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Abstract

Epidemiology of lameness in dairy cattle: description and analysis of foot lesions

R.D. Murray, D.Y. Downham, M.J. Clarkson, W.B. Faull, J.W. Hughes, F.J. Manson, J.B. Merritt, W.B. Russell, J.E. Sutherst, W.R. Ward
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Information from 37 dairy farms, in four regions of England and Wales provided data on 8991 lesions and the preventive trimming of 4837 cows' feet. Of the total of 13,828 forms returned, veterinary surgeons treated 32 per cent and farmers or stockmen 46 per cent. Of the 8645 lesions associated with episodes of lameness, lesions in the hindlimbs accounted for 92 per cent, of which 65 per cent were in the outer claw, 20 per cent in the skin and 14 per cent in the inner claw. Sole ulcers

(40 per cent) and white line lesions (29 per cent) were the predominant diseases of horn, and digital dermatitis (40 per cent) was the most common disease of the skin. Subjective assessments showed that sandcrack, penetration of the sole by foreign bodies and interdigital necrobacillosis were associated with the most severe cases of lameness. There was a significant seasonal effect in the reporting of lesions.