

SMALL RUMINANT HOOF CARE

Quick Reference Guide



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

EXTENSION

Oglethorpe County



IMPORTANCE

Hoof care is a vital component of small ruminant management. Diseases of the hoof affect the overall health of the goat or sheep and decrease productivity. Cull animals with excessive hoof problems and seek veterinary advice for persistent foot disease.

COMMON HOOF DISEASE

Foot Rot contributes to a significant loss of time and money.

It is caused by the coexistence of two anaerobic bacteria. Symptoms include lameness and a rotten smell. It is found in high moisture areas during warm weather and spread by the introduction of an infected animal into the herd. Consider quarantining any new animal for 30 days.

Foot Scald appears as moist red areas between the toes and is very sensitive to the touch. Also spread by infected animals.

Laminitis is swelling under the hard wall of the hoof. It is caused by changes in diet or severe bacterial infections and requires vigorous hoof trimming.



TRIMMING

To prevent and correct disease, trim hooves every 2-12 weeks depending on breed, genetic composition, soil moisture, and nutrition. Watch the herd for signs of disease or lameness and trim accordingly. Create a flat surface on the bottom of the hoof that is parallel to the hoof at the hairline. Step by step instruction is included on the back page of this guide.

Basic Steps to Hoof Trimming

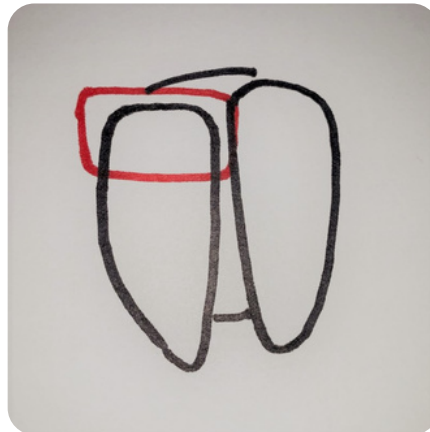
Trim excess growth off outer edges and decrease toe length. Take care to remove all pockets where debris and bacteria can hide.



Trim inner wall in a similar fashion. Trims should be at a depth where coloration becomes lighter and the sides and toe are even with the center pad of the foot.



Flatten the heel of the hoof to create a level surface for the animal to walk on. Repeat steps on the other half of the foot.



Hold toes together to match up the angle on each. Be sure that your cuts have created a level and upright foot shape when the animal is standing.

