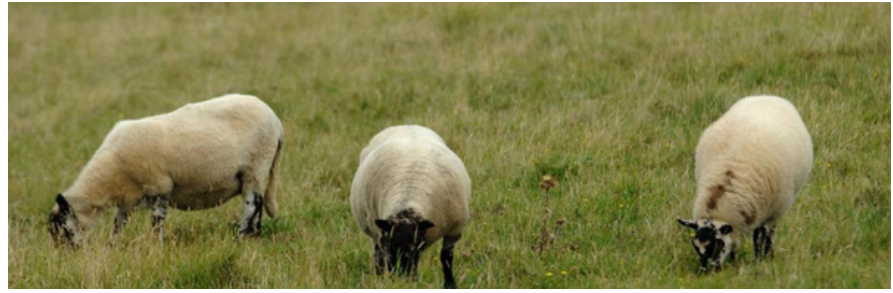


HOOF TRIMMING

A quick guide to trimming small ruminant hooves



HERD HEALTH

Trimming your small ruminant's hooves is important for their overall wellbeing. It can impact their performance, disease resistance and welfare. As part of a herd health routine hooves should be checked for disease and excess growth often. Animals exhibiting chronic hoof disease or excessive abnormal hoof growth should be culled. Maintaining hooves allows for better air flow reducing the changes of bacteria that can cause infection. Trimming helps prevent lameness and promote proper hoof growth in young animals.

TRIMMING PROCESS

Once you have all the proper tools and have practiced your restraint method, you can begin the trimming process. Grasp one leg by the pastern (ankle) and bend it back. Make sure the animal isn't over reaching and calm. With the point of closed shears, scrape away any debris. Pry open and snip off the outer hoof wall flap folded under the hoof. Trim down until you see the white sole. You will then see a growth ring parallel to the hairline. Trim away ragged edges of inner hoof wall between the two halves of the hoof. Trim the soft heel, one tiny slice at a time until the heel is the same level as the toe. Stop trimming if you begin to see pink. This means you are close to the foot's blood supply. If bleeding occurs, sprinkle the area with blood shop powder.

THE ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO TRIM

The frequency and timing of trimming varies based on multiple factors. The type of terrain, age, level of activity, nutritional level and genetics all come into play. Typically rocky and harder areas will wear down hooves faster meaning less trimming. Small ruminants in soft pastures will need trimming more frequently. If an animal has trouble walking, it is time to check its hooves.

PROPER EQUIPMENT

- Hoof shears or trimmers
- Hoof knife, straight vs. curved
- Brush
- File or Hoof Rasp/Plane
- Spray bottle and gloves

RESTRAINT TECHNIQUES

There are a variety of restraint techniques to utilize. It is best to practice before actually trimming. Standing against a fence or on a stand or work platform can work for goats. Sheep can be tipped onto their rump or use a deck chair. Lastly, a tilt table or "squeeze" that is manual or automatic can work.

