



Quebec cows: What's underfoot?

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“Hi Gilles!”

“Hey Paul! I'll just finish up what I'm doing here while you bring in your chute and get your shavings down in the alley. I'll be with you in a few minutes.”

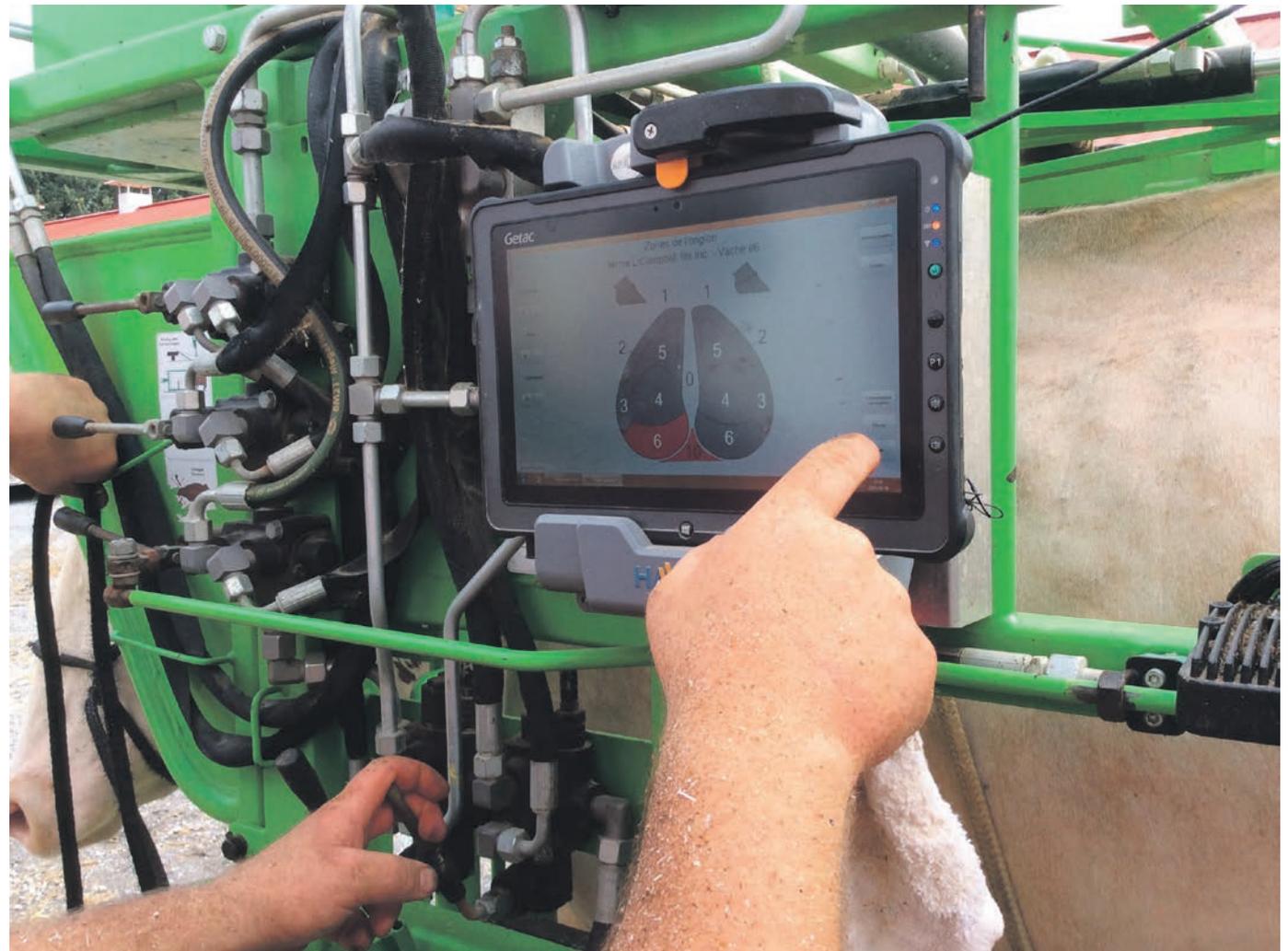
Paul has come to do the hoof trimming at Ferme des Grands Vents. He has just attended the Symposium sur les bovins laitiers, and is looking forward to sharing what he has learned with Gilles, his favourite client, who is always looking for ways to improve his operation.

Paul is a member of the Association des pareurs d'onglons du Québec (APOQ). He makes a point of using his Hoof Supervisor System (HSS) for all his hoof-trimming visits. Once a week, he connects to Valacta's VISION2000 database and downloads the cow lists for the clients he'll see in the coming week to put together his trimming lists.

“So what's new, Paul? Were you at the symposium?”

“Yes I was, and I attended a conference presenting the data we collected. There was a little bit of you and me in that one! People are recognizing the importance of collecting all this data on feet so we're not doing all this work for nothing.”

