

Reducing the spread of digital dermatitis by disinfection of hoof-trimming equipment



Hygiene standard operating procedure for foot trimming:

The following protocol has been shown to eliminate the viable bacteria from foot-trimming knives and user gloves, thereby minimising the spread of digital dermatitis (DD) via this route.

As some (~12.5%) healthy feet may have subclinical DD, this protocol should be used at all times during foot trimming, i.e. when trimming feet with any signs of DD (including healed), any other foot/claw horn presentations and also healthy feet.

This procedure should be used, together with additional control strategies, such as routine footbathing and effective slurry management on farm to help prevent the spread of DD.

Before you start

One option is to wear arm-length gloves with wrist-length gloves over the top. This makes it easier to change wrist-length gloves when they are damaged. Wrist protectors can still be worn over the arm-length gloves, as only the hand gloves would be changed, as needed.

Equipment

- Arm-length disposable gloves
- Wrist-length disposable gloves
- A bucket of soapy water
- Two pairs of clean hoof knives
- Container for disinfectant
- Disinfectant: 2% Virkon®, 2% sodium hypochlorite, or 1% FAM30® are suitable for this purpose

Protocol



1) Prior to use, ensure all knives are free from faecal material and visible dirt. Fill the container with suitable disinfectant and then submerge the blades for at least 20 seconds.



2) After trimming each foot, clean your hands and knives by swilling in the bucket of soapy water to remove visible dirt.



- 4) Return the knife blades to the disinfectant for at least 20 seconds before next use.
- 5) To minimise disruption to work flow, use alternate pairs of knives for each foot, leaving the first pair in disinfectant.



3) Dry knives with paper towel. This will also help to remove visible dirt.



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