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TITLE
SCORING CLAW LESIONS ON A DUTCH SOW HERD: USING INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE IN YOUR PRACTICE

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CONTENT
Background and objectives- Lameness in sows is still a major reason for culling. Compared to cattle and horses, little research on pathogenesis and risk factors in sows is performed. Interdisciplinary knowledge from a ruminant claw specialist was used to score and interpret claw lesions in sows.
Material and methods- Fifty-two sows, seven gilts and one boar from a 350-sows rearing herd were scored for claw lesions and lameness. For clinical examination, each sow was led into a inspection box and lifted by a beam (Zinpro Corporation: Feet First® Chute). Claw or feet disorders were scored using two different scoring systems. At the abattoir, legs of nine sows culled for various reasons were collected and examined for gross pathological lesions.
Results- A prevalence of 98% was found for claw and skin lesions and of 53% for lameness. Claw lesions were found to be a bad predictor for lameness. 90% of the animals had heel horn proliferation, less than half showed lameness. All gilts and the claws of 6 out of 9 sows at the abattoir had white line defects in at least one foot. Older sows were unfortunately not scored for white line defects
Discussion and conclusion- Heel horn proliferation in sows is a disease comparable to slurry heel in cattle and thrush in horses. White line defects are also common in these species. Literature in cattle and horses attributes these abnormalities mainly to a lack of hygiene in stables, and in cattle also to feeding errors. Both diseases can not be treated with trimming. Therefore, prevalence of claw lesions should be lowered by means of prevention. Since knowledge on claw lesions is far more developed in cattle and horses, using interdisciplinary knowledge within your veterinary practice is essential.