

## CONSIDERATIONS:

### **DAIRY COW:**

Youngest age for a hoof trim should be a heifer going into their first calving (90-100 day interval)

Dry conditions can make hooves difficult to trim.

### **DOE:**

Does that are fed a high energy and protein diet tend to have hooves that grow more rapidly.

Avoid trimming doe hooves during late gestation

Over time, the claws of ruminants wear, changing the shape of the sole, which in turn makes the foot unstable. The two claws become unbalanced both longitudinally and laterally. As changes develop in the lateral claw, it becomes “overloaded,” the heel horn may become thicker (overburdened), and posture is compromised. Therefore, the objective of trimming is to reduce excessive weight bearing on load-bearing claws.

Under normal circumstances, horn growth keeps pace with wear. The growth/wear rate at the heel is greater than at the toe. Horn that is dry tends to be extremely resistant to wear and may grow longer than normal. Thus, the claws maintained in hay/straw yards tend to become overgrown. Conversely, the claws maintained in extremely wet conditions are softer than normal and more prone to wear and damage. On concrete surfaces, the lateral hind claw tends to wear less than the medial.

If claws are routinely correctly trimmed, longevity of the herd may be extended.

All claws should be evaluated before trimming. On average, the front (dorsal surface) wall of a hind claw measures ~7.5 cm long from apex to hair line. When the dorsal wall increases in length, the dorsal surface of the claw tends to become concave. This causes greater weight-bearing to be transferred to the posterior aspect of the claw, increasing pressure on the flexor process of the distal phalanx, the point beneath which sole ulcers develop. The longer the toe, the greater the stress on the flexor system. When the claws are short and the dorsal wall is >7.5 cm, there is considerable risk that the thickness of the sole at the apex will be less than the desirable 7 mm.