CPD and Check Day.

Professional (Category 1)

Trimmer Assessment Criteria

The National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers

Last Updated 22nd July 2021

THESE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA ARE DESIGNED TO BE USED DURING NACFT CHECK DAYS.

NACFT CATEGORY 2 TRIMMERS AND THOSE WORKING TOWARDS THEIR DIPLOMA MAY FIND THESE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA PARTICULARLY USEFUL.

THE OVER-RIDING AIM OF THE NACFT CHECK DAYS IS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE AND PROVIDE QUALITY CPD FOR NACFT MEMBERS. AN ADDITIONAL PURPOSE IS TO CHECK TRIMMERS' COMPETENCE, SAFETY, MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT, BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF LAMENESS AND SKILLS.

EVEN VERY EXPERIENCED TRIMMERS CAN DRIFT WITH THEIR TECHNIQUE, OVER TIME. GOOD TRIMMERS RECOGNISE THE VALUE IN HAVING AN EXPERIENCED, INDEPENDENT PERSON REVIEW THEIR WORK PERIODICALLY AND PROVIDE IDEAS AND GUIDANCE WHICH CAN HELP THEM BECOME A BETTER TRIMMER.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) IS PROVIDED AT THE CHECK DAY. TRIMMERS ARE ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT LATEST RESEARCH AND IDEAS ON CATTLE LAMENESS. THIS HELPS TO KEEP TRIMMERS UP-TO-DATE, AND ALSO ENHANCES ENJOYMENT OF THEIR WORK

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ONE VETERINARY SURGEON (WITH EXPERTISE IN CATTLE LAMENESS), AND ONE EXPERIENCED NACFT COMMITTEE MEMBER AT A CHECK DAY. TOGETHER, THEY WILL BOTH LEAD THE DAY AND MAKE ASSESSMENTS, BASED ON THE CRITERIA INCLUDED HERE.

TRY NOT TO VIEW THE CHECK DAY AS A TEST! SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND REVIEW. IN MOST CASES, TRIMMERS WILL BE GIVEN SOME GUIDANCE WHICH IS DESIGNED TO BE USEFUL FOR THEM. IN SOME INSTANCES, TRIMMERS WILL BE DIRECTED TO ADDITIONAL TRAINING OR RE-TRAINING IN ORDER TO REACH OR MAINTAIN THEIR CATEGORY 1 STATUS.

SOME RETRAINING OR REVIEWING WILL BE REQUIRED WHEREVER A **CRITICAL NON-CONFORMANCE** IS FOUND. A CRITICAL NON-CONFORMANCE WOULD BE IF SOMETHING IS UNSAFE, DANGEROUS, UNPROFESSIONAL OR VERY LIKLEY TO HARM ANIMAL WELFARE OR BIOSECURITY. EXAMPLES WOULD INCLUDE ARRIVING WITH UNHYGIENIC EQUIPMENT, OR CAUSING INJURY THROUGH POOR TRIMMING TECHNIQUE. THREE OR MORE MAJOR NON-CONFORMANCES WOULD ALSO LEAD TO A CRITICAL NON-CONFORMANCE.

A **MAJOR NON-CONFORMANCE** IS AN AREA WHICH DEFINITELY REQUIRES ADDRESSING, BUT BY ITSELF DOES NOT RENDER THE TRIMMER UNFIT, AND REQUIRING EXTRA TRAINING. EXAMPLES INCLUDE TECHNIQUES WHICH ON OCCASIONS CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF LAMENESS, SUCH AS INCORRECT BLOCK PLACEMENT, OR COSMETIC REMOVAL OF DORSAL OR ABAXIAL WALLS. SOME AREAS OF PROFESSIONALISM SUCH AS POOR RECORD KEEPING OR INACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF LESIONS MAY ALSO BE CONSIDERED A MAJOR NON-CONFORMANCE.

