate and formaldehyde. I feel both are overkill and I think have safety issues. I know too many trimming friends who have seen positive results for me to say that foot baths do not work.

We are starting to see teams of Hoof Trimmer, Veterinary, Nutritionist & Dairy Farmer come together as a team and come up with solutions that will make Dairy Farming more profitable for all concerned. The future will lie with the collection and use of data because all of us will have to interpret not only our data but also the other data that is collected. I have never had a nutritionist come to me and say that I changed something; do you see any difference in the feet. I have had a nutritionist come and say we tested the last ten batches of the feed and we found nothing wrong that the feed met the specifications. We did not change anything! "What are you seeing in the feet?" It was the third cow on a three-day job. By the time I had finished the job I knew that they had changed something but I would never know what. I could see a change in the feet and the next time I went they had not changed feed companies but they had changed nutritionists. I have always had the support of veterinarians but it was always one to one on a direct question and only ran into a problem of not getting the product that I needed once in Quebec and I just went to a different veterinary in Quebec and got what I needed through the farmer. By 2000 the hoof trimmers were sharing stories of successes and failures among themselves and this brought a huge amount of pride into we hoof trimmers as individuals and as a profession.

As a profession Hoof Trimming will change. It will change with not only the people doing the job, the equipment that will be used but also the attitude of the individual toward everything that has to do with getting the job done. We all share this adventure and let's get with this rollercoaster and enjoy the ride into a prosperous future.





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As the COVID-19 has changed our normal way of life and work, we are looking for that public definition of our work to warrant that we are essential to our clients and animals that we serve. To each of us it's a "no brainer" that our work can't be done from my computer and that staying home is not an option. Each of us have looked and found some sort of documentation for ourselves and our employees to drive to work. I'll admit mine does not say Hoof Trimmer are essential but are on the shirt tails of veterinary services.

The COVID-19 has forced us to evaluate what we do and have changed our sanitary protection to ourselves and those around us. Most of us work alone or with a limited number of employees. That's in our favor but our human side still lingers that fear that we are going to get Covid-19 or we are going to come in contact with someone who has been infected and be forced to take a two-week quarantine.

I'm sure that each of us are proud and thankful that we are Hoof Trimmer's and we are essential to agriculture. We are all more respectful of those in the medical field who are in the front line of this invisible battle. We all pray for a quick end to this pandemic but the uncertain timeline is indeed stressful.

Be safe, protect yourself, and continue to serve our clients and cows to the best of our ability.

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- Thomas A. Edison*



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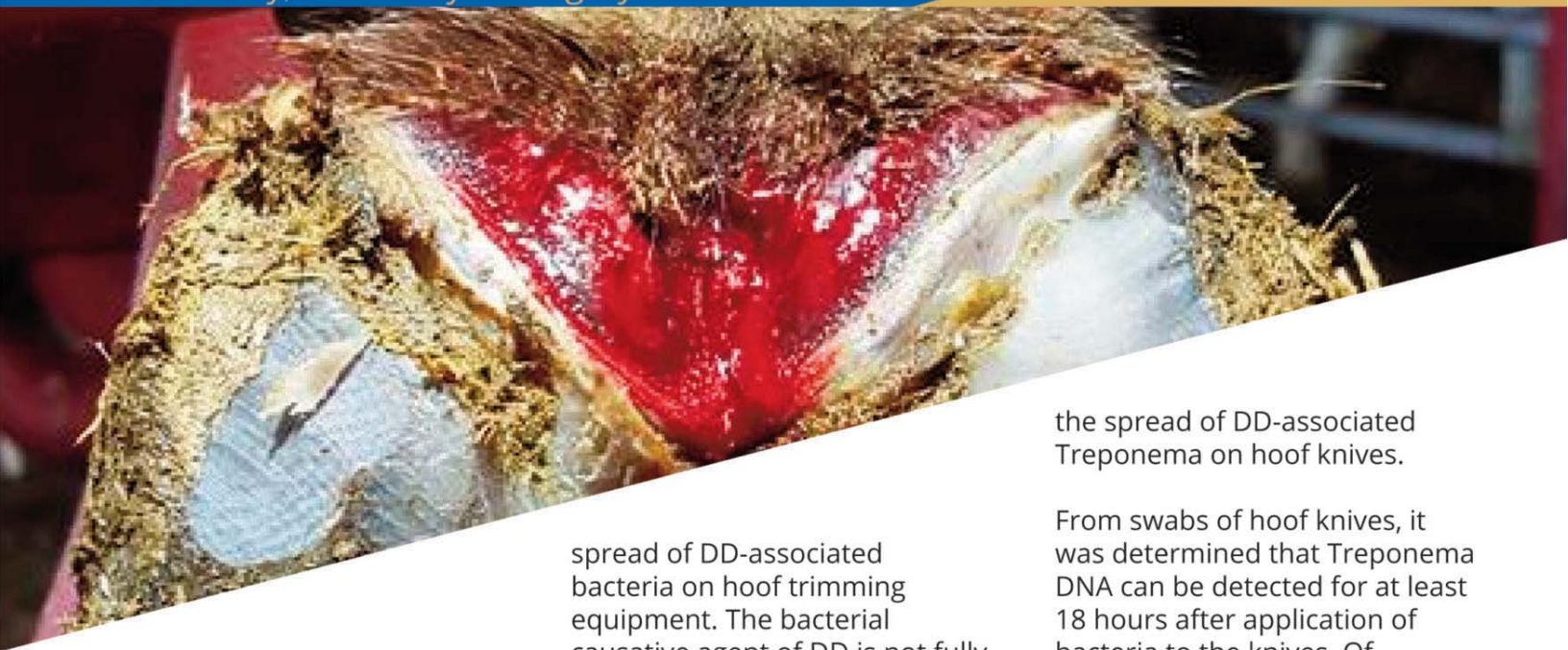
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New Insights into Disinfection Protocols for Hoof Trimming Equipment to Prevent the Spread of Digital Dermatitis-Associated Bacteria

