

The “Claw-Manager” – a new digital protocol and software program for professional claw trimmers and vets for documentation and analysis of claw disorders

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Objective

In most dairy herds there is a lack of documentation of lameness and claw disorders, and digital software programs are rarely used by claw trimmers or farmers. The aim of this report is to present a newly established digital protocol and software program – called the “claw manager”- as modern tool for documentation of claw disorders for the professional claw trimmer.

Materials and Methods

A shock proof and washable touchscreen is mounted on the tilt table or the walk-in claw trimming crush close to the claw trimmer, with a wireless connection from the touchscreen to a laptop and a printer placed in the driver`s cab. Data on the farm can be registered manually or by import of data from public farm registers, such as the dairy performance control register or the farm register of the Agrarmarkt Austria. The animal data file comprises all claw disorders graded into three severity scores and five lameness scores. As a default, lameness scores for severe claw disorders and reminders for presentation of affected cows to the vet are also included. Treatments and working time are also recorded. For each of the 8 main claws, 10 zones are presented by the software, and the diagnoses can be inserted touching the corresponding zone on the touchscreen. During the test phase of this program the claw findings of 141 herds were documented.

Results

The software was programmed to analyse the documented lameness scores, claw-horn and skin findings. The lameness score is calculated from the number and percentage of lame cows in the herd, and from the incidence of each lameness score (1 – 5) within the herd, and it is automatically compared with the normal value for healthy herds, where the mean lameness score is below 1.4 or 85% of the cows are sound.

The severity of lesions was arithmetically and geometrically scored using the claw scoring system of LEACH et al. (1998). The geometric severity scores for all zones of all eight claws were added resulting in the “Cow Claw Score” (CCS) for each animal. The median of all CCS of a herd describes the FCS (Farm Claw Score). An analysis of the various claw zones is expressed by the FZS (Farm Zone Score) that lists the affected claw zones in a descending order.

Conclusions

The “Claw manager” proved to be a practical digital documentation program for claw trimmers. Furthermore, the incorporated software characteristics form the basis of claw health prophylaxis, lameness management and control programs for vets.

Key words: Claw manager, digital claw protocol, claw trimming, claw health control.