

How often should I trim my cows?

 diamondhoofcare.com/hoof-trimming-frequency/

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Today's burning question: hoof trimming frequency

If you ask five people how often your herd requires hoof trimming, you may end up with six opinions. OK, that's probably stretching it a bit but the fact remains that opinions on this matter vary greatly.

When dairy producers ask me this question, I tend to start the conversation with a question of my own. I usually ask if they agree with me on the key point of hoof trimming, which is the prevention of serious problems and control of lameness. I mean, don't you feel that you gain so much more when you do your best to **prevent lameness** from occurring or when you **minimize its effects**?

What causes lameness?

I have devoted a lot of time and energy to exploring the subject and you can check our [other blog posts](#) for more information about lameness and lameness control. Still, let me give you the short version.

Lameness can be the result of various environmental factors. These include housing facilities, feeding, flooring, and hoof trimming practices.

In addition, there are "cow-specific" factors that contribute to lameness. Examples include genetics, stage in lactation, and previous lameness issues.

That said, it's obvious that one herd would be more prone to lameness than another. Moreover, some cows in the same herd tend to be more prone than others.

Timing guidelines

We subscribe to the view that producers should **check** every animal in their chutes twice a year. I bolded "check" for a reason, namely to emphasize that you should never over-trim a cow!

If the hoof looks good, you'll get the feeling of satisfaction that the cow is all set and good to go for another six months. If you know that a particular animal is prone to lameness, make sure to check her again in, say, three months.

Preventive vs curative

I realize that herd owners often underestimate the impact of preventive hoof trimming. Instead, they take the curative approach. It is in widespread use but it only addresses lameness.

My advice? Start by determining the lameness rate in your herd. If it exceeds 2% per month, you should schedule hoof trimming sessions more frequently.

Some producers like the idea of trimming the whole herd to get it over with in one go. However, others prefer to call in their trimmer on a monthly basis. While both strategies are great, the latter needs proper record-keeping.

Concluding remarks

One final remark: we visit our dentists for regular check-ups and I sure am happy when mine tells me there are no cavities to fill. However, I also make sure to book an appointment for next time. Get the point? Good luck with keeping your cows in shape!

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me through the [Contact page](#). One last thing: [download a printable version](#) of this article, and give it to a friend or colleague!