

How to trim your sheep's hooves?

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Sheep is one of the most important species among farm animals. By improving methods of housing and intensive animal production some changes especially in growth and shearing of the hooves has been happened. Proper hoof trimming is the most important factor to provide hoof health and function. Reducing claws to normal proportions in order to restore their normal function could be called functional trimming. It involves shortening and leveling the claws. Only after this functional trimming may any defects in the horny shoe be treated by removing any remaining loose horn and thinning edges of horn remaining along an exposed corium.

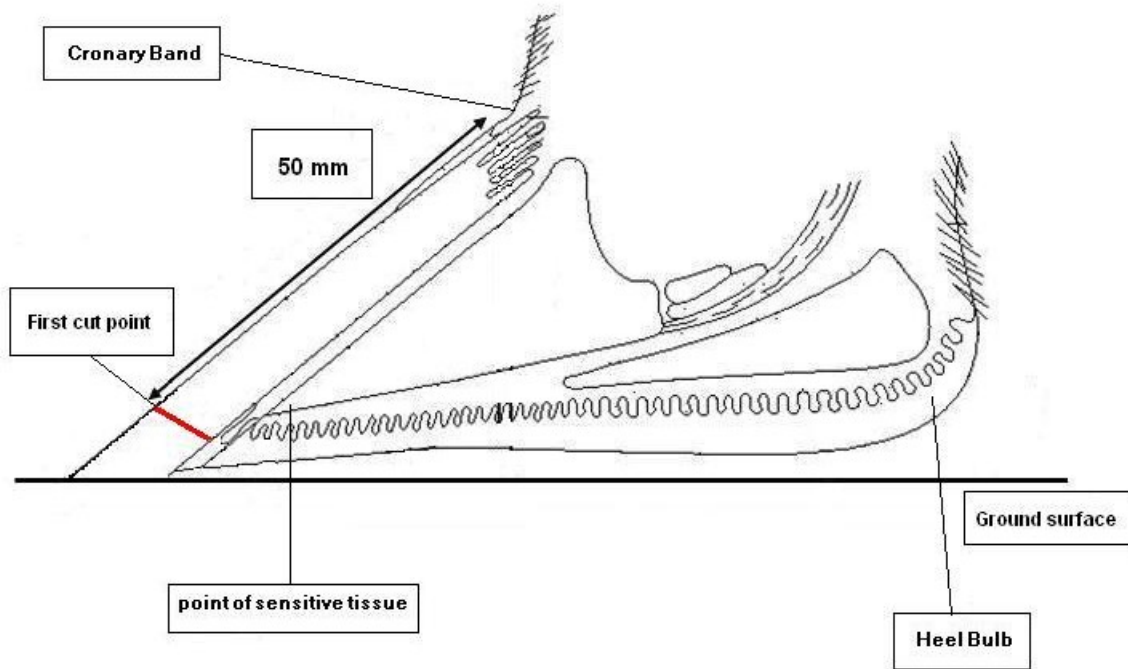
The aim of trimming is to eliminate cracks and crevices that could trap mud and harbour foot rot bacteria. Do not draw blood in any foot trimming exercise, since this increases the risk of infection and causes further damage to the foot.

Standard Hoof Trimming Method:

The following method includes five stages and is based on anatomical study of hoof growth pattern in different Iranian sheep breeds.

At first Clean feet thoroughly before trimming and inspect each claw carefully.

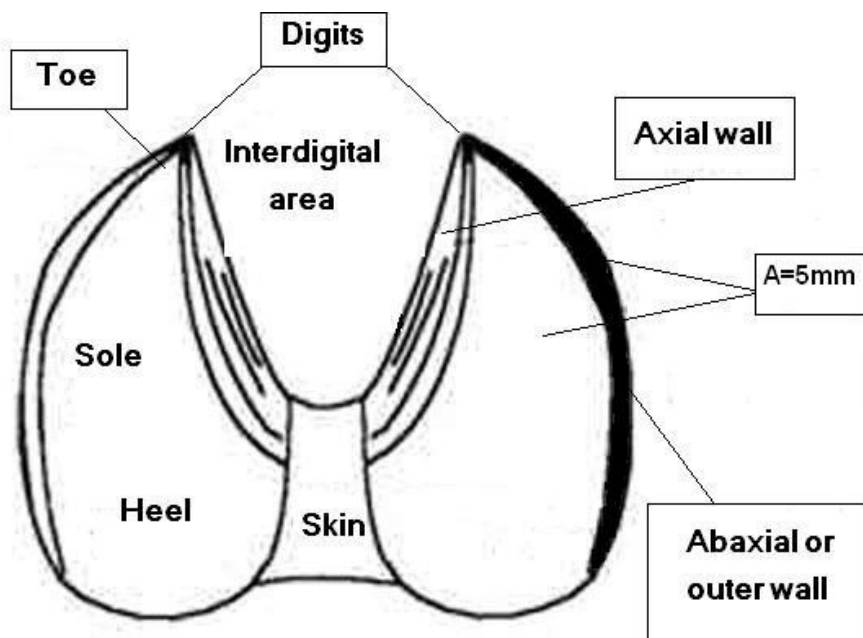
First stage: toe length to sensitive tissue in sheep is calculated 45 mm, regards to safe limit of sensitive tissue (5 mm) it seems that 50 mm length from coronary band leaves a safe margin for inner sensitive tissues.



Stage 2: from first cut point a line is connected to heel region and all horny parts will be cut below this line.



Stage 3: if the first cut was done in proper distance, after second cut white line should be appearing in sole edges and rejoins in toe but if it does not appear or the difference between toe height to sole and toe height to ground is more than 5 mm, it is necessary to remove to parts of edges until this difference become 5 mm or rejoining of the axial and abaxial white line in toe region was observable.



A: The difference between toe height to sole and toe height to ground

Stage 4: consists of inspecting solar part to determine any infected pouches.

The final stage is to trim the two claws back to approximately the same size. The final result is even distribution of weight between all eight digits.



It appears that ovine hoof and its growth pattern is similar to the cattle but differences between growth rates of the claws are not significant. So beginning the hoof trimming from a special claw is not necessary and at the end of hoof trimming it is important that claws back to approximately the same size.



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