

Hoof Trimming

The trimming of hooves of goats is a simple task that can be easily learned. Many foot and leg problems in goats are either caused by a lack of trimming or improper trimming techniques.

Time between trimmings

The amount of time between trimmings depends on many factors, such as:

- type of terrain
- the goat's age
- level of activity
- nutritional level
- breed

Goats raised in relative confinement and on small acreages may also require more frequent trimmings than goats raised in large pastures. Generally, foot trimming should be done on an as needed basis. A properly trimmed hoof should look like that of a newborn kid.



Digging out a "dirty pocket".



Back right done.

Tools for hoof trimming

- gloves
- a set of hoof shears
- a hoof knife, both with sharp edges.
- Optional items include: a rasp, some iodine, turpentine, copper sulfate, and formalin.

It is always easier to trim feet after the goats have been outside in wet grass, as the moisture is taken in by the hoof walls, making them softer and easier to trim.

Restraining your goat

There are several ways of holding or restraining a goat in order to care for hooves. The best method is whatever works well for your particular situation.

Methods

- Place the goat on a milking stand.
- Tie the goat to a post or fence with a halter
- Have someone hold the goat while the feet are being trimmed.

- Hold the goat's feet in the same fashion as a farrier works on a horse.
- Place the goat between one's legs in the same position used for shearing; that is, the animal is in an upright sitting position.

Steps in trimming

Step 1

The first step in trimming is to clean off the foot, so that it is free of dirt, stones, rot and manure. Besides being easier to see and more pleasant to handle, a clean foot will not dull a knife's edge as fast as a dirty foot.

Step 2

The next step is to remove any rim or excess growth from the walls of the foot. The wall may have grown and folded back under the foot. In this case some of the overlapped toe will have to be cut back so that the rim of the wall can be removed properly.



Trimming inside heel area.