FINALLY, **ADVISORY FINDINGS** ARE SIMPLY THAT: ADVICE. NO TRIMMER SHOULD BE DISAPPOINTED IF ADVISORY FINDINGS ARE RECORDED FOR THEM. ADVISORIES ARE THERE TO HELP TRIMMERS CONSIDER WHERE THEIR TECHNIQUE COULD BE MODIFIED, OR DIFFERENT APPROACHES TAKEN, WHICH ARE LIKELY TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE. EXAMPLES INCLUDE MINOR MISS-RECORDING, SOME MINOR GAPS IN THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE, OR UNNECESSARY UNDER-LOADING OF SOME PARTS OF THE CLAW.

ADVISORY FINDINGS, BY THEMSELVES, WOULD NOT LEAD TO A CRITICAL NON-CONFORMITY.

EXAMPLES OF ADVISORY FINDINGS, MAJOR NON-CONFORMANCES AND CRITICAL NON-CONFORMANCES ARE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX 1 OF THIS DOCUMENT.

THE CHECK DAY

Resources needed for the Check Day should include suitable cattle for trimming, handling facilities, undercover conditions, and access to electrics.

The minimum age limit for delegates undertaking a Check Day is 18 years. There is no upper age limit.

Assessment is a process by which it is confirmed that the delegate is competent. It is a process of collating evidence about his/her capabilities and judging whether that evidence is sufficient to attribute competence. The delegate must be registered through NACFT prior to attending a Check Day, and for delegates wishing to be recognised as Category 1 trimmers, they must bring an original copy of their trimming qualification (e.g. Dutch Diploma).

Delegates are expected to use their own equipment (unless through prior arrangement with the assessors). Delegates may bring their own trimming crushes, and these will be assessed prior to and whilst they are being used. For practical reasons, some delegates will use the crushes of other people. For instances where a delegate does not bring their own trimming crush, they must be able to show sufficient photos, or video, of their usual crush being operated, in order that its safety and maintenance can be assessed. Photographs or video on smartphone should be perfectly sufficient.

The result of the Check Day assessment will be recorded on an assessment report form for each delegate.

The schedule of assessment contains the assessment criteria relating to:

- Equipment
- Observation of practical performance
- Assessment of knowledge and understanding

Complaints and Appeals procedure.

In the event of any dissatisfaction with the arrangements and conditions of assessment, the delegate should first raise the issue on the day with the assessors. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint to satisfaction, delegates should afterwards submit their complaint in writing to NACFT.

Learning Outcomes.

Delegates will be able to demonstrate knowledge of, or ability in:

- Equipment and materials required for cattle foot trimming
- Effective animal preparation and foot trimming
- Identification of lesions, completion of accurate records and the need for veterinary intervention
- Preparation and application of claw block
- Recognise foot disorders likely to cause impaired mobility and understand those caused by infectious disease, or environmental (housing) and management factors
- Biosecurity and disease spread within cattle
- Knowledge of relevant legislation

The assessment is divided in to two main aspects:

1. Practical Foot Trimming of Cattle
2. Principles of Cattle Foot Trimming

Delegates must complete all Assessment Activities in both of the above areas.

Guidelines for the Practical Assessment.

The delegate is required to trim four cows. All four feet must be trimmed on at least one cow. The back feet only can be trimmed on three cows unless the front feet require trimming.

The delegate may choose to use knives and/ or an electric rasp for trimming. If an electric rasp is used, safety goggles must be worn at all times and rasps should be operated according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Safe Practice.

- Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times.
- Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure biosecurity at all times.
- All equipment must be operated in such a way that the delegate, assessor, other persons, animals or other equipment are not endangered.

If these conditions are not observed this will result in a critical non-conformity.

Validation of Equipment.

Any appropriate item(s) of livestock and clinical equipment complying with legal and animal welfare requirements is acceptable for the assessment, provided it is suitable for all assessment activities to be carried out. Additional Information may be sought from the relevant manufacturer's instruction book, operators' manual, product label or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Animal Welfare.

Throughout the Check Day, a high emphasis is placed on animal welfare, which underpins the whole qualification and professionalism of being a Category 1 trimmer.

The "Five Freedoms" and their interpretation by the RSPCA appear at the back of this document (Appendix 2).

During the Check Day and assessment, delegates are reminded that they should carry out all the activities to comply with the relevant animal welfare codes and laws.

