



SHEEP SHEET

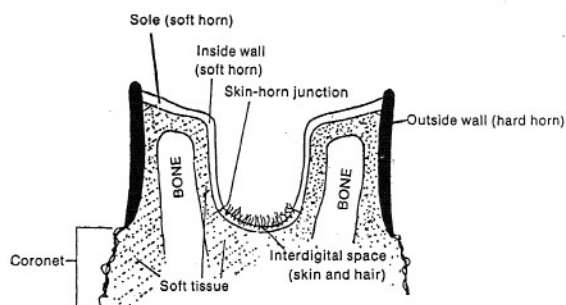
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Hoof trimming in sheep serves three functions:

1. To properly shape the hoof in young growing animals,
2. To help prevent leg abnormalities in young animals, and
3. To control foot rot in older animals.

If sheep are kept in dry lot, feet should be trimmed at least three times each year. If the hoof becomes misshapen or the animal develops lameness, trimming should be done more often. Care should be taken to avoid trimming feet of ewes during late gestation. If animals are going to be exhibited, their feet should be trimmed 2 to 3 weeks before showing.

Anatomy of Sheep's Foot:



Necessary Equipment:

A sharp pair of hoof trimmers. In the absence of a sheep trimmer, a sharp knife can be used, but care should be taken not to cut one's finger or thumb. The animal's foot can also be injured if

PRACTICAL HOOF CARE

Sheepdex H-8

caution is not observed during trimming. An iodine solution (7%) or other disinfected material should be kept close at hand.

Preparing the Hoof:

Hooves of some animals are extremely hard and difficult to trim. Generally, black pigmented hooves are harder than white colored hooves. But overall dry conditions can render both types of pigmented hooves hard and difficult to trim without shattering and breakage if care is not exercised. To soften hard or dry brittle hooves, animals can be allowed to stand in a wet area for 2 to 3 hours before trimming. Water softens the hoof and makes it easier to trim.

Examining the Hoof Condition:

The most common method of restraint is to place the sheep on its rump and hold it between one's knees in the shearing position. This procedure can be accomplished by standing on the sheep's left side, holding the jaw with the left hand and placing the right hand on the ewe's hip. Hold the jaw tightly and bend the sheep's head sharply over its right shoulder. At the same time, press down on the animal's right hip. When the sheep falls to the ground, raise the front feet and head so the sheep rests on its rump and leans off center of the tail bone and against the operator.

If a large number of sheep are to be processed, a bale of hay can serve as a rest during trimming. A second method of restraint is to use a tilting squeeze table. The animal is rotated on its side while being restrained. This equipment requires added expense, but offers easy access to the animal's feet. Care must be observed, however, to avoid being kicked. A third method employs the use of a commercially made sheep deck chair. This "beach" type chair is adjustable and holds the sheep on its dock comfortably and allows the operator the flexibility of having both hands free to concentrate on feet trimming rather than having to use one hand for restraining.

Trimming Process:

When the animal's feet have been examined and the animal restrained, the foot is grasped by the fetlock and the thumb used to separate the digits. Use the trimmer to cut off the tips of the hoof. Care should be taken to avoid removing too much hoof because small blood vessels may be severed. Once the tips have been removed, trim the outer and inner areas of the hoof until it is level with the fleshy center portion of the toe. Next, cut away excess areas of the posterior hoof wall which have overgrown the sole.

If evidence of foot rot is found, the foot should be treated. Also, if minor bleeding results during trimming, an iodine so lution (7%) or other commercially available disinfectant and foot treating product should be applied after trimming is completed. Finally, the sheep should be allowed to stand on level surface. Examine the job and, if uneven areas are observed, minor trimming adjustments should be made.

How Do You Distinguish Foot Rot from Other Causes of Lameness in a Sheep?

FOOT ROT (Virulent Foot Rot [VFR]; Contagious Foot Rot)	FOOT SCALD (Ovine Interdigital Dermatitis, OID)	FOOT ABSCESS (FA; Infective bulbar necrosis; heel abscess; bumblefoot)	SCABBY MOUTH (Sore mouth; Contagious Ecthyma; CE; orf; contagious pustular dermatitis)
More than one foot on an animal is affected. Both digits on an affected foot may be involved.	As with foot rot.	Usually only one foot on an animal is affected. Only one digit of an affected foot is involved.	Several feet on an animal may be affected and/or mouth lesions may be present.
Moisture present and hair missing from between digits.	As with foot rot.	Usually no hair missing between the digits.	No damage between the digits.
Horn abnormal on inside wall and may extend to include sole and outside wall.	Horn may be abnormal in the heel.	Horn damage mostly on the outside wall at the coronet ¹ or toe.	Scab encrusted area at coronet and above.
No swelling of the foot.	As with foot rot.	Swelling of the foot.	Scab encrusted area at coronet and above.
The foot is not hot to the touch.	As with foot rot.	The foot is hot to the touch.	There may be localized inflammation.
No pus.	As with foot rot.	Pus present and may break out at coronet.	No pus.
No involvement above coronet.	As with foot rot.	Area at coronet and above swollen by abscess.	Scab encrusted area at coronet and above.
No bleeding.	As with foot rot.	Bleeding may occur.	Bleeding may occur.
Animals of all ages affected.	As with foot rot.	Mostly mature animals affected, especially ewes in lamb.	Animals of all ages affected.

NOTES:

¹ Coronet is where the hoof joins the leg of the animal.

Of the diseases; foot rot, foot scald, foot abscess and scabby mouth; more than one can occur on an animal at the same time. Laboratory testing or expert advice is required to distinguished foot scald from the early signs of foot rot.

For more information write:

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