

experienced digital dermatitis had 439 – 739 pounds less milk production on a 305-day record and also worse health outcomes when compared to cows without digital dermatitis. Even though sole ulcers are one of the most difficult diseases to control on a dairy, any reduction in them can make a large economic difference on a farm. In another study, Cha et al., 2010, determined the average cost per lameness case (US\$) was \$216 for sole ulcers, \$133 for digital dermatitis, and \$121 for foot rot. If adjusted for inflation in 2016 that would be \$241, \$148, and \$135 respectively.

If a dairy operation can reduce lameness, especially sole ulcers, there can be a large economic impact to the farm. Some of the best ways to reduce lameness is to improve cow comfort, avoid overcrowding, provide proper ventilation, and develop a monitoring and treatment system. If proper records are kept, you can actually determine your own cost of lameness and then look for ways to make improvements!

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Foot health and lameness are major issues facing dairy farmers because of their common occurrence and a the tremendous economic losses incurred.

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