

- SOP No:** ATT 02
- SUBJECT:** Bovine Foot Examination and Corrective Hoof Trimming
- POLICY:** This procedure may only be performed by, or under the supervision of, an operator skilled in the technique
- PRECAUTIONS:** Methods of restraint should be available to ensure the wellbeing of the animal and the safety of the operator. These facilities may include the use of a crush, ropes for leg lifting, and cow belts. In some cases, local anaesthesia and sedation may be required. Gloves providing protection against injury by hoof trimming equipment should be used.
- EQUIPMENT:** Assorted ropes
Cow belts
Assorted hoof knives
Hoof clippers
Sheep hoof shears
Hoof testers
Lignocaine 2% for local anaesthesia if required
Xylazine for sedation if required
Gloves
- PROCEDURE:**
- Detailed Examination of the Foot:** In general, the examination should begin with the most affected limb and start with the claws. A complete examination should be performed regardless of any lesions found at early stages of the assessment. Examination of the digits should begin with the animal standing progressing from the hoof wall up each limb. The sole of each claw should then receive a closer examination which requires elevation and restraint of the limb. There are several methods for lifting front and hind limbs and operator and animal safety should be considered when choosing the particular method.
 - Lifting and restrain of the front limb:** For calves or very quiet cattle, elevation of the limb may be achieved by manually grabbing the metacarpus such that both the carpal and elbow joints are flexed as the limb is lifted. Alternatively, a rope may be applied to the limb below the accessory digits, the limb lifted and the rope secured to the crush. A cow belt may be used to offer some support and thereby prevent the animal from lying down during the procedure.
 - Lifting a hind limb:** The pelvic limb may be lifted using a rope or pulley or a Hoofnak. In one rope method, the rope is tied around the fetlock. A second loop is made in the rope above the hock. The free end of the rope is passed over the top of the crush and back down through the loop to create a pulley mechanism to lift the limb. The free end of the rope can then be secured. A Hoofnak is a portable device that can be applied to pipe railings on the crush. Elevation of the limb is made possible with a lever and ratchet system.
Hoof-trimming technique
 - Exploratory technique:*** The sole should be lightly pared to expose potential subsolar lesions or to explore readily visible surface lesions. If possible, the intent is to pare deep enough to expose normal horn.

- **Corrective hoof trimming:** The objective is to restore the foot to its normal shape. Measurements in the following description are based on a mature cow. Adjustments will have to be made for other sizes of stock. Gradual removal of claw is advised to avoid trimming too short. There are three general stages to the hoof-trimming:
 - **Cut one:** Cut the overgrown toe back to its correct length, approx 75mm from the coronary band.
 - **Cut two:** Visualize a line from the top of cut one at the toe to the bottom of the heel. Gradually remove the entire hoof beneath this line taking care to during the process to reassess sole thickness to avoid excessive trimming and damage to the underlying corium. The sole surface should be flat.
 - **Cut Three:** Remove any ledge of solar overgrowth into the interdigital space and smooth down any sharp edges.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Local infiltrative or regional anaesthesia and/or sedation should be considered when dealing with aggressive animals or when painful conditions of the foot exist. Changes in the technique may be required depending on animal and/or facility variations.

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REFERENCES

1. Greenough, PR & Weaver, AD 1997, *Lameness in Cattle*, 3rd edn, W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia.
2. Blowey, R 1993, *Cattle lameness and hoofcare: an illustrated guide*, Farming Press, Ipswich.