PREVALENCE OF LAMENESS IN 15.053 COWS AND THE TYPE OF CLAW LESION IN 961 LAME COWS FROM 28 DAIRY HERDS IN SOUTHERN CHILE

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Introduction: LAMENESS causes pain, deterioration of ANIMAL WELFARE and economic losses. LAMENESS is caused because of multifactorial disorders, where feeding practices, environment, infectious processes, genetics and behavior are involved. There are few studies in Chile about the prevalence of LAMENESS in dairy cows. Some authors have reported prevalences between 9.1 and 46.6%. The prevalence of LAMENESS found in other countries (including Israel, New Zealand and USA) vary from 3.8% to 30%.

Objective: Determinate the prevalence of LAMENESS in 15.053 cows and the type of claw lesions in 961 lame cows from 28 dairy farms in southern Chile.

Material and methods: 28 Dairy farms in the X region of Chile were visited from June of 2009 to may of 2010. A Veterinary Doctor attended and collected the data from 961 lame cows to determinate the prevalence of type of the lesions. In lame cows all four feet were examined.

Results: The average prevalence of LAMENESS was 9.9%. The four most frequent lesions were white line disease (69.6%), ulceration of the sole (40.6%), overgrowth of the horn (34.3%) and sole hemorrhage (30.3%). The hind foot was the most affected in 72% of the cows and the most affected claw was the lateral hind claw in 67%.

Conclusion: The average prevalence of LAMENESS is similar to recent studies in Chile. It is necessary to train the staff of the dairy farms for a good identification of LAMENESS.

Keywords: LAMENESS, prevalence.