

From the hoof trimmer's perspective

by Karmella Dolecheck and Jeffrey Bewley

NOT a lot of information exists on hoof trimmer billing practices, yet understanding hoof trimming costs is important for making decisions about lameness treatment and prevention.

To address this, we recently surveyed hoof trimmers in order to better understand their general practices. We wanted to know what types of foot disorders they see most often, and how much it costs to treat specific foot disorders.

What the trimmers said

Here are some of the study highlights, based on 116 United States hoof trimmers who responded to the survey:

1. The average number of cows trimmed per hour was 10 ± 5 .

2. The average amount charged per cow was $\$12.55 \pm 2.38$.

The amount charged was higher in the Midwest ($\$13.21 \pm 0.31$ per cow) than the Northeast ($\$11.73 \pm 0.33$ per cow) or other regions of the United States ($\$10.89 \pm 0.47$ per cow).

Hoof trimmers who worked with mostly larger herds (greater than 500 cows) charged less ($\$11.10 \pm 0.43$ per cow) than those who had mostly medium-sized herds (100 to 500 cows) as clients ($\$12.54 \pm 0.33$ per cow).

3. Respondents reported that most of their treatments over the past 12 months were for digital dermatitis. Meanwhile, the least common foot disorders treated were toe ulcers, thin soles, and foot rot (Figure 1).

Respondents that mostly served herds over 500 cows reported a lower prevalence of digital dermatitis (32 ± 4.2 percent versus 44 ± 3.4 percent and 47 ± 3.2 percent in small and medium herds, respectively). On the other hand, they noted a higher prevalence of sole ulcers (23 ± 3 percent in herds over 500 cows versus 13 ± 2.3 percent and 13 ± 2.4 in small and medium herds, respectively).

Respondents from the Northeast reported more sole ulcers than respondents from other regions (22 ± 2.3 percent versus 12 ± 3.3 percent).

4. The mean total treatment cost per case of each foot disorder was greatest for toe ulcers, followed by sole ulcers, white line disease, thin sole, foot rot, and digital dermatitis (Figure 2).

Some respondents included information on how much they charge per wrap or per block. The average wrap price was $\$3.92 \pm 1.71$, and the average block price was $\$16 \pm 6.15$.

Make informed decisions

The results from this study show that hoof trimming practices vary across the country and, to some extent, depend on herd size. If you are considering more consistent hoof trimming for your herd, you can use the values reported in this study to help estimate the costs

associated with this lameness prevention strategy.

Additionally, we found that the cost of lameness treatment by a hoof trimmer depends on the foot disorder being treated. Specifically, treating infectious foot disorders (digital dermatitis and foot rot) is generally less expensive than treating noninfectious foot disorders (toe ulcers, sole ulcers, white line disease, and thin sole).

Knowing the expected cost of treatment per case can improve decision making about when to treat a cow and when to cull. It can also help identify which lameness prevention strategies might be beneficial to your herd. 🐄

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Figure 1. The percent of each foot disorder hoof trimmers reported treating over the past 12 months

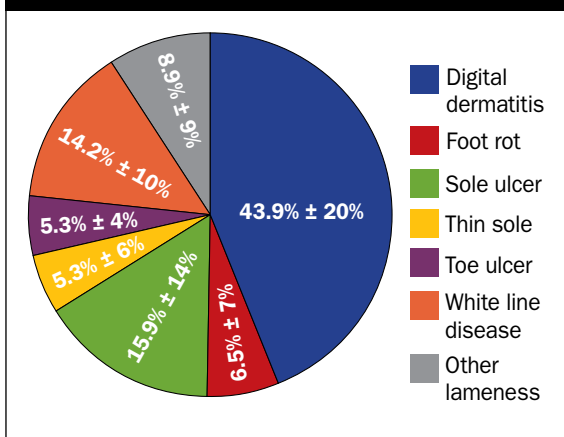
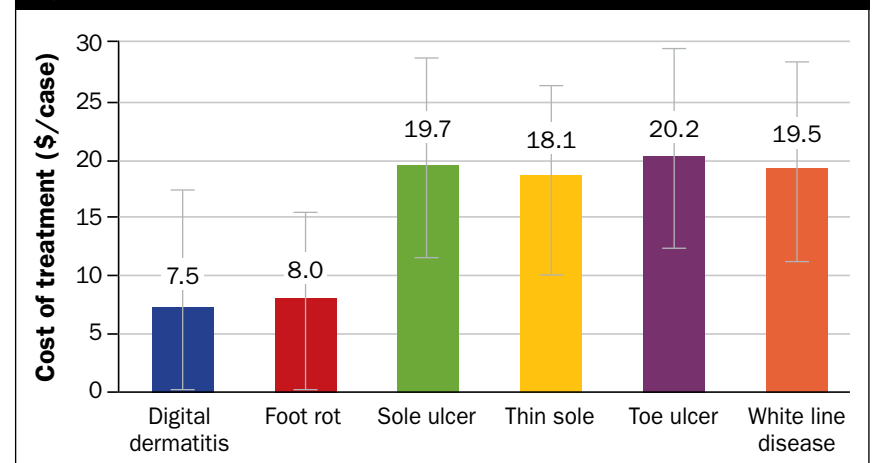


Figure 2. The cost to treat each foot disorder, as reported by hoof trimmers



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