**Here are some common hoof-trimming errors**

1. Excessive removal of the outer wall of the hoof. This is common where trimmers misuse grinders. It's okay to round off the toe end of the claw but not to remove the side wall further back towards the heel. This can result in more white line disease.

*Test:*After trimming, the claw side wall should be healthy and still show faint horizontal ridges. It should not be pale in color and smooth, and there should be no evidence of grinder tracks.

2. Trimming toes too short. For the average mature Holstein, the front hoof wall from a point about midway down the periople to the toe should measure at least 3 inches. (You can locate the periople with finger pressure. It is the soft horn between the skin and the hard wall horn.) If the toe is trimmed too short, then the sole will be made too thin in the toe, and the cow will be susceptible to white line fissure development in the inner and outer wall region of the toe.

*Test:* Measure the front claw wall using a 3- inch marker from the hard horn about midway down the periople to the toe.

3. Excessive trimming of the heel of the inner claw of the rear foot. Among cows on concrete, it is common for the soles of the inner and outer claw to become worn excessively. Trimming should transfer weight from the heel of the outer claw to the inner claw and maintain the height of the inner claw in situations of excessive wear.

*Test:*When the length of the outer groove (the line on the side wall where the perioplic horn wraps around to join the horn of the wall) is 1.5 inches or less, the sole/heel of the weight-bearing surface may give with finger pressure, indicating that it is too thin. This may be due to wear or trimming. After trimming, examine the inner claw heels. There should be no evidence of trimming to the rear of the outer groove.

4. Removal of the outer wall of the toe of the inner or outer claw. The removal of horn from around the interdigital space from the inner and outer claw (modeling) should be confined to the area to the rear of the inner groove where the white line leaves the weight bearing surface. The inner wall at the toe is a weight-bearing surface that should not be removed.

*Test:*Watch the trimmer shaping the interdigital space; examine recently trimmed claws to make sure that the inner wall is intact, or both.

5. Trimming the sole too thin. The healthy sole should be at least 1/4-inch thick and not give under firm thumb pressure or reasonable pressure with hoof testers. Thin soles will predispose the cow to white line fissures in the toe region and toe ulcers.

*Test:*Examine cows that have been trimmed recently and those that have not been trimmed for more than four months. Determine sole thickness before and after trimming to ascertain whether the problem is due to the environment, the trimmer, or a combination of the two. Consult treatment records for evidence of having more lesions located in the toe region of the claw.

6. Trimming the sole of claws with extreme concavity rather than flat. While pastured cows develop overgrown wall horn and concavity of the sole, cows kept on concrete should not be trimmed with extreme concavity of the sole. When a cow stands on concrete with concave soles, the claws will be pushed apart, increasing weight transfer to the inner components of the inner and outer claw. This may predispose the claw to sole ulceration and hemorrhage in the typical site, below the back edge of the pedal bone.

*Test:* Examine recently trimmed claws, and make sure that there is at least 3/4 inch of sole horn adjacent to the white line on the inner and outer claw that is trimmed perpendicular to the long axis of the limb to provide claw stability.

7. Shortening of the toe without proper reduction of sole thickness. Overgrowth in the toe should be removed by shortening the toe and thinning the sole in the toe region to leave 1/4 inch of thickness at the cut end of the toe. However, a common error involves trimming the front hoof wall down to shorten the toe, with minimal removal of sole horn. This does nothing to correct weight balance and leaves the overgrown sole horn in the toe region of the claw.

*Test:*The trimmer must be observed to detect this problem. They typically will use a grinder to thin the front hoof wall down and avoid trimming the sole, but this technique must be differentiated from the trimming of corkscrew claws where the front wall curvature is corrected before the sole is trimmed.