

1 **Effect of trimming of overgrown and deformed claws in goats on morphometric measurements**

2 Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado <sup>1\*</sup>, Juscelio Bassoto Filho <sup>2</sup>, Melina Marie Yasuoka <sup>3</sup>, Rudiger Daniel

3 Ollhoff <sup>4</sup>, Sarita Bonagurio Gallo <sup>5</sup>, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior <sup>1,2</sup>

4  
5 <sup>1</sup> Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, Department of Surgery, University of Sao Paulo,  
6 São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

7 <sup>2</sup> Faculty of Animal Science and Food Engineering, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Sao  
8 Paulo, Pirassununga, SP, Brazil.

9 <sup>3</sup> Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Veterinary Medicine, Anhembi Morumbi University –  
10 Laureate International Universities, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

11 <sup>4</sup> School of Life Science, Graduate Program in Animal Science, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do  
12 Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brazil.

13 <sup>5</sup> Faculty of Animal Science and Food Engineering, Department of Animal Science, University of Sao  
14 Paulo, Pirassununga, SP, Brazil.

15 \* Corresponding author: Vivian C. M. Prado. E-mail: [vivian.cmprado@gmail.com](mailto:vivian.cmprado@gmail.com)

16  
17 **Authors' contributions:**

18  
19 Conceptualization: Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

20 Methodology: Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

21 Formal analysis and investigation: Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado, Juscelio Bassoto Filho, Melina Marie  
22 Yasuoka, Rudiger Daniel Ollhoff, Sarita Bonagurio Gallo, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

23 Writing - original draft preparation: Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado, Juscelio Bassoto Filho, Melina Marie  
24 Yasuoka, Rudiger Daniel Ollhoff, Sarita Bonagurio Gallo, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

25 Writing - review and editing: Vivian Cristina Mendes Prado, Melina Marie Yasuoka, Rudiger Daniel  
26 Ollhoff, Sarita Bonagurio Gallo, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

27 Resources: Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior;

28 Supervision: Sarita Bonagurio Gallo, Eduardo Harry Birgel Junior.

29

30

## 31 **ABSTRACT**

32 Reduced welfare and productivity of dairy goats have often been associated with poor claw health,  
33 especially conditions such as claw overgrowth and deformations. It is known that periodic claw trimmings  
34 have prophylactic and therapeutic effects on these problems, and this study aimed to evaluate if the  
35 additional use of an angle grinder to finish trimming overgrown and deformed goat claws, after the usual  
36 trimming using hoof shears, could provide further changes in these claws. For this, twelve Saanen goats  
37 ( $57.29 \pm 11.15$  kg of body weight,  $3.08 \pm 1.78$  years old) were selected by presence of severe claw  
38 overgrowth, and absence of claw alterations of other nature. Their claws were trimmed in two steps, first  
39 using hoof shears and then using an angle grinder. Morphometric, baropodometric, and conformational  
40 aspects of all claws were assessed before claw trimming and after each trimming step. To analyse the effects  
41 of the trimming steps in each claw, the Tukey's test was used on parametric data, with 5% probability, and  
42 descriptive statistics were used on non-parametric data. Although this is a small pilot study, results suggest  
43 that using an angle grinder after the use of hoof shears, could further reduce heel length and sole width of  
44 claws, as well as reduce the number of deformed claws. The incorporation of the second trimming tool,  
45 could also further increase the frequency with which the point of maximum pressure was found in the toes,  
46 rather than in the heels of the claws as seen in deformed claws.

47

48 **KEYWORDS:** claws, overgrowth, deformations, angle grinder, baropodometry, morphometry.

49

## 50 **INTRODUCTION**

51 Goat claws are adapted to resist constant wear over hard, steep and dry ground (Zobel et al. 2019)  
52 and, when raised in farms, overgrown claws become a common problem, affecting more than half of  
53 animals within herds as shown in many different studies (Hill et al. 1997; Anzuino et al. 2010; Ajuda et al.  
54 2014; Hempstead et al. 2021). Lack of trimming is one of the predisposing factors for this condition, which  
55 is known to be highly associated with lameness (Hill et al. 1997; Eze 2002; Ajuda et al. 2019; Deeming et  
56 al. 2019; Anzuino et al. 2010), impacting goats welfare (Anzuino et al. 2010; Battini et al. 2015; Can et al.  
57 2016), and production (Eze 2002). Therefore, especially in confined goat herds, periodic claw trimming  
58 should be performed over two times a year (Battini et al. 2014; Christodoulopoulos 2009) to rectify claw  
59 imbalances, reduce deformations and minimize possible inflammatory claw conditions associated with  
60 overgrowth (Ajuda et al. 2014).

