**CHAPTER II**

**ReVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**2.1. General study**

**2.1.1. Risk factors of hoof disorder:** Several factors have been reported by various researchers leading to claw disorders in animals.

**2.1.1. I. Intrinsic risks:** There are intrinsic risks for lameness that cannot be changed. These include seasons, gestation and stage of lactation (Green *et al.,* 2002; Knight, 2001), previous disease (Hirst *et al.,* 2002; Alban *et al.,* 1995) and parity (Hirst *et al.,* 2002; Hedges *et al.,* 2001). There is also a genetic determined intrinsic risk for development of lesions (Koenig *et al.,* 2005; Boettcher *et al.,* 1998). Older cows may be more likely to become lame and so allocating time for prompt treatment or through a culling program for cows that are repeatedly lame. It is, however, possible to moderate the extrinsic risks from the environment and herd management to better suit the dairy cow’s requirements, help her to cope in her environment and thereby minimize the impact of external risks on the intrinsic risks that face the modern dairy cow.

**2.1.1. II. Extrinsic risks:** There are obvious pragmatic reasons for studying lesions rather than lameness. Lesions are more frequent (80% prevalence) (Manske, 2002) and their severity changes fairly rapidly (Leach and Logue, 1997) and so one can study a smaller number of cattle for a short time period and collect a similar amount of data to that collected by studying many cattle over a long period of time to get record lameness events. Using lesions to identify risks for lameness is acceptable if the presence of lesions is a good proxy for risk of lameness. We cannot always be sure of this because there is not necessarily a direct correlation between the size and severity of a lesion and the lameness caused by this lesion (Flower & Weary, 2006; Green & Mülling, 2005).

There are six key areas that we can consider when attempting to reduce lameness in dairy cows. These are listed in Table 1 with the specific lesions that may be targeted through improved management in these areas.

**Table 1: Key areas for external risks and the associated lameness Risk area**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key areas for external risks and the associated lameness risk area** | **Effect of good environment/ management** | **Associated lesion**  **in poor environment** |
| ***Cow comfort***  Maximizing lying times  Comfortable lying surface  Good walking and standing surfaces | Reduces wear on the sole  Reduces pressure on the feet  Reduces damage to the bony prominences | Sole ulcer  Heel ulcer  Laminitis  Hock damage/swelling |
| ***Cow hygiene***  Dry environment  Slurry free environment  Good herd biosecurity | Reduces contact between pathogen and host  Prevents introduction of infectious pathogens  Reduces exposure of feet to corrosive environment | Digital dermatitis,  Heel erosion/inter-digital dermatitis  Other infectious causes of lameness |
| ***Social and physical integration***  ***for heifers and dry cows*** | Reduces defensive movements Avoids cow to cow confrontation  Reduces standing times  Improves eating and drinking behavior | White line disease |
| ***Cow flow on the farm***  Good routes around  Buildings  Parlor  To pasture  To feed | Allow a cow to express normal gait  Reduces defensive movements from humans to avoid confrontation  Reduces standing times  Improves eating and drinking behavior | White line disease  Sole ulcer |
| ***Diet***  Macronutrients  Micronutrients | Reduces ruminal acidosis and macro and micronutrient deficiencies or excesses  Improves hoof horn quality and integrity | White line disease  Sole ulcer |
| ***Correct routine professional functional preventive hoof trimming*** | Corrects abnormal growth of the hoof horn  Prevents excessive/abnormal wear  Prevents areas of deep sole horn  Interrupts vicious circle of increased horn production  Balances the weight load on lateral & medial claw  Avoids high loading of localised areas of the sole | All causes of lameness |

**2.1.1. II. a. Cow comfort**

Prolonged standing has been associated with the presence of sole ulcers (Cook *et al.,* 2005) and increased foot lesions and lameness (Leonard *et al.,* 1994; Singh *et al.,* 1993). It is also reported to reduce the efficiency of rumination, which may impact on diet and exacerbate diet related lameness.