1. PRACTICAL FOOT TRIMMING OF CATTLE

(i) Demonstrate knowledge of equipment and materials required for foot trimming

Typical equipment required for foot trimming:

- PPE: apron, disinfectable boots, overalls, wrist guards, gloves
- Knives and clippers
- Hoof testers
- Electric grinder (optional)
- Electric cables (optional)
- Crush
- Disinfectant (DEFRA approved) and suitable means of disinfection
- Report sheets/ app or computer programme
- Hoof blocks
- Any other relevant equipment, e.g. rasp

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of the condition of equipment required for foot trimming

- In good working order
- Clean
- Sharp
- Correct angle, blade/bow
- Disinfection and biosecurity (hygiene, cleanliness) routine
- Test electrical supply
- Safe routing of cables

(iii) Mobility score the animal, identify lame limb(s), and prepare the animal for trimming

For all cows, candidates must:

- Assess her mobility, on the AHDB four point (0-3) scale, including being able to identify the lame limb(s) for animals with AHDB score 2 or 3
- Assess and minimise risks to the cows and people in the vicinity
- Have a clear crush/work area
- Maintain quiet, firm control
- Create a stress free/comfortable environment for the cow
- Be aware of animal behaviour and condition of health
- Exercise the correct use of restraint

(iv) Carry out foot trimming procedures

Using the 5-step method, summarised as:

- Step 1 – inner claw on hind feet, correct length and level (front feet: begin with outer claw)
- Step 2 – match outer claw to inner claw
- Step 3 – modelling
- Step 4 – height difference if required, and deal appropriately with claw horn lesions
- Step 5 – remove loose horn and sharp ridges; deal appropriately with skin and infectious lesions
- Awareness of dew claws

After correctly trimming, the finish should:

- Produce a functional balanced foot
- Improve locomotion
- Alleviate pain
- Include an assessment of foot conformation
- Accurately identify lesions
- Identify appropriate trimming procedures
- Recognise where there is need for veterinary intervention

(v) Report findings

Completed report sheets (paper or computerised) should containing the following records:

- Number and identity of animals trimmed
- Date trimmed
- Findings/ lesions identified
- Procedure
- Other comments eg. future/ follow-up visits, recommendation for vet advice

Records should be able to be used by the farmer, including for:

- Satisfying Farm Assurance recording requirements
- Helping to assess the main causes of lameness on the farm
- Informing his/her vet, or other relevant professionals, of cows trimmed and the findings
- Identifying problem cows (e.g. repeat cases; non-healing lesions; poor conformation etc.)
- Identifying cows which require further treatment

Delegates will be expected to:

- Identify lesions correctly
- Complete report sheets after trimming
- Demonstrate knowledge of the ways in which records should be used by the farmer

(vi) Using blocks, and aftercare of lame cows

Delegates will be expected to:

- Know when a block is required
- Demonstrate correct application of claw block
- Demonstrate knowledge of when claw blocks need removing
- Understand reasons for blocking:
    - Improve locomotion
    - Alleviate pain
    - Promote healing
    - Transfer weight away from affected claw/ lesion
- Understand the circumstances when the farmer should be using pain killer/ anti-inflammatory for the cows
- Understand the additional aftercare or recovery needs which individual cows may require

Delegates will be expected to be able to prepare a foot and apply a claw block, if required:

- Preparation of foot (level claw)
- Clean claw
- Produce level, smooth, stable block on application
- Selection of appropriate block
- Correct use and storage of adhesive
- Recommendations for aftercare of blocked cows
- Understand when blocks should be removed:
    - If uneven wear of the block results in the cow walking back on her heel
    - If the block or glue causes irritation or discomfort by rubbing on the claw
    - If the block has been in place for more than 6 weeks

2. PRINCIPLES OF CATTLE FOOT TRIMMING

(vii) Demonstrate knowledge of mobility scores

- Understand the AHDB four-point mobility scoring system
- Know the definition of each score
- Understand the principles of lameness detection and mobility scoring, why it is used, how the data is typically presented, and have an appreciation of typical herd scores

