

Good Management Practices Can Help Prevent Lameness

by Donna M. Amaral-Phillips

Management Action	Why is this practice important?
Scrap lots to prevent cows' hooves from coming in contact with manure and urine	Increased exposure of hooves and feet to manure and urine can increase the incidence of foot rot and other infectious foot problems. Also, moist hooves are softer and may be more susceptible of injury from small stones found in lanes which move cows to and from barn lots.
Trim feet regularly	Make sure cows distribute their weight evenly over the claw
Proper use of footbaths and regular spraying of hooves to treat hairy heel warts	Prevent infectious diseases of the hoof
Minimize standing time on concrete surfaces	Provide comfortable, well-bedded, and properly-designed freestalls for cows to lie down and chew their cuds. Do not overcrowd the freestall barn- enough stalls are needed so that the timid heifer can "find her own stall"
After feeding, the majority of the herd should be lying down in stalls and chewing their cuds	If cows are not using the stalls properly, investigate how to improve their usage (Are the stalls the proper length? Do cows have adequate lunge space to get up and to lie down? Are the stalls comfortable?)
Hock Lesions	Adequate bedding is needed in the rear of the stall to prevent lesions. (With mattresses, 1 inch of bedding should cover the back of the stall.)