
Overview

This standard covers the skills and knowledge required to carry out cattle foot trimming.

The feet of cattle need to be checked on a regular basis and trimmed when necessary to maintain the health of the animal's feet. Feet are trimmed to produce a functional, balanced foot to improve locomotion and alleviate pain.

You will need to be aware of your own limitations and ensure that you meet the relevant legal responsibilities for duty of care under animal health and welfare legislation.

This standard is suitable for appropriately trained and qualified cattle foot trimmers.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. maintain a high standard of professional and ethical conduct and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. ensure that your work is carried out in accordance with current animal health and welfare legislation, relevant farm animal regulations and codes of practice at all times
3. carry out all work in accordance with relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, risk assessment requirements and codes of practice
4. ensure appropriate levels of hygiene and bio-security are implemented
5. use working practices that minimise the risks of personal injury or health problems
6. ensure the animal is safely, securely and humanely restrained and is not showing signs of distress
7. assess the condition and conformation of feet to identify any problems and decide on appropriate trimming requirements
8. identify possible causes of **lesions**, the action required and when to recommend veterinary advice/attention
9. carry out cattle foot trimming safely and effectively, using appropriate equipment and methods including application of hoof/claw blocks where necessary
10. monitor the welfare of the animal throughout the trimming process and ensure that the time that the animal spends in the crush is kept to a minimum
11. release the animal from the crush in a safe manner and ensure it is returned to a safe place after release
12. complete **records** of findings, actions taken and any recommendations
13. clean and disinfect equipment following trimming to maintain hygiene and bio-security
14. maintain professional competence through Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your professional and ethical responsibilities and the limits of your authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
2. your responsibilities under current animal health and welfare legislation, other relevant farm animal regulations and codes of practice, and the legal limitations of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) with regard to diagnosis and treatment of disease or injury
3. your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation and codes of practice
4. how disease may be transmitted or caused by the trimmer, and ways to prevent this
5. the importance of maintaining appropriate levels of hygiene and bio-security and how this can be achieved
6. the risks of personal injury or health problems associated with your work and how these can be minimised
7. the importance of monitoring the welfare of the animal throughout the process
8. how to assess the condition of the foot and identify lesions
9. the possible causes of lesions of the foot
10. the effect of **housing/environment** and **diet** on foot condition and horn growth
11. signs that indicate **infection** and possible **methods of control**
12. when to recommend veterinary advice/attention
13. how to carry out cattle foot trimming procedures and the **steps** that should be followed
14. the reasons for applying **hoof/claw blocks**, the correct method of application and when they should be removed
15. the relevant legal and other requirements for maintaining records and the information they should contain
16. the importance of appropriate insurance cover
17. the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain professional competence and the role of professional organisations

Scope/range

Lesions of the foot include:

- digital dermatitis
- heel horn erosion (slurry heel, interdigital dermatitis)
- interdigital growth
- foul of the foot (luer)
- sole bruising/sole haemorrhage (corium dysfunction, claw horn disruption)
- toe necrosis
- sole ulcer
- white line disease

Effect of **housing/environment** on foot condition including:

- cubicle size/comfort (quantity, availability)/lying times
- ventilation
- lighting
- under-foot conditions/floor surfaces
- access to food and water

Effect of **diet** on horn growth including:

- inadequate fibre in diet
- any nutritional mismanagement that leads to low condition scores (less than CS 2) or excess weight loss
- low rumen pH (acidosis)

Signs that indicate **infection**:

- lameness
- heat
- swelling
- redness/smell/discharge

Methods of control:

- footbath
- topical spraying of individual animals
- hygienic housing
- routine trimming

Steps used in trimming:

- inner claw on hind feet, correct length and level
- outer claw on hind feet, correct length and level
- modelling
- height difference if required

- removal of loose horn
- awareness of dew claws and further check for skin infection

Reasons for applying **hoof/claw blocks**:

- improve locomotion
- alleviate pain
- promote healing
- transfer weight

Preparation and application of **hoof/claw blocks**:

- preparation of the foot (level claw)
- clean claw
- selection of appropriate block
- produce level, smooth, stable block on application
- correct use and storage of adhesive
- recommendations for aftercare

Reasons for removing **hoof/claw blocks**:

- if uneven wear of the block results in the animal walking back on their heel
- if the block or glue causes irritation or discomfort by rubbing on the claw
- if the block has been in place for more than 6 weeks

Records should contain:

- number and identity of animals trimmed
- date trimmed
- findings/lesions identified
- procedure carried out
- other comments e.g. future visits, recommendations to seek veterinary advice

LANCFT2

Carry out cattle foot trimming



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Suite Veterinary paraprofessional activities; Livestock Production

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