**2.1.1. II. A .i. Excessive standing may occur for two reasons:**

The lying conditions are not comfortable. In this situation cows will lie down for larger time if there is enough lying space; Bowell (2003) reported that the ratio of cubicles to cows was negatively correlated with locomotion score. Cattle will also lie down for longer if lying conditions were comfortable. Longer lying times have been reported in straw yards compared with cubicle houses (Singh *et al.,* 1993) and shallow vs deep quantities of bedding in cubicle houses (Faull *et al.,* 1996). Longer lying times have also been observed when cows lie on mattresses compared with mats (Chaplin *et al.,* 2000) and on deep sand when compared with mats and sawdust (Cook *et al.,* 2004). Hard lying surfaces, which result in cattle bearing weight on a few points of the body, may lead to superficial damage which may in turn discourage cattle from lying down. Wechsler *et al.* (2000) reported a significantly higher incidence of leg injuries over the tarsus (hock) in cows housed in cubicles with mats compared with cubicles bedded with straw. Given a choice, cows preferred cubicles deeply bedded with sawdust or sand to cow mattresses (Tucker *et al.,* 2003). Other factors linked with uncomfortable lying conditions include those associated with cubicles; Leonard *et al.,* (1994) reported that small Newton Rigg cubicles were associated with decreased lying times and increased haemorrhage scores in cattle when compared with large Dutch comfort cubicles. Faull *et al.,* (1996) reported increased locomotion scores associated with limited “borrowing” space at the front and side of cubicles, low side rails and high kerb heights (> 16cm) in the cubicle houses in 37 herds. In summary, cows lie down more when the lying area is comfortable. There are many suggested lying times for cattle. There is probably no absolute since a cow’s activity will depend upon her yield, however, cows should not stand while ruminating, and they should lie down at every opportunity.

**2.1.1. II.a.ii. Type and quality floor surfaces**

**Type of floor surface**

Gitau *et al.,* (1996) studied cattle in Kenya; none were kept on concrete and no sole ulcers or white line disease was reported. This may be of huge importance to our understanding of the etiology of these lesions. Concrete is ubiquitous in most intensive dairy industries and so we cannot assess the impact of concrete without turning to countries where it is not used. Clearly the breeds and production of Kenyan cattle may also vary but the information from this study cannot be ignored. The data from New Zealand is similar and horn lesions have increased since concrete standing has been used on farms (Chesterton, 2004). A sudden change from one floor type to another has been reported to affect lameness. Cattle moving from resilient floors, e.g. straw bedded, to hard floors, e.g. concrete, have more lameness (Hultgren & Bergsten, 2001) and lesions (Webster, 2002). This is hypothesized to occur because of the following chain of cause and effects. If animals are moved to a hard floor the claw is exposed to higher pressure, in particular high circumscribed/local load. This pressure stimulates horn production, more horn is produced and the claw gets bigger. Because of the initial asymmetry of the two metatarsal bones the outer claw on the hind limb is more loaded which causes more stimulation of horn production. As a consequence the claw gets bigger, carries more load and more horn is produced. Thus for cows on hard floor a vicious circle of pressure and horn production is activated. This can only be interrupted by regular professional functional claw trimming. A sudden change onto an abrasive floor may wear out the sole horn before the rate of horn growth has increased. This may explain the thin soles often reported in early lactation cows.

**Quality of floor surface**

As well as floor material the quality of the floor surface whilst standing or walking also affects cow comfort. Poor quality includes surfaces that are too smooth and lead to slipping, too abrasive leading to wear of hoof horn, too uneven leading to tripping and presence of loose stones that may penetrate the sole, particularly the white line. Smooth walking surfaces have been associated with poor locomotion (Faull *et al.,* 1996). The quality of concrete in the feeding area, on tracks in the housed environment and tracks to and from pasture has been identified as an associated risk for lameness (Chesterton, 1998), particularly white line disease. Good management of the above will lead to optimal lying times of 14-16 hours a day and reduce physical damage to soft and hard tissues of the claw. Reduction of excessive standing times prevents prolonged pressure on the weight bearing parts of the claw thus preventing direct damage to the soft living tissue and improving microcirculation in the dermal vascular system required for nutritional and oxygen supply of the horn producing tissue.