(viii) Demonstrate knowledge of diseases

- Understand the definition of the term zoonoses
  - Disease of animals transmissible to humans
- Examples of recognised zoonoses
  - Leptospirosis
  - Brucellosis
  - Ringworm
  - Tuberculosis
  - Salmonella
  - E.coli
  - Cryptosporidia
- Examples of diseases that can potentially be passed from farm to farm or cow to cow by the trimmer
  - Salmonella
  - Digital dermatitis
  - Foot and mouth disease
  - Ringworm
  - Johnes disease
  - BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea)
  - Leptospirosis
  - IBR (Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis, 'Cow flu')

(ix) Demonstrate knowledge of measures to reduce risks of spreading disease or contracting a zoonotic disease (biosecurity)

- Measures to reduce risks of spreading diseases or contracting a zoonotic disease
  - Personal hygiene; washing hands before eating/ smoking
  - Washing and disinfecting crush and equipment thoroughly between farms (including overalls, wellingtons, gloves etc., or use disposable items)
  - Washing and disinfecting equipment between cows to reduce spread of digital dermatitis
- Keeping area around the crush scraped free of faeces during trimming
- Use of suitable disinfectant

(x) Demonstrate knowledge of foot disorders caused by infectious disease organisms, or management/ environmental factors.

- Infectious or contagious lesions of the foot (those caused to a large extent by bacteria), including:
  - Digital dermatitis (including some understanding of M-classification)
  - Foul of the foot
  - Heel horn erosion (slurry heel)
- Claw horn lesions, including:
  - Sole bruising/ haemorrhage
  - Sole ulcer
  - White line disease and white line abscess
- Mixed or complicated lesions, including:
  - Infected claw horn lesions
  - Interdigital growth

    - Toe necrosis
    - Other non-healing lesions and DD-infected lesions
- Be able to discuss possible causes and risks for different lesions of the foot, including:
    - Mechanical forces and trauma
    - Long standing times
    - Effects of poor cow flow
    - Low body condition score
    - Slurry management and foot hygiene
    - Poor biosecurity and infection pressure
    - Delayed detection and treatment leading to more advanced claw horn lesions
    - Prolonged wet feet causing soft horn
- Be able to recognise signs that indicate infection or inflammation, including:
    - Lameness behaviours
    - Heat/ swelling/ redness/ odour or characteristic visible lesions associated with lameness
- Be able to briefly discuss some principles of control and lameness management, including:
    - EDPET (Early Detection, Prompt, Effective Treatment)
    - Footbathing
    - Topical spraying of individual animals (and blitz treatments of herds) for DD control
    - Hygienic housing
    - Routine trimming
    - Ensuring good lying times/ cow comfort
    - Ensuring good cow flow/ stress-free handling and calm stock person-ship
    - Other aspects of housing and environment, such as suitable floor surface, avoiding overcrowding and ensuring good drainage
- Be able to briefly discuss nutritional effects on lameness management, including:
    - Biotin supplementation
    - Reducing thin cows
    - Avoiding excessive weight loss (e.g. after calving)

(xi) Demonstrate knowledge of the law in relation to the work of a foot trimmer.

- Understand what cattle foot trimmers can and cannot legally do in the course of their work, in accordance with the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and UK Veterinary Medicines Regulations
- Trimmers may:
    - Trim a cow's foot to relieve the area around a sole ulcer
    - Apply a block to alleviate weight bearing of a diseased foot or lesion
    - Spray a digital dermatitis lesion with the farmer's own topical antibiotic or other licensed product
    - Indicate a case of foul which the farmer may treat with antibiotic injection which has been prescribed for that purpose by their own vet
    - Record lesions, such as sole ulcer, foul of the foot, digital dermatitis, on record sheets
- Examples of things the trimmer should never do include:
    - Advising the farmer which antibiotic to use to treat a simple case of foul (or give other advice regarding any other veterinary medicinal products)
    - Injecting antibiotic into the foot
    - Spraying a digital dermatitis lesion with his/her own topical antibiotic, or other licensed product (as it has not been prescribed by the farm's vet for that purpose)
    - Treating any cow with an unlicensed product
    - Injecting local anaesthetic into the foot or leg in order to pare an infected sole ulcer
    - Performing surgery
- Understand the seriousness of breaking the law regarding animal welfare, and performing illegal acts of veterinary surgery
- Understand the seriousness of breaching veterinary medicines regulations with regards animal welfare, food safety, residue avoidance and antimicrobial resistance
- Be able to discuss how to approach difficult situations where trimmers may find themselves being coerced into acting illegally

APPENDIX 1

Examples of assessment findings.