61 Slipped foot, a condition characterized by altered pressure distribution on goats' claws, with  
62 overburden of its heels (Hill et al. 1997), is a kind of deformation associated with claw overgrowth (Ajuda  
63 et al. 2014; Ajuda et al. 2019). Most studies of claw pressure distribution were made using baropodometry  
64 technics in cattle and sheep (Carvalho et al. 2006; Telezhenko et al. 2008; Oehme et al. 2018; Nuss et al.  
65 2019; Ferrer and Ramos 2016), but not yet in goats. It is well known, in cattle, that pressure is not equally  
66 distributed between claws or regions of claws (Van Der Tol 2002), and in sheep, pressure is mainly  
67 deposited on its walls and heels (Ferrer and Ramos 2016). The classical Dutch trimming method foresees  
68 these claw imbalances, and aims to prevent or correct it in cows.

69 A normal claw morphometry of Saanen goats, according to Koluan and Göncü (2016), has length  
70 of dorsal wall, length of claw, claw width and dorsal angle from forelimbs respectively equal 3.9cm, 5.8cm,  
71 2.0 and 59.6°, and of hindlimbs equal 3.7cm, 5.3cm, 1.7cm, 58.7°. Other researchers show different values  
72 for some of these measurements (Arun 2015; Ajuda et al. 2019).

73 For goats, claws with a wall overgrowth of more than 2.5cm can be considered severe, according  
74 to Anzuino et al. (2010), and one of the most popular tools used for trimming this exceeding horn tissue,  
75 are hoof shears (Smith and Sherman 2009). This tool can easily be purchased and handled, but should be  
76 kept sharp, and the handler should be trained to trim the claws without causing injuries (Brandão 2020).  
77 Attention to the equipment and the technique is also important when using angle grinders to sand claws,  
78 causing no injuries to the animals, due to excessive abrasion or overheating of structures, when handled  
79 by a trained person (Blowey 1998; Ferrer and Ramos 2016).

80 In sheep, angle grinders are used to speed the process of hoof care, specially when dealing with a  
81 great number of animals (Ferrer and Ramos 2016). The angle grinder can also be used to perform more  
82 precise paring of claw surfaces in goats (Koluan and Göncü 2016), and according to van Amstel and  
83 Shearer (2006), cattle claws with excessively rigid and deformed horn tissue, can benefit from the  
84 progressive sand of these structures through the use of an angle grinder. Such applications of the angle  
85 grinder could be further explored on goats claws.

86 Considering that claw overgrowth affect great percentage of goats, specially on large farms (Can et  
87 al. 2016) and that many farmers still refrain from performing adequate claw care (Mordia et al. 2018; Boz  
88 2015; Aguiar et al. 2011; Arun 2015; Hill et al. 1997; Hempstead et al. 2021), the importance of further  
89 exploring new and effective claw trimming techniques, is shown. The lack of informations about claw  
90 conformation and lesions in goats are also significant, if compared to other domestic species (Deeming

91 2019; Hill et al. 1997), therefore, this study aimed to evaluate if the additional use of an angle grinder to  
92 finish trimming overgrown and deformed goat's claws, after the traditional trimming using hoof shears,  
93 could provide further morphometric, conformational and baropodometric claw changes.

94

## 95 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

96

97 The experimental procedures were approved by the Ethic Committee on Animal Use of the Faculty  
98 of Animal Science and Food Engineering - University of Sao Paulo. In this study, twelve non lactating  
99 female Saanen goats (mean  $\pm$  SD, 57.29  $\pm$  11kg body weight, age 3.08  $\pm$  1.7 years), from the herd of the  
100 Faculty of Animal Science and Food Engineering at the University of Sao Paulo, were used. These animals  
101 were selected by presence of severe claw overgrowth according to Anzuino et al. (2010), having over 2.5cm  
102 of exceeding horn tissue, and absence of claw alterations of other nature, such as infectious claw disease.  
103 The animals were kept in the same stall with a concrete floor, without bedding, in an area of 50m<sup>2</sup> and their  
104 diet consisted of corn silage and water ad libitum, balanced feed for goats in maintenance, and mineral salt  
105 for goats.

106 Claw trimming was performed twice a year in these animals and in the autumn, at the time of the  
107 experiment, six months after the last trimming, their claws were submitted to a two step trimming process  
108 by an experienced veterinarian. For the first step, a pair of hoof shears for small ruminants were used (Fig.  
109 1a) and, for the second step, an angle grinder from *SKIL*<sup>TM</sup>, model 9002, 650W and 10.000rpm (Fig. 1b),  
110 equipped with sanding flap disc from *Lotus*<sup>TM</sup>, model 4026, with nylon resin and zirconia alumina, 40-Grit,  
111 114.3mm diameter was used, enabling refinement and finishing of the claw trimming (Fig. 1c).