Changing lying conditions is in reality highly complex. On farms often look at a combination of stocking density, cubicle type, lying surface, bedding material and depth and possibly even a slurry system that constrains changes in cubicle design and bedding type. This poses two challenges: which of the features of the housing is “causing” the lameness and how can we change only one aspect e.g. recommending sand over sawdust as a bedding material may not be acceptable if the slurry system will not handle sand. This is where the farmer and advisor need to work together to agree a practical solution. Evidence for loss of productivity through premature culling, treatment costs and milk loss may help to persuade a reluctant farmer to consider changing the environment.

**2.1.1. II.b. Biosecurity**

One aspect of hygiene is biosecurity. The evidence to date indicates that digital dermatitis is most easily introduced into a herd through purchase of an infected animal. Maintaining a closed herd at a high level of hygiene is the best way to prevent introduction of infectious lameness or most other infectious diseases. If this is not possible then quarantine for two weeks and careful examination of the lifted and cleaned feet of newly purchased animals will assist in reduction of introduction of new infections.

**2.1.1. II.c. Hygiene**

A second area for risk of lameness, and indeed any infectious disease, is hygiene. Cleanliness of cows is a good general indicator of hygiene status. Dry feet have greater integrity than wet, the hoof horn and the barrier of the skin between and above the claws is intact reducing the chances of bacteria invading the tissue. In wet conditions, slurry and water soften the horn and weaken or even disrupt the skin barrier; slurry may also corrode the horn. Lesions associated with exposure to slurry are digital dermatitis and heel erosion (also known as interdigital dermatitis). Somers *et al.,* (2003) reported an increased risk of digital dermatitis for cows housed on solid concrete floors compared with those on slatted floors without scrapers. It was also reported that cows with restricted or zero grazing had an increased risk of digital dermatitis, suggesting that both improved cleanliness and reduced stocking may be important factors in reducing digital dermatitis.

**2.1.2. Types of hoof problem**

Foot infections, abscesses or sole ulcers may stem from cracks that result when feet are too soft or hard.

Excessively soft feet are more apt to occur in free stall systems from standing in manure and urine. This may result in heel and sole cracks allowing ulcers, abscesses or infections to occur. Excessively hard feet usually occur in stall-barns, especially when kiln-dried shavings or sawdust are used for bedding. This may result in cracks at the top of the foot, which may extend down from the hairline and allow infections relatively high in the foot.

Basically problem can be broadly categorized into 2 types:

Infectious and Non-infectious disease

**Table 2: Infectious and Non-infectious disease**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Infectious Disease | Non-infectious Disease |
| Heel warts  Digital and inter-digital dermatitis  Foot rot | Laminitis  While line disease  Sole ulcers  Joint and upper leg trauma/deformity |

**Foot rot:** A smelly infection of the foot, which generally occurs high between the claws or toes, is referred to as foot rot. This results mainly from an infection caused by the bacterium *Fusiformis necrophorus*. The organism may build-up in barnyards, exercise lots, mud-holes, and pastures. Cattle with foot rot show lameness, usually on one leg only. The foot swells above the coronet and the toes spread. Cracks and fissures develop in the inter-digital space. There are characteristic, foul-smelling exudates at these fissures. If left untreated, the infection can progress into the joint space or tendon sheath producing permanent damage.

**Heel erosions:** Heel erosions or under run heels begin at the bulb of the heel. They start out as pits on the surface that can develop into parallel grooves that get filled in with black material and bacteria. The horn can separate at the grooves to form a ‘flap’. A new sole develops underneath and material becomes packed in between the layers. This condition is usually seen in confined cattle in wet, dirty lots. Overgrown hooves shift the weight toward the heels, exposing the heels to erosion, mostly in the hind claws.

