



# Dairy Tech-Line



March 2009

## Recommendations for Hoof Care

By Paul Windschitl, Dairy Nutritionist, Ph.D.

When it comes to dairy management, hoof care often gets set aside on many operations. However, proper hoof health and reduced lameness have proven over time to be a valuable investment for producers.

Paul Windschitl, Hubbard Feeds dairy nutritionist, says, "By maintaining proper hoof health, producers can reduce their chances of mastitis, cow injury and reproduction problems. Producers should make hoof care a top priority in the herd."

Windschitl offers the following recommendations for producers to ensure proper hoof care.

### Hoof Health Recommendations

- Routine hoof trimming should be implemented through the herd. When trimming, it is important to balance the hooves, trim them evenly and flat and not over-trim.
- Comfortable, free-stalls are important to prevent laminitis due to excessive standing time.
- Locomotion scoring should take place regularly to indicate and diagnose lameness issues. Workers should also watch for cows lying down often or not getting up to eat when feed is available.
- Proper nutrition and adequate fiber are vital parts to hoof health and preventing laminitis problems. If fiber in the diet is off or if the cows are not getting adequate feed, hoof health and milk production are affected. Additives such as biotin and Zinpro® are also recommended.
- All cows should go through foot baths 3-4 days per week to help ensure hoof care. Proper foot bath requirements include:
  - 8 – 10 feet long, 3 feet wide and approximately 5 inches deep
  - Baths should be changed approximately every 200 cows
  - After going through the foot bath, cows should enter a clean, dry area
- Producers should work with their veterinarian or nutritionist to design a hoof care plan fit for their operation.

Hubbard Feeds Inc., based in Mankato, Minn., is a leader in animal nutrition, dedicated to providing innovative feed products. Hubbard specializes in providing nutritional expertise and high quality service to help producers be more successful. Hubbard was the first major U.S. feed manufacturer to be ISO 9001 registered and HACCP certified, the international standards for feed quality management and food safety. For additional information about Hubbard Feeds, visit [www.hubbardfeeds.com](http://www.hubbardfeeds.com).