112 The first step, trimming with hoof shears, consisted of paring the excess horn tissue from abaxial  
113 and axial walls of the claw, that often were folded, and from the heels of the claws as necessary to assure  
114 the line of the claw bearing surface was parallel to the coronary band. The second step, refinement of the  
115 trimming using an angle grinder with a sanding disc, initially aimed to correct possible irregularities in the  
116 leveling of the bearing surface of walls, sole and heel, then it was used to shape the axial region of the heel  
117 and wall, where much keratinized tissue folds itself specially when the claw is axially rotated and, finally,  
118 to straighten the surface of the abaxial walls. Both trimming steps were performed with the animal in lateral  
119 recumbency that was placed on a mat and restrained by an assistant, allowing the tool operator to  
120 adequately shape the claw horn. In neither step of the trimming process the animals showed lameness, as

121 confirmed by assessment of locomotion score proposed by Anzuino et al. (2010). The hardness of wall  
122 horn measured by a type D Shore Durometer from *Teclock*<sup>TM</sup>, and sole thickness assessed by digital sole  
123 compression, had no important changes in their values, suggesting adequate preservation of the claw  
124 structure.

125 During the experiment, all 96 claws of the 12 selected goats were analysed, and data were collected  
126 three times by the same person: before claw trimming; after trimming with hoof shears; after use of the  
127 angle grinder for refinement and finishing of the first trimming step.

128

### 129 **Morphometry**

130 Using an electronic digital caliper from *MTX*<sup>TM</sup>, model 316119, with maximum permissible error  
131 of 0.02mm, each claw of the selected goats was systematically measured three times: before claw trimming;  
132 after trimming with hoof shears; after use of the angle grinder for refinement and finishing of the first  
133 trimming step. The collected data were: dorsal length (distance from the most dorsal point of the coronary  
134 band to the tip of the toe), sole length (distance from the most caudal point of the heel, to the tip of the  
135 toe), heel length (distance from the most caudal point of the coronary band to the most caudal point of the  
136 heel) and sole width (distance between the axial and abaxial walls of the claw, at its widest point) (Fig. 2).

137

### 138 **Images**

139 Images obtained from the dorsal, lateral, and palmar/plantar aspect of each claw of the goats standing  
140 still and supporting its weight on the four limbs, allowed further assessment of the claws before trimming,  
141 after trimming with hoof shears, and after use of the angle grinder for refinement and finishing of the first  
142 trimming step. The software used to process and analyse the images was *Fiji/ImageJ* (Schindelin et al.,  
143 2012) which enabled measurement of additional morphometric traits: claw angles (Fig. 3a), and sole areas.  
144 The actual sole areas of the claws were measured by positioning a tape on the hands that held the claws at  
145 the time of the image capture, to provide a reference, with known width, to the conversion of pixel values  
146 in the image, to centimeters (Fig 3b; 3c). Classification of claw deformation was also performed through  
147 image analysis, being identified as deformed claws, the ones who were rotated or had lost its natural  
148 triangular form, as described by Ajuda et al. (2019).

149

### 150 **Baropodometry**

151 Static baropodometric examination of goats' footprints determines the pressure applied by each  
152 individual point of the claws over the ground and allows the localization of the point of maximum pressure.  
153 With this intent, a *Baroscan*<sup>TM</sup> baropodometry platform from *Podotech*<sup>TM</sup>, with 4096 pressure sensors and  
154 an active area of 2500 cm<sup>2</sup>, and its *Barosys*<sup>TM</sup> software version *1.6 beta*, were used in this study.

155 Examinations were performed in each animal by placing its fore limbs over the platform, until  
156 balanced and still to allow the software to process baropodometric records with acquisition frequency of  
157 500Hz, during 5 seconds. The same procedure was repeated for hind limbs. All animals were examined  
158 before trimming, after trimming with hoof shears, and after use of the angle grinder for refinement and  
159 finishing of the first trimming step.

160 The location of the maximum pressure point of each claw was determined first by measuring the  
161 longitudinal axis of their footprint through the software, then subdividing this axis into three equidistant  
162 segments (anterior/toe, middle/sole center, and posterior/heel), separated by imaginary transversal lines.  
163 This process allowed settlement of the point of maximum pressure in one of the three claw regions (Fig.  
164 4).

165

#### 166 **Statistical analysis**

167 Statistical analysis were performed to evaluate if additional use of an angle grinder to finish  
168 trimming overgrown and deformed goat's claws, after the traditional trimming using hoof shears, could  
169 provide further claw changes. For this, all 96 claws from the 12 selected goats were assessed. To analyse  
170 parametric data, represented by the morphometric traits in this study (dorsal length, sole area, claw angle,  
171 sole length, sole width and heel length), the claws were subdivided into four types: lateral claws of fore  
172 limbs; medial claws of fore limbs; lateral claws of hind limbs, and medial claws of hind limbs. To analyse  
173 non-parametric data (deformation and location of the maximum pressure point), the claws were not  
174 subdivided.

175 The parametric analysis were performed through the computer program *Statistical Analysis System*  
176 (*SAS version 9.3*), testing for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test, the Proc GLM, Tukey test with 5% as  
177 significant level, to compare the morphometric traits of each type of claw before and after every step of the  
178 trimming process. For non-parametric analysis, the comparison of claws before and after each step of the  
179 trimming process was performed using descriptive statistics.

