



## Results from the Foot Trimming Hygiene Questionnaire

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**Research has shown that there is a risk of transmitting digital dermatitis during foot-trimming and work is needed to address this risk. In 2019, a questionnaire was carried out to gauge current industry practices for maintaining good hand and hoof knife hygiene during foot trimming. The questionnaire was answered by 135 cattle foot-trimmers, farmers and veterinary surgeons.**

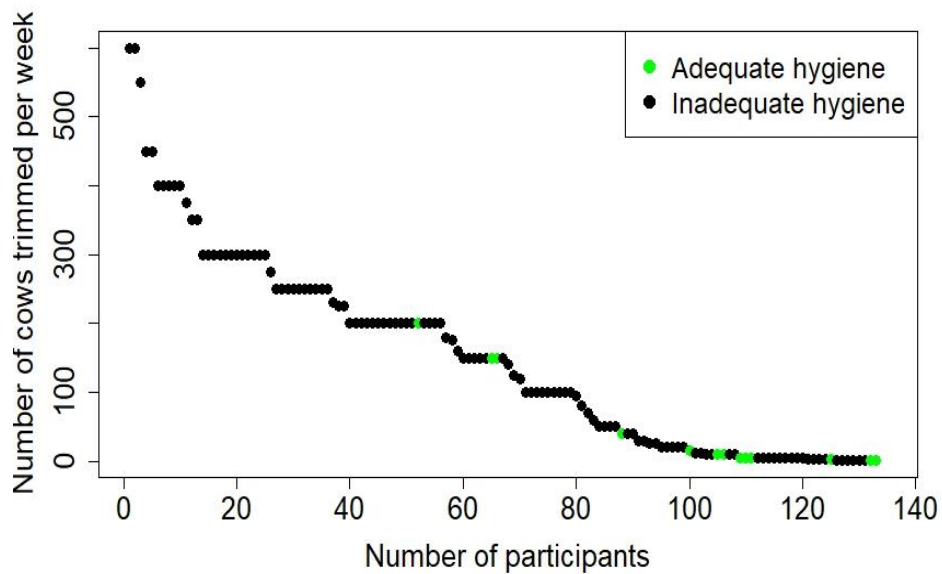
Respondents reported working on 4,869 farms and estimated they were trimming 22,192 cows between them every week. They also estimated that 3,555 (73%) of their farms were affected by DD. Hygiene measures used for handwashing and knife cleaning, and the frequency of application, were categorised according to whether transmission of DD is likely to be prevented.

Ten different hygiene measures were reported for handwashing, and 12 for hoof knife cleaning. These were classified as “Adequate” if a cleaning or disinfection agent was used (as opposed to water only, paper towel or sawdust). “Handwashing” was also considered adequate if the respondent reported changing gloves. The different types of measures used for hand hygiene were adequate in 60.7% of cases, whilst measures for knives were adequate in 81.1% of cases.

“Adequate” frequency was defined as being carried out at least after trimming of DD affected animals. Handwashing was adequate for 18% of respondents and knife cleaning was adequate for 21%, (whilst 55% and 56% respectively reported that no hygiene measures were undertaken).

Handwashing and knife cleaning practices were further assessed considering **both frequency and efficacy** to define whether *overall hygiene* was “Adequate” or “Inadequate” for preventing DD transmission for each participant. (Figure 1). Thirteen participants reported adequate overall hygiene (9.6%) and were collectively responsible for 2.7% of cows trimmed. (Only 4 were trimming more than 15 cows per week). There is a strong trend that most of those who trim a significant number of cows’ feet are not taking hygiene precautions that would be adequate to prevent spread of DD (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 highlighting the participants who reported the use of adequate overall hygiene during foot-trimming.**



Encouragingly, the hygiene measures used by participants were mainly effective, especially for hoof knife cleaning. The frequency of application, however, is often inadequate and for half of respondents was absent. Ideally equipment should be disinfected between feet or at least between animals.

A follow-up questionnaire will be launched shortly to gauge awareness of hygiene recommendations, and to gather information regarding the barriers to implementing improved hygiene practices in the industry. Please look out for it- your responses are important for helping to tackle digital dermatitis!

In case you missed the disinfection protocol we have developed it is available here for free download: <https://ahdb.org.uk/reducing-spread-of-DD>.