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Distribution of lesions by limbs and claw affected in 3477 lame cows in 50 dairy herds in southern Chile

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Introduction: The lameness is caused by multifactorial disorders, where feeding practices, environment, infectious processes, genetics and behavior, both animal and human, are risk factors. In Chile there are few studies about the prevalence of lameness in dairy cows. Moreover, there are no studies that emphasize the distribution of the lesions by affected limb and sometimes not thoroughly reviewed all four limbs generating an underestimation of the problem and a partial or temporary improvement of the animal health.

Objective: Determine the distribution of lesions by limbs and claw affected in 3477 lameness in 50 dairy farms in southern Chile

Material and Methods: 50 dairy farms in the IX, X and XIV regions of Chile were visited from June 2009 to September 2010. A veterinarian attended and collected the data of 3477 lame cows to determine the distribution of lesions by limbs and claw affected. There were trimmed the whole claws in all the cows. Data were uploaded to EXCEL 2007 to record hoof lesions and descriptive statistic was performed.

Results: It was performed corrective and curative trim to a total of 27816 claws of 3477 lame cows. Most of the injuries affected the hind limbs (74%) and a 26% affected the forelimbs. The most affected was the lateral hind claw (65%) (comparing the claws of the hind limbs). The three most frequent disorders were the white line disease (68.2%), ulcer (41.3%) and double sole (27.5%).

CONCLUSION: The distribution of lesions is similar to recent studies in Chile and to the international literature. However, the author considers the lameness is underestimated. It is necessary to train the staff of the dairy farm and teach them that lame cows redistribute its weight on their other limbs increasing the risk of hoof injuries and therefore trimmers should review all four extremities.
Key words: lameness, limbs, lesions, claws.