Advisories = modified technique, approach or knowledge which are likely to improve performance.

Examples:

- Instability across toe failing to bring axial wall into weight-bearing
- Unnecessary but mild under-loading of the dynamic (main weight-bearing) claw
- Restricted size or area of modelling
- Loose horn or sharp ridges left
- Incorrect mobility score identification
- Incorrect theoretical knowledge
- Missed mild lesion e.g. M3 DD lesion or mild, incidental (score 1) claw lesion

Major non-conformances = techniques which on occasions can increase the risk of lameness, or large knowledge gaps.

Examples:

- Toe trimmed too short (<75mm) or too long (>90mm)
- Toe blunted without removing sole thickness correctly
- Significant height-difference created (over-balanced claw) in a sound limb
- Modelling into a toe triangle
- Incorrect block placement
- Cosmetic removal of dorsal or abaxial walls
- Lack of correct recording and reporting
- Missed claw lesion or failure to block a claw lesion
- Missed M2 or M4 digital dermatitis lesion
- Failure to know the AHDB mobility score system
- Failure to understand the predominant causes of the main lameness lesions

Critical non-conformance = an action considered dangerous, unprofessional or likely to increase the risk of lameness or worsen a lesion causing lameness.

Examples:

- More than 3 “major non-conformances”
- Unclean crush or trimming equipment
- Insufficient PPE to proceed safely
- Dangerous equipment or operation
- Making a cow lame after handling in crush or after trimming
- Removal of axial walls
- Applying an unlicensed treatment, or unconventional treatments such cauterisation
- Evidence of performing an act of veterinary surgery, or actions in contravention of the Veterinary Surgeons Act or Veterinary Medicines Regulations

APPENDIX 2

The Five Freedoms

The 'Five Freedoms' as defined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, define ideal states, and provide a comprehensive framework for animal welfare on farm, in transit and at the place of slaughter.

They are:

(1) Freedom from fear and distress
(2) Freedom from pain, injury and disease
(3) Freedom from hunger and thirst
(4) Freedom from discomfort
(5) Freedom to express normal behaviour

What the Five Freedoms mean:

FREEDOM from fear and distress by providing conditions and care, whether on farm, in transit or at the abattoir, which avoid mental suffering. For instance, staff involved in handling livestock need to be aware of the welfare problems associated with animal handling and understand the behaviour characteristics and likely reactions of the species in question, so that potentially stressful events such as loading/unloading and moving animals can be carried out quietly and calmly.

FREEDOM from pain, injury and disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment. The design of accommodation for farm animals should be such that a high or regular occurrence of injury and disease as the consequence of poorly designed facilities is avoided. Stock-keepers should be sufficiently skilled and alert to detect incidents of injury and disease early, to act appropriately to reduce or avoid them in future.

FREEDOM from hunger and thirst by providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour. Feed must be satisfying, appropriate for the species/age of animal and safe. Other measures (such as minimising bullying and competition at feed time by ensuring appropriate placement and numbers of feeders/drinkers) should also be employed to achieve this 'freedom'.

FREEDOM from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area. The provision of a safe, clean, dry bedded lying area helps to achieve this and space allowances should ensure that all animals have adequate space to lie comfortably, groom themselves, get up and get down easily without injuring themselves or others. The design of flooring and un-bedded areas along with drainage and manure handling should be such that they do not result in injuries or diseases of the feet.

FREEDOM to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals' own kind. The proven needs of different species of animals must be met. For example, the provision of straw bedding of other material for manipulation for pigs, can not only provide a comfortable lying place, but also enriches a potentially barren environment by providing an opportunity for pigs to satisfy their strong instinct for exploration, rooting behaviour and play. Allowing expression of natural behaviour helps to reduce the occurrence of unnatural, potentially harmful behaviours and improves mental wellbeing.