180

**181 RESULTS**

182           Claw trimming using hoof shears created a significant decrease in dorsal length of lateral claws of  
183 fore limbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ), medial claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.0005$ ), and lateral and medial claws of hind  
184 limbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ) and also in the sole area of all assessed claws ( $P < 0.0001$ ); the additional use of the  
185 angle grinder after the trimming with hoof shears, in turn, did not amplify these changes. Claw angle values  
186 were increased in lateral claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.0116$ ), medial claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.0009$ ) and  
187 lateral and medial claws of hind limbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ) after trimming with hoof shears but remained  
188 unchanged with the additional use of the angle grinder.

189           None of claw interventions affected sole length values of lateral claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.5931$ )  
190 and medial claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.1833$ ), but in lateral and medial claws of hind limbs, the trimming  
191 using hoof shears significantly reduced it ( $P < 0.0001$ ), while additional use of the angle grinder after the  
192 hoof shears, did not cause further changes in these values. The hoof shears did not influence sole width of  
193 the claws or its heel length; however, additional use of the angle grinder after the hoof shears, was effective  
194 in reducing sole width in lateral claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.0010$ ), lateral claws of hind limbs ( $P = 0.0767$ ),  
195 medial claws of hind limbs ( $P = 0.0024$ ) and reduce heel length on lateral claws of fore limbs ( $P < 0.0001$ )  
196 medial claws of fore limbs ( $P = 0.0002$ ), lateral claws of hind limbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ) and medial claws of hind  
197 limbs ( $P = 0.0006$ ) (Table 1).

198           The percentage of deformed claws was reduced from 84.37% (81/96) to 42.71% (41/96) after claw  
199 trimming using hoof shears and to 16.67% (16/96) after additional use of the angle grinder to refine and  
200 finish the first claw trimming. Regarding the distribution of the maximum pressure points in claw regions  
201 during the claw trimming process, initially, before any claw intervention, the heel was the region that most  
202 frequently received the maximum pressure point, with 61.46% (59/96) of the claws showing maximum  
203 pressure points in this region. After claw trimming using hoof shears, only 43.75% (42/96) of the claws had  
204 maximum pressure points on the heels and, conversely, the number of claws with maximum pressure points  
205 found on the toe rised from 20.83% (20/96) to 31.25% (30/96). A greater increase in the number of claws  
206 with maximum pressure point located in the toe region, occurred after the additional use of the angle grinder  
207 to refine and finish the claw trimming, reaching 43.75% (42/96) of the claws. The number of claws having  
208 the center of the sole as the region where the maximum pressure point was located, remained relatively  
209 constant throughout the trimming process (Table 2).

210

## 211 **DISCUSSION**

212 This study shows that additional use of an angle grinder after the use of hoof shears, when trimming  
213 goats' claws, can be effective in further reducing its sole width and heel length, since this tool allows a  
214 more precise thinning and fine sanding of the horn (Koluan and Göncü 2016), being presumably useful for  
215 specific purposes.

216 In cattle, according to Toussaint Raven (1985), careful trimming of axial claw walls and modeling  
217 the axial site of the sole ulcer site, can reduce its sole width, widening its interdigital space, and in those  
218 claws axially rotated, that grows horn mostly towards the interdigital space, pairing the axial region is much  
219 needed (van Amstel 2017). Attention to overgrowth in this region of cattle claws is relevant to prevent local  
220 accumulation of dirt (van Amstel and Shearer 2006) important predisposing factor to foot rot, especially on  
221 rainy seasons.

222 On lateral claws of hind limbs, however, the sole width did not change statistically after any step of  
223 the trimming process. Their absolute values, though, were similar to those of the medial claws of hind  
224 limbs, which showed a significant change in sole width when the angle grinder was used to refine and finish  
225 the initial claw trimming with hoof shears. The disparity of these specific claws could be expected when  
226 considering that in different ruminant species, hind limb claws are more prone to disturbance (Ajuda et al.  
227 2014; Hill et al. 1997; Muggli et al. 2011; Keller et al. 2009) and, in goats, mostly lateral claws are (Arun  
228 2015). This could implicate that lateral claws of hind limbs are more difficult to shape, and could be one of  
229 the claws that can not have its structural normality restored through trimming (Ajuda et al. 2019).

230 On fore limb claws, the sole length was always the same before and after both steps of the trimming  
231 process, and this may be due to its greater wear (Ajuda et al. 2019). Hind limb claws, on the other hand,  
232 had a significant reduction in sole length after being trimmed with hoof shears, probably due to the greater  
233 and more frequent accumulation of excess horn tissue in these claws, when compared to the claws of fore  
234 limbs (Ajuda et al. 2019). The additional use of the angle grinder after the trimming with hoof shears, was  
235 not effective in promoting a significant difference in sole length values on fore and hind limbs, therefore  
236 its use may not be necessary in this case.

237 Hoof shears alone, also showed to be effective when shaping and correcting the claw's angle, dorsal  
238 length and sole area, since the additional use of an angle grinder after the trimming with hoof shears, did  
239 not significantly change these morphometric traits.