Ben Caddey, University of Calgary



Digital dermatitis (DD), already more than 40 years after its first reporting, still has many questions left unanswered about what causes the disease and how best to prevent and treat it. However, because it is an infectious disease, we can assume that DD is picked up by individual animals somewhere from their immediate environment. Whether the disease is spread from manure, other cows, or contaminated equipment; an effective mitigation strategy for all risk factors can be developed if the proper research is done. Recently, a study published in *Veterinary Record* (2019) by Amy Gillespie's group at the University of Liverpool [1] focused on preventing the

spread of DD-associated bacteria on hoof trimming equipment. The bacterial causative agent of DD is not fully understood yet, but previous reports suggest that among all the dozens of different bacteria possibly involved in DD, *Treponema* are the most abundant within lesions. *Treponema* bacteria are long, spiral-shaped bacteria that move around in a corkscrew-like fashion, allowing them to burrow deep into skin and possibly contribute to DD lesion formation. Gillespie and her research group applied two different species of *Treponema* that were isolated from DD lesions—*T. pedis* and *T. phagedenis*—onto hoof knife blades to achieve two main objectives: 1) to determine how long *Treponema* survive on hoof knives, and 2) which disinfectant is most effective at eliminating

the spread of DD-associated *Treponema* on hoof knives.

From swabs of hoof knives, it was determined that *Treponema* DNA can be detected for at least 18 hours after application of bacteria to the knives. Of interest, attempts to culture *Treponema* from these hoof knives was only possible within 2 hours. This means that under laboratory controlled conditions, DD-associated *Treponema* may be able to spread across individual animals if the same knife is used on multiple animals within 2 hours and no adequate disinfection protocol is in place.

Efficacy of various disinfectants at a 20 second exposure time were tested to assist in establishing protocols for hoof trimmers to follow when on farm. Three disinfects, 1% FAM 30 (iodine-based), 2% sodium hypochlorite (chlorine-based bleach), and 2% Virkon, all performed well at reducing traces of *Treponema* on hoof



knives compared to 5% copper sulphate, 2% glutaraldehyde, and water. In particular, 1% FAM 30 was able to completely eliminate all traces of Treponema in cultures, performing the best out of the other disinfectants in this regard.

It is important to stress that this work was completed in a lab setting, and may not translate directly to farm conditions. It is very important for a disinfectant to be applied after knives are cleared of any type of debris

(manure, trimmings, etc.), otherwise limited effectivity should be expected. Altogether, stringent levels of disinfection must be properly planned and put into use consistently if we're to reduce our risk of spreading DD and other harmful infectious diseases on hoof trimming equipment. Consultation between hoof trimmers, veterinarians, researchers, and producers is essential to establishing the most effective and feasible protocols for reducing the impact of preventable diseases. And

although this paper focuses on DD, other blood transmitted diseases like leucosis should also be taken into account. As researchers, we see that there is still some extra work needed to fully endorse FAM 30, sodium hypochlorite, or Virkon as the best method of preventing a hoof trimmer's role in spreading DD, but we strongly recommend taking these results into consideration when discussing biosafety and disinfection protocols for on-farm use.



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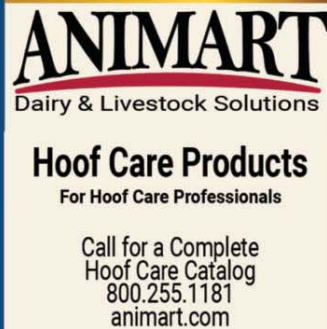


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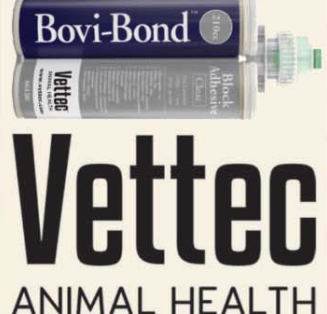
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