After each trimming, Paul enters his observations into his computer (Photo 1). When he notices a problem, he



Once the affected claw area has been identified by the trimmer, the HSS automatically presents a screen with possible lesions and degrees of severity.

identifies the claw, the affected area, the type of lesion and the severity. Data entry only takes a few seconds per cow.

To improve, you have to know where you're starting from

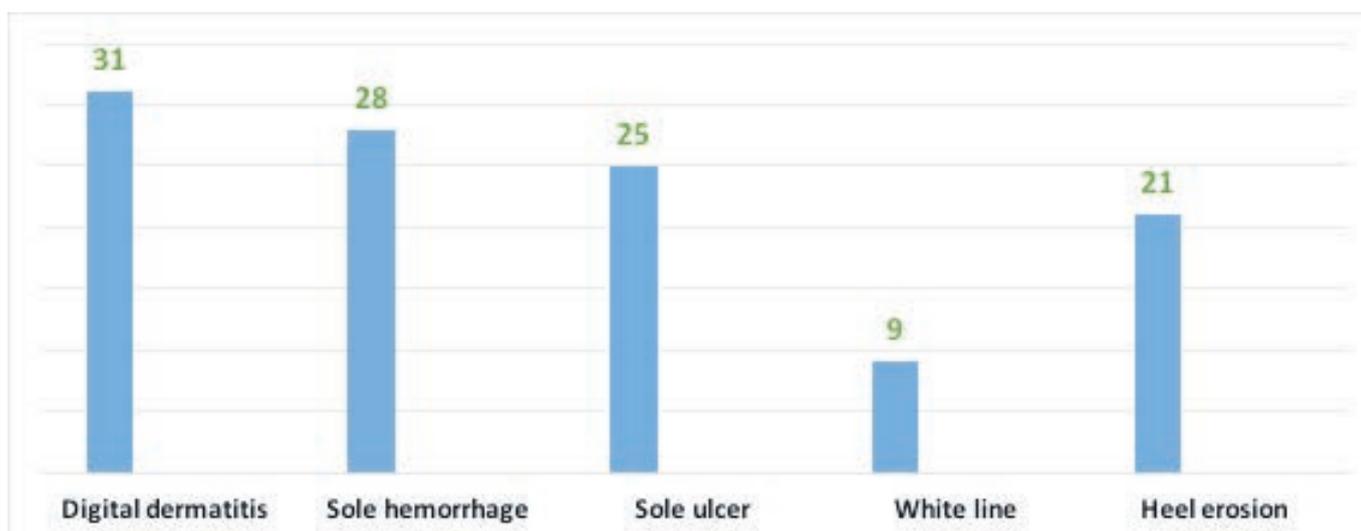
“So Paul, what did you learn at the conference?”

Paul explains that 74 per cent of cows in tie-stall barns are lesion-free, compared with 55 per cent in free-stall housing, whether they're milked with robots or in a milking parlour. Figure 1 presents the most commonly observed feet problems in Canadian herds where data is collected.

One of the graphs that caught Paul's attention showed the distribution of the different types of lesions in relation to housing systems (Figure 2). As an example, the incidence of digital dermatitis is higher in free-stall housing systems. “I always stress the importance of footbaths for those producers, and ideally, they should be 10 to 12 feet long. Because digital dermatitis is contagious, prevention and persistency is the best practice in order to eliminate the problem in your herd.”

Paul was also intrigued by the fact that the lesions observed in the two types of free-stall housing are different. Moreover, levels of hemorrhages and sole ulcers in free-stall barns with automatic milking seem to be similar to levels in tie-stall barns. Why is that? It remains to be determined, but Gilles thinks it might be due to the fact that cows spend a fair amount of time standing still, either in their tie stalls or in line, waiting to be milked by the robot. Comfort issues might need to be addressed in those areas.

Figure 1. The five most common lesions encountered in participating herds (%)*



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It pays to share data!

Once he is done with the trimming, Paul can either print the two main reports on-site with a printer or give them to Gilles on a USB key. He also reviews the results with Gilles and his veterinarian, to see if the vet's last intervention protocol gave them the outcome they were hoping for. Based on the data that Paul collected and the HSS reports (distribution of lesions in the herd and the Individual Cow report, photo 2), they're now able to assess the results of the measures they've implemented.

At week's end, Paul reconnects to the VISION2000 database and uploads the trimming data for the herds he has visited, data that is stored for each herd and for each cow. Valacta relays this data to the Canadian Dairy Network on a regular basis.