**Laminitis**

Founder or laminitis can result in long, overgrown and deformed feet or toes. Animals may appear quite lame or stiff and have difficulty in getting up and down. Hemorrhages can be found in the soles and walls of the feet. Infections, abscesses or ulcers may occur when foreign material enters places where the wall and sole have separated. The highest incidence of laminitis often occurs during the first 100 days postpartum.

**Sole ulcers**

Sole ulcers are raw sores usually occurring on the inner side of the outside claw. It is a bulge of granular-like tissue sticking through the sole. Sole ulcers are usually associated with clinical manifestations of laminitis. A general rule of thumb is that if 10 percent of a herd has documented sole ulcers, the herd should be suspected for laminitis. However, there are other factors that can predispose cows to sole ulcers such as moisture and manure, excessive wear and poor hoof trimming. Sole ulcers usually occur in both hind legs.

**Digital dermatitis**

In the past 10 years, digital dermatitis has developed as a serious problem in several dairy regions in North America. They are heel warts, hairy foot warts, strawberry foot disease, raspberry heel, digital papillomatosis and Mortellaro disease. Affected animals have pronounced lameness and spend excessive time lying down. First-calf heifers are often affected, and to a greater degree in the hind feet. There is little to no digital swelling with this disease.

**2.1.3. Clinical Signs and Diagnosis**

Clinical signs are acute to per acute, severe lameness with marked swelling around the coronary band and in the interdigital space (Stokka *et al.,* 2001; Berg and Franklin, 2000, Bergsten, C. 2001). It is commonly found in one foot and is more common on rear feet. The first signs of disease are erythema and swelling in the interdigital space and around the coronet. Animals show slight lameness for 18 to 24 hours, which is often missed (Baggot and Russell, 1981). Other signs are pyrexia, decreased feed intake, and decreased milk yield. Culture of *Fusobacterium necrophorum* is rarely used to confirm diagnosis. A form of the disease that is more rapid in onset and less responsive to antimicrobials (super foot rot or super foul) has been reported in the US (Guard, 1997). Septic arthritis might be mistaken for interdigital phlegmon but most septic arthritis involves swelling of only one digit and would not have a necrotizing interdigital lesion (Bergsten, 2001). Deep digital sepsis, however, can be a sequel to chronic or non-responsive interdigital phlegmon (Reinohl-DeSouza *et al.,* 2004).

**2.1.4. Treatment of hoof disorder**

Prompt treatment of lame individuals requires several steps. First the detection of the disease or lameness in the affected cow must take place. Secondly, the predisposing factors responsible for the hoof disorder need to be addressed. Finally, immediate alteration of floor or provision of comfortable bedding should be done with clinical management of specific disease condition.

**2. 2. Review study:** Several scientists have been taken different experimental and survey type studies throughout the world at different point in time. Some of the important citations interrelated to this study are illustrated below:

**Mishamo Sulayeman and Abebe Fromsa (2012)** carried out a study on 432 dairy cattle that belonged to 23 randomly selected farms from Hawasa town to determine the prevalence of lameness, identify the associated risk factors and assess the effect on milk production. The result showed an overall lameness prevalence of 3.5%. Lameness of one or more animal was detected in 11 (47.83%) of the 23 visited farms. Milking status, pregnancy, feeding, floor type, length of rough track, frequency of floor cleaning, age, and sex and herd size were considered as risk factors and statistically tested. All the risk factors except milking status were not significantly associated with lameness (P>0.05). Lameness was more frequent in hind limbs (2.8%) than in forelimbs (0.7%). In milking dairy cows, the mean daily milk yield was significantly reduced after the onset of lameness. The study showed that lameness is an economically important dairy herd problem.