240 After the trimming using hoof shears, as well as after the additional use of the angle grinder to finish  
241 the trimming, there was an evident decrease in the prevalence of deformed claws. The improvement in claw  
242 conformation, promoted by the use of the angle grinder in addition to the hoof shears, may be related to the  
243 fact that this tool changed two morphometric traits further than the hoof shears alone could: sole width and  
244 heel length. It also shows that if only the hoof shears were used, as occurs in many farms (Smith and  
245 Sherman 2009), probably overgrown and deformed claws would not benefit from the further improvements  
246 that an angle grinder could promote.

247 In each step of the trimming process, there was a change in distribution of maximum pressure points  
248 on goats' claws. Pressure distribution in cattle claws can also be influenced by trimming techniques  
249 (Telezhenko et al. 2008) and claw deformation (van Amstel and Shearer 2006; Hinterhofer et al. 2007). In  
250 this study, the frequency with which the maximum pressure points were located in the toe tended to  
251 increase, and in the heel decrease, after trimming with hoof shears and also after additional use of the angle  
252 grinder for refinement and finishing of the claw trimming. This demonstrates a change in the pattern showed  
253 by some overgrown claws, the pressure of which is deposited mainly on the heel (Ferrer and Ramos 2016)  
254 causing a condition sometimes referred to as "slipper hooves" also found in goats (Hill et al. 1997),  
255 characterized by exacerbatedly deepened heels and downward inclination of the coronary band (Deeming  
256 et al. 2019).

257 Overload of certain regions of cattle claws can predispose them to lesions (Hinterhofer et al. 2007;  
258 Telezhenko et al. 2008) and, as the trimming process restore the normal shape of the claws, with its greater  
259 toe angles, pressure is usually anteriorized (van Amstel and Shearer 2006), as was also noticed in goats  
260 throughout this study. In sheep, when body weight is transferred forward towards its claw walls, its vertical  
261 structure is capable of better supporting the weight (Ferrer and Ramos 2016). Assuming that goats have  
262 claw biomechanics similar to sheeps, the forward weight shift promoted by trimming techniques can be  
263 beneficial for them as well.

264 Although this is a small pilot study with limitations, the results suggest that using an angle grinder  
265 to refine and finish the trimming done with hoof shears, would benefit goats with severely overgrown or  
266 deformed claws. The additional use of the angle grinder further reduced heel length and sole width of claws,  
267 which can be associated to the reduction in the number of deformed claws this tool promoted even after  
268 previous trim with hoof shears. The use of the angle grinder in association with the hoof shears also

269 contributed to improve pressure distribution of claws, moving the point of maximum pressure from its heels  
270 to the toes.

271

## 272 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

273 Our thanks to CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) for the scholarship.

274

## 275 **STATEMENT OF ANIMAL ETHICS**

276 The experimental procedures were approved by the Ethic Committee on Animal Use of the Faculty of  
277 Animal Science and Food Engineering - University of Sao Paulo (CEUA number 5542160120, approved  
278 on July 02, 2020).

279

## 280 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

281 The authors declare no conflict of interest

282

## 283 **DECLARATIONS**

284 **Funding:** We thank CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) for the  
285 scholarship.

286 **Conflicts of interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest

## 287 **Authors' contributions:**

288 Conceptualization: V. C. M. Prado, E. H. Birgel Junior; Methodology: V. C. M. Prado, E. H. Birgel Junior;

289 Formal analysis and investigation: V. C. M. Prado, J. Bassoto Filho, M. M. Yasuoka, R. D. Ollhoff, S. B.

290 Gallo, E. H. Birgel Junior; Writing - original draft preparation: V. C. M. Prado, J. Bassoto Filho, M. M.

291 Yasuoka, R. D. Ollhoff, S. B. Gallo, E. H. Birgel Junior; Writing - review and editing: V. C. M. Prado, M.

292 M. Yasuoka, R. D. Ollhoff, S. B. Gallo, E. H. Birgel Junior; Resources: E. H. Birgel Junior; Supervision:

293 S. B. Gallo, E. H. Birgel Junior. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

294 **Availability of data and material:** The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are

295 available from the corresponding author on reasonable request

296 **Code availability:** Not applicable

297 **Ethics approval:** The experimental procedures were approved by the Ethic Committee on Animal Use of  
298 the Faculty of Animal Science and Food Engineering - University of Sao Paulo (CEUA number  
299 5542160120, approved on July 02, 2020).

300 **Consent to participate:** Not applicable

301 **Consent for publication:** Not applicable

302

### 303 **REFERENCES**

304

305 Aguiar GMN, Simões SVD, Silva TR, Assis ACO, Medeiros JMA, Garino FJr, Riet-Correa F (2011) Foot  
306 rot and other foot diseases of goat and sheep in the semiarid region of northeastern Brazil. *Pesq Vet*  
307 *Bras* 31:879-884

308 Ajuda IG, Vieira A, Stilwell G (2014) Are there differences in dairy goats claws' temperature, before and  
309 after trimming?. In: *International Symposium on Medical Measurements and Applications*,  
310 *Proceedings. IEEE, Piscataway*, pp 688-692.

