



VPP Beef Niche Market Cow earns a premium - BCS #3

DQC
Dairy Quality Center
a division of Agri-Education, Inc.

BEEF TRIM



Unworthy of selling into the VPP Beef Niche Market - BCS #1

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Ouch - That Hurts!

Southwest Region

When you stub your toe or step on something sharp the first thing you do is check it out. You assess your foot based on your pain level and determine treatment to correct or prevent further damage. A cow knows pain but doesn't have the ability to treat her foot/h hoof but relies on you to: 1. Notice the problem ("Hey, I'm limping here - something is wrong") 2. Assess the injury or source of pain ("Got a minute to check out my problem?") 3. Prevent and/or treat the hoof/foot ("Thanks for the TLC, I appreciate it!")

In reality foot health is serious for man and animals alike. The ability of the cow to move freely, to eat, stand, be bred, walk, and even rise up and lie down impacts the economics of the dairy. The milk producer is focused on milk production, feeding, breeding, etc. Fresh eyes -- (your eyes and your knowledge) are needed to guide locomotion assessment.

Here's the rub:

Image - Milk producers are working hard to create a trustworthy image with consumers as food producers.

Strike one; a cow that appears to limp. Consumers assume *the milk producer doesn't care about his cows.* "If one dairy is bad, they all are bad. Why don't they care about their animal's pain?"

Longevity - Locomotion and hoof health can be one of the quickest ways to loose a high producing cow. **Strike two; a premature cull.** Definitely a sore spot as second and third lactation cows make the dairy money (an economic loss for the producer).

Production & Economics - A healthy cow is the shining star of the milking string. A poor environment, overstocking, heat wave with little relief strategies in place, inadequate or inconsistent nutrition based on the cow's life cycle needs, poor genetics, mishandled cows in the parlor or loafing area, and many other failures can threaten the continued success for this shining star. **Strike three;** if she isn't treated like a queen she will not continue to be the shining star. Once she is a liability she will have to go.

This calls for a specialist in animal care - a defender of diseases - your veterinarian!

The veterinarian's knowledge of animal health, vast experiences of cattle behaviors and the sincere dedication to "do no harm" and prevent pain. Creating a plan and tailoring it to the dairy's needs is essential.

Hoof health is a great reason to increase your veterinarian's consultation with dairy clients. What is the veterinarian's role and involvement related to your herd's hoof health?

6 Most Missed Opportunities

1. Consultation for semen selection and genetics to improve leg and hoof structure.
2. Training for dairy managers and employees to establish and follow hoof care protocols.
3. Review hoof trimming records regularly to assess treatments and improvements. (Is the hoof trimming program working / do the cows improve?)
4. Instruct dairy managers to have an action plan in place for quick response to emergency events. What steps need to be taken? Who is in charge?
5. Assess and identify locomotion scores and repeat hoof health events (using the records) to determine when an animal is culled/marketed.
6. Include your veterinarian in the dairy management team to reduce animal pain (polled genetics, improve milk quality, increase longevity, etc.) and more!

You have a great lead into hoof health discussions with the Zinpro Corporation's **Cattle Lameness Manual** as you work to reduce pain at the dairy!