The future

For the moment, this centralized database enables us to better understand the hoof health situation in Quebec. Eventually, the data will be used to develop new herd management tools. First, a foot-health report will be made available through the milk recording program to producers who contribute data. This report will make it possible

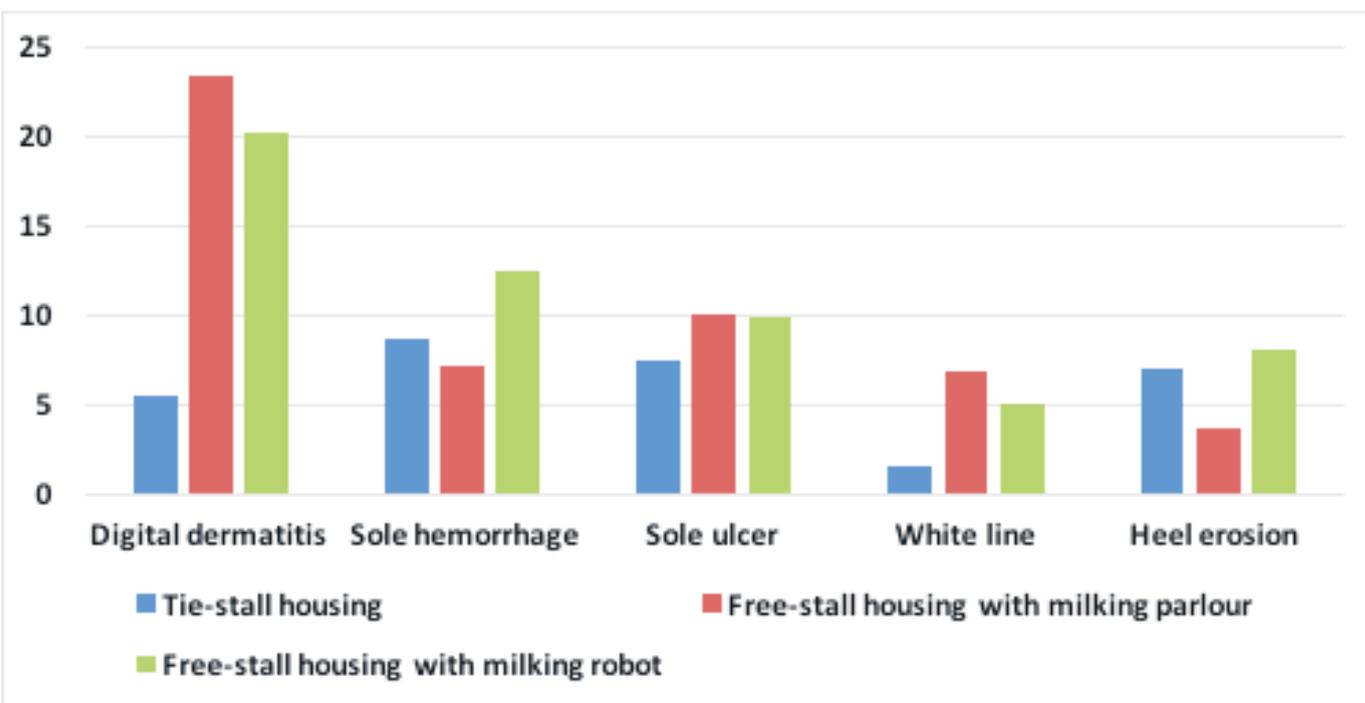


to compare herds with similar management. Likewise, in December 2017, the Canadian Dairy Network will offer a new genetic evaluation for digital dermatitis, exclusive to the Holstein breed. And, for the most part, all this is made possible through the data collection efforts of hoof trimmers in Quebec and a few other Canadian provinces.

We're making progress in foot health in our herds, one step at a time!

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Figure 2: Prevalence (%) of the five most common lesions by housing type



Paul The Trimmer
Hoof Supervisor System
Individual Cow Report



10/1/2017 - 10/31/2017
Des Grands Vents Farm

3470 (10/11/2017)	Routine					
3471 (10/11/2017)	Routine	LF	Medial	7	(C) - Corkscrew Claw	1
		LF	Medial	4	(H) - Sole Hemorrhage	1
		LF	Medial	2	(Y) - White Line Hemorrhage	1
		RF	Medial	7	(C) - Corkscrew Claw	1
		RF	Medial	4	(H) - Sole Hemorrhage	1
		RF	Medial	2	(Z) - Thin Sole	1
3483 (10/11/2017)	Routine					
3505 (10/11/2017)	Routine					
3508 (10/11/2017)	Routine	LR	Lateral	3	(W) - White Line Lesion	1
3520 (10/11/2017)	Routine	LR		10	(I) - Interdigital Dermatitis	1
		RR		10	(D) - Digital Dermatitis	M1
		RR				Treatment
3542 (10/11/2017)	Routine					
3543 (10/11/2017)	Routine	LR	Lateral	11	(X) - Axial Fissure	2
		LR				Block
3545 (10/11/2017)	Routine	RR	Medial	11	(X) - Axial Fissure	2
		RR	Medial	5	(T) - Toe Ulcer	1
3571 (10/11/2017)	Routine	LR	Lateral	5	(Z) - Thin Sole	2
		LR	Lateral	1	(T) - Toe Ulcer	1
		LR				Block

The Individual Cow report provides the details for actions undertaken with each cow in the herd.