311 Ajuda IGG, Battini M, Stilwell GT (2019) The role of claw deformation and claw size on goat lameness.  
312 *Vet Anim Sci* 8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vas.2019.100080>

313 Anzuino K, Bell NJ, Bazeley KJ, Nicol CJ (2010) Assessment of welfare on 24 commercial UK dairy goat  
314 farms based on direct observations. *Vet Rec* 167:774–780. 10.1136/vr.c5892

315 Arun MT (2015) *Surgical management of hoof disorders in goats. Dissertation, Anand Agricultural*  
316 *University*

317 Battini M, Vieira A, Barbieri S, Ajuda I, Stilwell G, Mattiello S (2014) Invited review: Animal-based  
318 indicators for on-farm welfare assessment for dairy goats. *J Dairy Sci* 97:6625-6648. [http://dx.doi.org/](http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.2013-7493)  
319 [10.3168/jds.2013-7493](http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.2013-7493)

320 Battini M, Vieira A, Barbieri S, Ajuda I, Stilwell G, Mattiello S (2015) On-farm welfare assessment  
321 protocol for adult dairy goats in intensive production systems. *Animals* 5:934–950 [http://dx.doi.org/](http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.2013-7493)  
322 [10.3168/jds.2013-7493](http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.2013-7493)

323 Boz I (2015) Adoption of innovations and best management practices by goat farmers in eastern  
324 Mediterranean Region of Turkey. *J Agric Ext Rural Dev* 7:229-239 10.5897/JAERD2014. 0668

325 Blowey R (1998) *Cattle Lameness and Hoofcare - an illustrated guide, 1st edn. Farming Press, Ipswich*

326 Brandão A (2020) Casqueamento de caprinos e ovinos ajuda a manter a produtividade dos rebanhos. *Portal*  
327 *Embrapa. Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária – EMBRAPA.*

- 328 [https://www.embrapa.br/busca-de-noticias/-/noticia/52353594/casqueamento-de-caprinos-e-ovinos-](https://www.embrapa.br/busca-de-noticias/-/noticia/52353594/casqueamento-de-caprinos-e-ovinos-ajuda-a-manter-a-productividade-dos-rebanhos)  
329 [ajuda-a-manter-a-productividade-dos-rebanhos](https://www.embrapa.br/busca-de-noticias/-/noticia/52353594/casqueamento-de-caprinos-e-ovinos-ajuda-a-manter-a-productividade-dos-rebanhos). Accessed 23 Jun 2021
- 330 Can E, Vieira A, Battini M, Mattiello S, Stilwell G (2016) On-farm welfare assessment of dairy goat farms  
331 using animal-based indicators: the example of 30 commercial farms in Portugal. *Acta Agric Scand A*  
332 *Anim Sci* 66:43-55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09064702.2016.1208267>
- 333 Carvalho VRC, Nääs IA, Bucklin RA, Shearer JK, Shearer L, Massafera Jr V, Sousa SRL (2006) Effects  
334 of trimming on dairy cattle hoof weight bearing surfaces and pressure distributions. *Braz J vet Res*  
335 *anim Sci* 43:518-525 Christodouloupoulos G (2009) Foot lameness in dairy goats. *Res Vet Sci* 86:281-  
336 284. [10.1016/j.rvsc.2008.07.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rvsc.2008.07.013)
- 337 Deeming LE, Beausoleil NJ, Stafford KJ, Webster JR, Staincliffe M, Zobel G (2019) The development of  
338 a hoof conformation assessment for use in dairy goats. *Animals* 9. [10.3390/ani9110973](https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9110973)
- 339 Eze CA (2002) Lameness and reproductive performance in small ruminants in Nsukka Area of the Enugu  
340 State, Nigeria. *Small Rumin Res* 44:263-267. [10.1016/S0921-4488\(02\)00030-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-4488(02)00030-5)
- 341 Ferrer LM, Ramos JJ (2016) *Las Cojeras en el Ganado Ovino Clínica y Prevención*, 1st edn. Servet, Navarra
- 342 Hempstead MN, Lindquist TM, Shearer JK, Shearer LC, Cave VM, Plummer PJ (2021) Welfare  
343 Assessment of 30 Dairy Goat Farms in the Midwestern United States. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 8.  
344 [10.3389/fvets.2021.646715](https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2021.646715)
- 345 Hill NP, Murphy PE, Nelson AJ, Mouttoutu N, Green LE, Morgan KL (1997) Lameness and foot lesions  
346 in adult British dairy goats. *Vet Rec* 141:412-416. [10.1136/vr.141.16.412](https://doi.org/10.1136/vr.141.16.412)
- 347 Hinterhofer C, Apprich V, Polsterer E, Haider H, Stanek C (2007) Comparison of stress zones in finite  
348 element models of deformed bovine claw capsules. *J Dairy Sci* 90:3690-3699. [10.3168/jds.2006-817](https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2006-817)
- 349 Keller A, Clauss M, Muggli E, Nuss K (2009) Even-toed but uneven in length: the digits of artiodactyls.  
350 *Zoology* 112:270-278. [10.1016/j.zool.2008.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.zool.2008.11.001)
- 351 Koluan N, Göncü S (2016) Measurements of healthy hooves, their interrelation and correlation with body  
352 mass in some improved goat breeds. *Int J Environ Agric Biotech* 1:108-116
- 353 Mordia A, Sharma MC, Nagda RK, Gautam L (2018) Health care management practices of goat owners in  
354 Chittorgarh District of Rajasthan. *Vet Pract* 19:147-149
- 355 Muggli E, Sauter-Louis C, Braun U, Nuss K (2011) Length asymmetry of the bovine digits. *Vet J* 188:295-  
356 300. [10.1016/j.tvjl.2010.05.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tvjl.2010.05.016)
- 357 Nuss K, Müller J, Wiestner T (2019) Effects of induced weight shift in the hind limbs on claw loads in

