8 Point – Dairy Cow Hoof Examination



1	Observe the cow walking. Which leg is the cow lame in?			
	Head down? Hind limb		Head up? Fore limb	•
2	NO Is the leg swollen and obviously painful above the hoof?			
	No swelling present.		Think of infections like footrot. Note: Always check for a wire or similar wrapped around leg/claw	*
3	Examine the external surface of both hooves on the lame leg and compare with the external surfaces of hooves on the other feet. Are cracks present in external surface of the hoof wall of lame leg?			
	No abnormality detected in either claw on the lame foot.		Vertical or horizontal cracks present – possible sand crack(s).	
4	Restrain cow in suitable facility and immobilize the affected leg with a rope or strap. <i>Tip: Use a second person to apply a 'tail jack' while attaching the rope.</i> Thoroughly clean the external surface with a brush and water. Is there soft tissue swelling with foul smelling discharge and dead and damaged skin in the Interdigital space?			
	No abnormality detected in the Interdigital space.		Footrot or a hard fleshy swelling or growth – possible Fibroma or a foreign body (gravel or stone), or foreign body penetration (wire) and injury of the Axial wall, or an Axial wall crack	
5	Carefully pare or sand away the superficial outer surface of the sole and trim any overgrown wall horn (double sole). Sole horn may be very thin so be careful not to reduce the weight bearing surface around the edge of the hoof more than is necessary. Is there abnormal discolouration in the sole horn? Do not confuse with normal pigment (usually black).			YES
	No visible discolouration.	 Red or bleeding lesion on sole at the sole-heel junction – sole ulcer? Red/purple smudges in the sole itself – bruised sole? Red paint splash spots/lines in the sole horn – Laminitis? Black/dark lines or cracks in the sole – sole penetration and/or under-run sole. Pare away until no black horn, dead tissue, or dirt remains, or pus detected. Check for presence of foreign body – stones/nail. 		
6	NO White line – expanded and filled with mud and gravel, especially towards heel area? YE			YES
	No apparent abnormality not detected.		White Line Disease – separation of wall from sole – check for abscess breaking out at the Coronet? Trim or grind hoof wall back to normal tissue to allow drainage.	•
7	Use hoof testers over the sole to gently squeeze the sole against the wall searching for sensitive areas which cause withdrawal reflex (flinching). Are there any sensitive areas which cause withdrawal reflex?			
	No apparent abnormality detected in either claw or hoof.		 Withdrawal response detected Bruising – rest Toe/foot abscess or under-run sole – trim, pare or grind until loose sole horn removed back to normal horn Pus detected – establish drainage. 	
8	Seek veterinary advice as lameness may be associated wit	th upp	er leg abnormality.	

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