Hoof Health Impacts Animal Longevity

A good foundation is important for a long lived animal.

Stating the obvious

This is not in Florida

- Sheep and goats originated in rocky terrain.
- Hoof wear was not an issue.

Peninsula (stretch of land surrounded by water).
Mediterranean region (body of water surrounded by soil).

Stating the obvious

Florida flat grounds pose a challenge for the natural wear of hooves.
- Our soils—sandy, low elevation.
  - Promote overgrown hoof walls and soles.
**Stating the obvious**

**Results:**
- A flat surface for animals to stand on.
- Removal of trapped mud and feces.
- Removal of excessive horn and sole tissue.
- Reduces the chance for foot scald, foot rot and other conditions.

**The Hooves**

- **Horn growth**
- **Coronary Band**
- **Coronary Cushion**
- **Wall**
- **Laminitis**
- **Digital Cushion**

**Why do we trim hooves?**

**Overgrown hooves will cause:**
- Inadequate posture.
- Joint problems.
- Fungal infections.
- Lameness.
- Poor performance due to painful movement.

**Correct trimming promotes:**
- A flat surface for animals to stand on.
- Removal of trapped mud and feces.
- Removal of excessive horn and sole tissue.
  - Reduces the chance for foot scald, foot rot and other conditions.

*It is necessary to allow air circulation on the hoof area to eliminate anaerobic bacteria to colonize the foot.*

Under normal conditions, sheep and goats need to be trimmed 1 to 2 times per year. Every farm is different and more regular trimming is necessary in our soils.

**Why do we trim hooves?**

Lameness can be caused by lack of trimming.
Common Hoof Problems

Laminitis:
- Severe pain in the sensitive blood vessels beneath the hoof wall
- Causes of laminitis include:
  - Overeating (causing too much energy to be diverted from the body)
  - Infection from the foot
  - Stress
  - Certain medications
  - Overgrown hooves

Prevention:
- Proper nutrition
- Regular hoof care
- Early detection and treatment

Splinter Heel:
- Caused by a foreign body or a sharp object
- Symptoms:
  - Swelling
  - Pain
  - Difficulty in walking

Treatment:
- Removal of the foreign body
- Medication
- Antibiotics

White Line Disease:
- Caused by candidiasis, dermatophytes, bacteria, or fungi
- Symptoms:
  - Cracks in the hoof wall
  - Loose or painful hoof

Treatment:
- Antifungal
- Antibiotics
- Poultices
- Shoeing

Foot Scald:
- Caused by bacteria or yeasts
- Symptoms:
  - Swelling
  - Pain
  - Discharge

Treatment:
- Antimicrobial
- Antifungal
- Blood pressure monitoring
- Supportive care
Before you Start

**Tools**
- Hoof trimming shears
- Hoof rasp
- Hoof pick
- Trimming knife
- File
- Stanchion
- Bailing twine
- Mineral oil

Basic Trimming Procedure

1. Dig out dirt
2. Trim wall
3. Trim heels
4. Trim excess interdigital hoof growth

Trimming Tips

1. Start by cleaning the toes.
   a) Trim the shortest toe first.
      - Front feet: Outer toes
      - Back feet: Inside toes
   b) Trim the front of the toes first.
2. After trimming the hoof wall, even the soles with a rasp.
3. Expose wounds, cracks or crevices to air by clipping the horn around it.
   a) Stop when you see pink, soft skin.
   b) Hoof should be even with hairline.
   c) Dry and hardened hooves can be softened with mineral oil.

Points of balance

- Invest in a goat stanchion if possible.
Other ways to trim small ruminants:
- Two-person trim
- Tilt table ($$$)
- Casting

Mamma said: Aim for this.

Other ways to trim small ruminants:
- Well-balance footing.

Objective: Providing the animal with sound, well-balance footing.

Nutrition:
- High caloric diets can produce hoof irregular growth.
- Low protein diets can interrupt normal hoof growth.

Genetics:
- Hoof problems can be inherited from parents.
- Cull animals that recur into hoof problems.

Regular trimming:
- Monitor on a regular basis. Trim as needed.

Want a sheep for the sky, but don't think she meant for this.

And some people say sheep are stupid.
• Foot problems can be avoided by detecting them early.
• Culling is always an option.
• Contact your veterinarian for information on treating common problems.