**Somers *et al.* (2003)** investigated at two consecutive periods each study having 3078 (49 herds) and 3190 (47 herds) cows respectively. Due to different hoof trimming strategy, data collected during both observation periods in straw yards (SY) herds (638 cows; 16 herds) were combined. Cows in SY had by far the lowest numbers of claw disorders. Over 80% of cows exposed to concrete flooring had at least one claw disorder at the time of observation, whereas on SY surfaces, this percentage was between 55 and 60.

**Somers *et al.* (2001)** focused on epidemiological and ethological aspects of claw disorders and disturbed locomotion with special emphasizes on floor type and implications for animal welfare. The majority of the 1.5 million dairy cows in The Netherlands are now-a-days housed in cubicle houses with concrete stall floors. A small percentage of dairy cows are housed in straw yards. This housing system has a deep litter (straw-bedded) area where animals can rest collectively, accompanied by a concrete walking surface in front of the feed alley. At first, investigation was done on the claw health of more than 7500 dairy cows on different stall floors. Four-fifths of the cows on a concrete stall floor suffered from one or more claw problems. Reduced figures in affected claws (58%) were found in cows housed in straw-yard systems. Additional risk-factor analyses showed that specific measures in the area of accommodation and management could improve the situation on dairy farms.

**Michael *et al.(2006)*** foundlaminitis was a disease that reduces overall profitability of the dairy operation. Cows that become lame showed a drop in milk production, have more reproductive problems and increase labor costs as personnel on the dairy spend more time moving cattle and loading the milking parlor. It is estimated that each case of laminitis cost the dairy producer $302 and that 15% of cows culled for slaughter are culled due to laminitis.

**Dembele *et al.,* (2006)** reported the prevalence of lameness on farms in a wide range from 6% to 42% (median 22%). At the farm level, floor slipperiness and poor animal care were associated with high lameness prevalence (Spearman correlations, *P* < 0.05), and the proportion of cows with overgrown claws tended to be associated with it (*P* < 0.01). Within farms, cows with overgrown claws and dirty cows were at an increased risk of being lame (multiple logistic regression, *P* < 0.05) and cows with skin lesions tended to be more lame (*P* < 0. 01).The risk of lameness had an inverted U-shape dependence on age (*P* < 0.05), with cows at 7–8 years of age being the most endangered by lameness.

**Vanegas *et al.*,(2006)** studied on two groups of cows were housed in identical free-stall facilities, except that 1pen (rubber, n = 84) had rubber alley mats covering the entire concrete floor of the pen, whereas cows in the second pen were exposed to concrete flooring (concrete, n = 82) without rubber alley mats. All cows were evaluated 3 times between 10 and 30, 74 and 94, and 110 and 130 DIM for 1) the presence of claw lesions on their rear feet, 2) the occurrence of clinical lameness based on a locomotion score, and 3) rates of claw growth and wear as observed on the dorsal wall of the right lateral claw. Cows on rubber flooring had decreased claw growth and wear between the first and last examination compared with cows on concrete. Regardless of flooring surface, second-lactation cows had greater wear rates than those in third or greater parities. Results of the study suggest that a soft flooring surface, such as interlocking rubber, is beneficial for hoof health.

**Nguhiu-Mwangi *et.al.*(2012)** concluded that, the cow-level factors that strongly contribute to the development of claw lesions are 3rd or higher parities and being in the lactation period between 1 to 90 days. The farm level factors that strongly enhance claw lesion development are frequent high concentrate feeding, lack of regular mineral supplement, concrete and earthen floors, overstocking, the presence of a curb between walk-alley and cubicles, and leaving manure in the walk-alley for a long time. These associations are supported strongly by statistics that indicate the direction and strength of the relationship. It can also be concluded that non-infective claw disorders in dairy cows particularly the disorders related to laminitis are insidious in nature, which gradually but progressively damage the integrity of the claw. The subclinical occurrence of these disorders makes them subtle and careful early diagnosis so that remedial measures can be instituted early before these irreversible damages have occurred is essential. The fact that a cow does not show signs of lameness does not necessarily imply her claws are sound, but only calls for further careful scrutiny. Claw trimming is one of the major ways of discerning these underlying claw disorders at the subclinical phase.

