

## Lameness Relevance in Dairy Cattle.

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### **Abstract**

In Chile milk production systems differ widely depending on the geographic and climatic zone in which it operates. In the central area confined milk production, cows are kept in barns and have high levels of milk production. In the south of the country the main system of production is on pasture with this system cows could be supplemented with forage crops or concentrates.

A study of prevalence of lameness in 2370 cows in 4 dairy farms done in central area shows that the prevalence was 21.6%. The five most common lesions were overgrowth (47%), digital dermatitis (31%), ulcer (20%), interdigital dermatitis (12%) and white line disease (12%). The hind limbs were the most affected with 73%. A 20% of the lame cows needed a block (rubber) and 56% of the lame cows needed a cohesive bandage. Also, 27% of cows only needed a corrective trim and culling was recommended in 2% of the cows due to the severity of the lesions. (Galleguillos and Borkert, 2013).

In this area of the country, the overgrowth and digital dermatitis was the most common lesion. This may be explained in part because cows are maintained in barns. In addition, most of the farms do not have an established trimming routine. Thus, the prevalence of digital dermatitis agrees to the presentation of this disease in confined systems where stocking density and poor hygiene predispose animals to present this disease.

Some authors have reported prevalences between 9.1 and 46.6% in the south area of Chile. Borkert (2011) determined in 47 dairy farms of the south area that the lameness prevalence was 9.2%. The 4 most common injuries: white line disease (68.2%), ulcers (41.3%), double sole (27.5%) and overgrowth (24.6%). The hind limbs were the most affected by 72%.

The white line disease is by far the most important lesion for pasture systems, and this is associated with improper handling, poorly designed infrastructure and poor walking surfaces, Levet *et al.* (2013) reports that in 50 dairy farms on pasture roads built with different materials was a risk factor for higher prevalence of lameness in the south of Chile. It is important to train people who work in dairy farms to improve the identification of lame cows as well as, correct diagnosis of lesions.

## References

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