



# Hoof Trimming

**Regular hoof trimming will give your goats the best chance for strong feet and hooves.**

**F**eet are among the most important parts of a goat, but foot care is often overlooked.

Regular hoof trimming will give your goats the best chance for strong feet and hooves. Improper foot maintenance can lead to foot rot, joint problems, chronic pain, and resulting ill-thrift if moving becomes painful.

The required frequency of hoof trimming will depend on the conditions under which your goats are kept. Goats that are kept in soft pastures or barn yards and are well-fed with grain will have fast growing hooves that will need to be trimmed every four to eight weeks. Goats kept out on the range on harder ground will wear down their hooves naturally, and will not need to have them trimmed as often. In either case, a regular routine of inspection and trimming is advisable.

Proper restraint is a must. If you have only one or two animals, you can halter and tie them, have someone hold them for you, or tip them on their bottoms (like sheep). If you have more animals (or a bad back!) a milking stand with a locking head gate works well and saves your back. Large operations should probably consider a handling and restraint system with a chute feeding into a raised table or even a tip squeeze. This will allow the process-

ing of more animals more efficiently – not only for hoof care but also worming, vaccination, etc. Feeding some grain or treats such as vegetable scraps or hay cubes will keep the goat occupied while you trim. Goats are intelligent and will soon get used to having their hooves trimmed if done regularly.

Invest in a pair of good quality shears – they will be easier to use and will stay sharp longer. Another useful tool is a hoof knife, which helps level the sole after you have trimmed the walls of the claws.

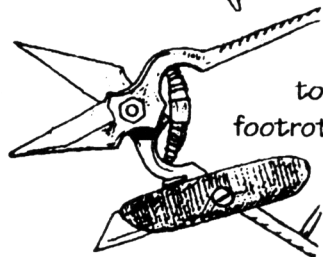
To trim goats' hooves, follow the diagram on the next page. If you trim too much and draw blood, don't panic. Disinfect the hoof and keep the goat on a clean dry surface until the bleeding stops. Use blood stop (styptic) powder and pressure if necessary. A good rule of thumb is to stop trimming when you see pink through the sole of the claw – this means you are getting close to the blood vessels. Overall, the sole of the claw should be parallel to the hairline at the top of the hoof, and level across each claw.

A badly overgrown hoof should be trimmed often, every week or two, a little at a time, until it has returned to a normal shape. After every trim, the blood vessels will retract allowing you to trim a little more of the overgrown hoof next time.

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Please wear gloves!

a badly  
overgrown  
hoof



tools of the trade -  
footrot shears & utility knife

1. dig out dirt from toes



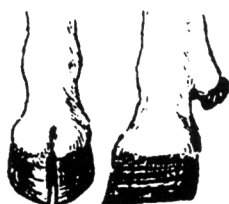
2. trim away excess hoof wall,  
parallel to lines of growth

3. pare heels to  
same level as soles  
of toes



4. remove excess nail tissue all  
around and between toes

5. pare thin slices from soles  
to make flat



6. a good trim!

drawings by S. Emond