**Bielfeldt ,s(2012)** investigated claw health of dairy cows in an observational study in different housing systems in Switzerland. Twenty-five professional hoof trimmers examined lameness (LN) and claw disorders on 4,621 cows in 290 farms within routine hoof trimming. 82 farms had tie-stall barns without exercise (T1) and 166 had tie-stall barns with exercise (T2), another 42 farms kept their animals in loose housing systems with exercise (L2). Observation period lasted from September 2001 until June 2002. Single claw disorders were joined together to four different diagnosis-complexes: Sole disorders (SD), white line disorders (WD), heel erosions (HE), and disorders of skin and inter-digital space (ID). Environmental and management factors were documented in a questionnaire for analyzing possible risk factors on claw health. Data from three breeding associations were available, including animal information and performance parameters. Prevalence was 15.7 % (SD), 13.6 % (HE), 10.0 % (LN), 6.1 % (WD), and 5 % (ID). LN and SD showed highest prevalence (13.2 %; 16.4 %) and highest odds ratio (OR = 1.89; 1.33) in T1. WD were more often detected in L2, accounting for 9.4 % (OR = 1.0). HE was identified most in T2 (17.1 %, OR = 4.72) and T1 (13.2 %, OR = 4.45). Disorders of skin and inter-digital space were most frequently found in T2 (7.5 %, OR = 1.55).

**Christoph *et al.,* (2006)** reported that lameness in cattle is a clinical sign with a multi-factorial etiology. A focused program for lameness reduction requires that farmers and their advisors recognize the main types of lameness occurring in cattle on their farm(s) and know the seasonal and lactation patterns of lameness and the management and environment of these cattle. In this paper we propose an approach to targeting cattle lameness using the above information together with published and new findings on risks for lameness in cattle to move towards targeted programs for reduction in lameness. Whilst there still have many questions on the etiology and pathogenesis of the lesions associated with lameness, research from the last 10 years can assist our understanding and anticipation cab be made that research in the next 10 years will strengthen this understanding so that we can be more accurate in targeted programs that reduce lameness in dairy cows.

**Haufe *et al.,* (**2012**)** conducted a study to assess the effects on the claw health of dairy cows of three different floor types and access to pasture were investigated on 35 farms. During each visit, the claw health of the same 10 cows per farm was assessed on the occasion of routine claw trimming. The proportion of cows with hemorrhages increased from mastic asphalt to rubber and slatted concrete floors. A lower proportion of cows kept on mastic asphalt was affected by white-line fissures and needed intermittent claw-trimming, an indicator for lameness. Cows housed in cubicle systems with slatted concrete floors were at the lowest risk of having heel-horn erosions. Access to pasture was associated with a lower incidence of slight white-line fissures and dermatitis digitalis. A higher proportion of cows with sole hemorrhages and sole ulcers were found on all floor types at the end of the summer period than at the end of the winter indoor-housing period. Floor type did not influence the presence of sole ulcers and deep white-line fissures. In conclusion, the effect of floor type on claw health was slight, and none of the investigated floor types was clearly superior to the others. Access to pasture was not effective in reducing the presence of most types of claw lesions associated with the floor type used in the indoor walking area.

**Shearer and Amstel (2000)** stated that the majority of lameness (> 90%) involves the foot. Claw diseases (sole ulcers and white line disease) are a primary cause of lameness in most herds and are predisposed by laminitis and confinement on concrete. Foot rot, inter-digital dermatitis, and digital dermatitis are diseases with an infectious component responsive to antibiotic treatment, particularly when identified early-on in the course of disease. Manure slurry, mud, and otherwise wet conditions seem to favor the occurrence of these diseases, however specific data to support these thoughts is limited.