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| **Hoof Trimming in Cattle** |
| **Objectives**  | * Return the hoof to the correct length
* Balance the weight distribution between the inner and outer claws on each foot
* Correct any lesions present on the claws
* Discover and address other foot infections, issues or injuries
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| **Anatomy**  | Hoof Anatomy  |
| **Restraint**  | Trim Chute  |
| **Equipment Needed** | * Chipper wheel or electric wheel grinder
* Hoof nipper
* Hoof knives
* Hoof tester
* PPE – gloves, ear plugs, eye protection (goggles, face shield)
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| **Why is it done?** | Proper functional and therapeutic hoof trimming in dairy cattle can reduce and help prevent lameness in dairy cows and can also improve productivity and overall animal wellness. Research shows that cows with healthy, pain-free hooves stay in the herd longer, have higher milk production and generate more long-term profit. |
| **When should it be done?** | * Lactating dairy cows should be trimmed twice per year
* All cows should be trimmed at dry off and again at 90-120 days in lactation
* Heifers should be trimmed 6-8 weeks before calving
* In addition to maintenance trimming, lameness scores should be used to identify lame animals who require therapeutic trimming
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| **Procedure**  | 1. Trim inner claw of the rear foot– remove excess toe length using the hoof nipper by cutting perpendicular to the sole. Appropriate toe length is 3 ¼ inches for Holstein cattle. You should never trim any claw shorter than this.
2. Using the grinder trim excess sole in the toe area to a thickness of ¼ inch. When the sole is trimmed to the proper thickness the white line appears as a ring around the inside of the sole. Avoid removing heel horn from the inside claws on the rear feet as this will reduce claw angle.
3. Apply pressure with a hoof tester to assess the sole thickness – if the sole is flexible when pressure is applied then it is too thin
4. Repeat the steps above to trim the outer claw to the same length as the inner claw by making a cut perpendicular to the sole.
5. Trim the outer claw sole to the same height as the inner sole to provide even weight distribution across the entire foot. Use the flat handle of the hoof knife to assess weight distribution within the claw and between the claws.
6. To trim the front feet, repeat steps 1-5 beginning with the outside claw
7. Model the soles – “dish” out the inner parts of both claws, behind the wall on the inner claw edge, to prevent buildup of manure between the claws and to reduce pressure on the typical sole ulcer site. Ensure that the modelling does not extend into the toe triangle as this results in removal of the weight-bearing axial wall.
8. Identify and therapeutically trim any lesions present – haemorrhage, abscesses present in the sole or white line. Use a hoof tester to identify any painful areas in the claw. Evaluate the skin between the toes and on the heels for evidence of infectious claw lesions.
9. Remove any loose horn in the heel area and trim any visible ridges
10. Trim the dewclaws if necessary
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