- 358 dairy cows. *J Dairy Sci* 102:6431-6441. <https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2018-15539>
- 359 Nuss K., Haessig M, Mueller J (2020) Hind limb conformation has limited influence on claw load  
360 distribution in dairy cows. *J Dairy Sci* 103:6522-6532. 10.3168/jds.2019-18024
- 361 Oehme B, Geiger SM, Grund S, Hainke K, Munzel J, Mülling CKW (2018) Effect of different flooring  
362 types on pressure distribution under the bovine claw - an ex vivo study. *BMC Vet Res* 14:259.  
363 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12917-018-1579-9>
- 364 Rodrigues CA (2008) Sistema Locomotor: Semiologia do Sistema Locomotor de Bovinos. In: Feitosa FLF  
365 (ed) *Semiologia Veterinária: A Arte do Diagnóstico*. Roca, São Paulo pp 497-513
- 366 Smith MC, Sherman DM (2009) Musculoskeletal System. In: *Goat Medicine*, 2nd edn. Wiley-Blackwell,  
367 Ames, pp 85-162
- 368 Schindelin J, Arganda-Carreras I, Frise E, Kaynig V, Longair M, Pietzsch T et al. (2012). Fiji: an open-  
369 source platform for biological-image analysis. *Nature Methods* 9:676–682. 10.1038/nmeth.2019
- 370 Telezhenko E, Bergsten C, Magnusson M, Ventorp M, Nilsson C (2008) Effect of different flooring systems  
371 on weight and pressure distribution on claws of dairy cows. *J Dairy Sci* 91:1874-1884.  
372 10.3168/jds.2007-0742
- 373 Toussaint Raven E (1985) Trimming. In: *Cattle Footcare and Claw Trimming. The Origin and Prevention*  
374 *of the Necrotising Inflammations of the Corium (Ulcerations of the Claw)*. Farming Press Books,  
375 Utrecht, pp 75-106
- 376 van Amstel SR, Shearer J (2006) *Manual for Treatment and Control of Lameness in Cattle*, 1st edn.  
377 Blackwell Publishing, Oxford
- 378 van Amstel SR (2017) Corkscrew Claw. *Vet Clin Food Anim* 33:351-364.  
379 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cvfa.2017.02.010>
- 380 Van Der Tol PPJ, Metz JHM, Noordhuizen-Stassen EN, Back W, Braam CR, Weijjs WA (2002) The  
381 pressure distribution under the bovine claw during square standing on a flat substrate. *J Dairy Sci*  
382 85:1476-1481. [http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.S0022-0302\(02\)74216-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.3168/jds.S0022-0302(02)74216-1)
- 383 Zobel G, Neave HN, Webster J (2019) Understanding natural behavior to improve dairy goat (*Capra hircus*)  
384 management systems. *Transl. Anim. Sci.* 3:212-224. 10.1093/tas/txy145
- 385
- 386
- 387

388 **Fig. 1**

389 Tools used for the two step claw trimming: (a) hoof shears for small ruminants; (b) angle grinder (c)  
390 sanding flap disc

391

392

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

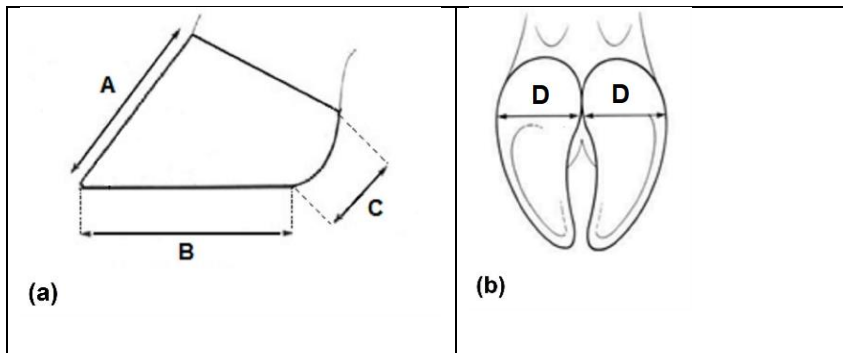
408

409

410

411

412

413 **Fig. 2**

414 Image adapted from Vermunt and Greenough (1995), (a) lateral view of the hoof and (b) palmar/plantar  
415 view of the hooves; showing morphometric regions of interest. A = dorsal length; B = sole length; C = heel  
416 length; D = sole width

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

438 **Fig. 3**

439 Using the software *Fiji/ImageJ* (Schindelin et al., 2012), (a) the angle of the claw was measured using the  
 440 *Angle Tool* that marked the required angle (red lines in the image), after three points were selected,  
 441 providing its value in degrees, in the bottom box of the image. (b) To measure sole areas in cm<sup>2</sup>, through  
 442 its photographs, the conversion rate from pixels to centimeters was established first. For this, the known  
 443 width of a tape (1cm) was selected in the image (red line over the blue tape) using the *Straight Line*  
 444 *Selection Tool* of the software. With this information, it was possible to use of the “set scale” option (shown  
 445 in the box aside) to calculate the required pixel/cm ratio. (c) The measurement of sole areas (area within  
 446 drawn red borders), where then possible using the *Freehand Selection Tool*, giving its values, in cm<sup>2</sup>, in  
 447 the box aside

448

449

450

451

452

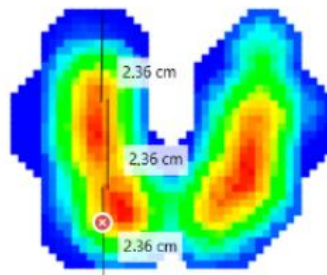
453

454

455

456



457 **Fig. 4**

458

459 In this baropodometric image of lateral and medial claws, the one on the left (lateral) had its longitudinal  
460 axis subdivided into three thirds (2.36cm each) in order to determine in which one of the three specific  
461 regions, is located the point of maximum pressure of the claw ("X" within the red dot)

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483 **Table 1.**  
484 Measurements of each claw of fore and hind limbs along the steps of the trimming process (means  $\pm$  SE)

Claw	Step	Dorsal Length (cm)	Sole Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	Claw Angle (Degrees)	Sole Length (cm)	Sole Width (cm)	Heel Length (cm)
FL	BT	4.62 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.25	9.89 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.47	57.61 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 2.51	5.22 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.21	2.49 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.06	3.75 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.09
	HS	3.51 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.11	7.58 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.30	66.35 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 2.19	5.02 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.07	2.53 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	3.60 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.09
	AG	3.35 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.10	6.45 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.18	65.09 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.72	5.12 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.08	2.25 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.04	3.04 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08
<i>P-value</i>		<0.0001	<0.0001	0.0116	0.5931	0.0010	<0.0001
FM	BT	4.02 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.17	8.30 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.30	54.33 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 2.02	5.36 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.12	2.33 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	3.40 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.08
	HS	3.53 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.13	6.70 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.21	61.72 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.65	5.13 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.07	2.33 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	3.21 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.10
	AG	3.21 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.10	5.99 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.19	64.16 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.83	5.21 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.07	2.11 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.04	2.87 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08
<i>P-value</i>		0.0005	<0.0001	0.0009	0.1833	0.0018	0.0002
HL	BT	4.31 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.21	8.81 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.72	37.36 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 2.33	6.40 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.24	2.06 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.07	2.58 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.06
	HS	3.08 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.06	5.21 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.31	48.45 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.96	5.04 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08	1.95 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	2.39 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05
	AG	2.95 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08	4.68 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.17	52.81 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.75	5.20 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08	1.87 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	2.17 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.05
<i>P-value</i>		<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	0.0767	<0.0001
HM	BT	4.26 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.16	7.83 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.31	47.15 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.92	5.56 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.13	2.06 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.06	2.57 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.07
	HS	3.00 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.06	5.13 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.21	62.9 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.84	4.88 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.08	2.06 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.04	2.52 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 0.06
	AG	2.78 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.05	4.63 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.17	65.20 <sup>a</sup> $\pm$ 1.54	4.89 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.07	1.86 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.03	2.21 <sup>b</sup> $\pm$ 0.07
<i>P-value</i>		<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001	0.0024	0.0006

485 <sup>1</sup>Abbreviations: Step = step of the trimming process; FL = fore limb lateral claw; FM = fore limb medial  
486 claw; HL = hind limb lateral claw; HM = hind limb medial claw; BT = before trimming; HS = after  
487 trimming with hoof shears; AG = after trimming with angle grinder;

488 <sup>abc</sup> Means with different superscripts within a column are statistically different at  $P < 0.05$ ; SE = Standard  
489 Error

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

506

507

508 **Table 2.**  
 509 Frequency and absolute values with which the maximum pressure point is contained in each region of the  
 510 claw along the trimming process

	Toe	Sole Center	Heel
Before trimming	20.83% (20/96)	17.71% (17/96)	61.46% (59/96)
After use of hoof shears	31.25% (30/96)	25.00% (24/96)	43.75% (42/96)
After use of angle grinder	43.75% (42/96)	21.88% (21/96)	34.38% (33/96)

511

512