

Mobility Steering Group

Lameness, foot trimming and COVID-19 restrictions: Update 23-04-20

In the interests of safety and complying with government advice, we recommend that foot trimmers should adhere to strict risk assessment criteria before agreeing to any routine work on farm. Where social distancing cannot be adhered to or other risks are identified then the work must be delayed.

This guidance will be revised as and when the Government's position is updated

Following Government advice, the Mobility Steering Group has considered the implications of the COVID-19 restrictions for lameness management and foot trimming.

In the Coronavirus bill Section 27 4(b) (ii). (Annex 1) persons "closely connected" with a food supply chain include those "providing goods or services to producers or intermediaries, where the goods or services relate to the welfare of animals". Those deemed essential to deliver this emergency care can travel to and from work. When carrying out essential work **people must practise social distancing**. Please make sure you are at least 2 metres away from other people, wherever possible.

The Group has reviewed the position of other relevant organisations. The British Veterinary Association have advised that all veterinary practices must reduce face-to-face contact immediately. This means:

- switching to providing emergency care only (in person);
- fulfilment of urgent prescriptions; and
- maintaining the food supply chain

The working principles BCVA are encouraging Veterinary practices to adopt include operating on a similar standard to out of hours.

[Position statements/FAQs](#)

- [BCVA](#)
- [BVA](#)
- [RCVS](#)
- [CHCSB](#) COVID-19: BEST PRACTICE Foot Trimmers

Maintaining the food supply chain is essential to maintain national food security, food safety and animal welfare. However, what activity is essential will come down to professional judgement and risk-based analysis. The view of the Mobility Steering Group is that this assessment must balance the impact on food security and animal welfare with the risk of spread on COVID-19 and therefore consequent pressure on the NHS.

While routine preventive foot trimming helps to maintain a healthy, productive dairy industry, routine preventive trimming is not considered absolutely essential work in the short-term. Even where some of the risk can be mitigated (it can never be eliminated). We are looking at locking down as much as possible in the current phase to reduce risk to human life.

Many trimmers will be travelling over an extensive area to provide their services on-farm which could lead to increased contact with other people - however many steps you take to reduce the risk, there is still a risk. It is critically important to take every precaution to maintain social distancing at

all times. Health and Safety is also important at this time to minimise the risk of injury during trimming which would be a concern at a time when NHS is stretched.

The average age of British farmers and farm workers is 60 so many will be in the at-risk category or will have vulnerable relatives on the farm. There is a duty of care here to ensure food production continues and part of this is minimising risk to farmers and farm workers.

If farm visits to provide routine trimming is necessary please consider the Mobility Steering Group guidance on “*Recommended best practice procedures for hoof trimmers*”.

Policy in this area is changing quickly, please check regularly for the most up-to-date information on risk management and keep monitoring the [government response to coronavirus](#) for further updates.

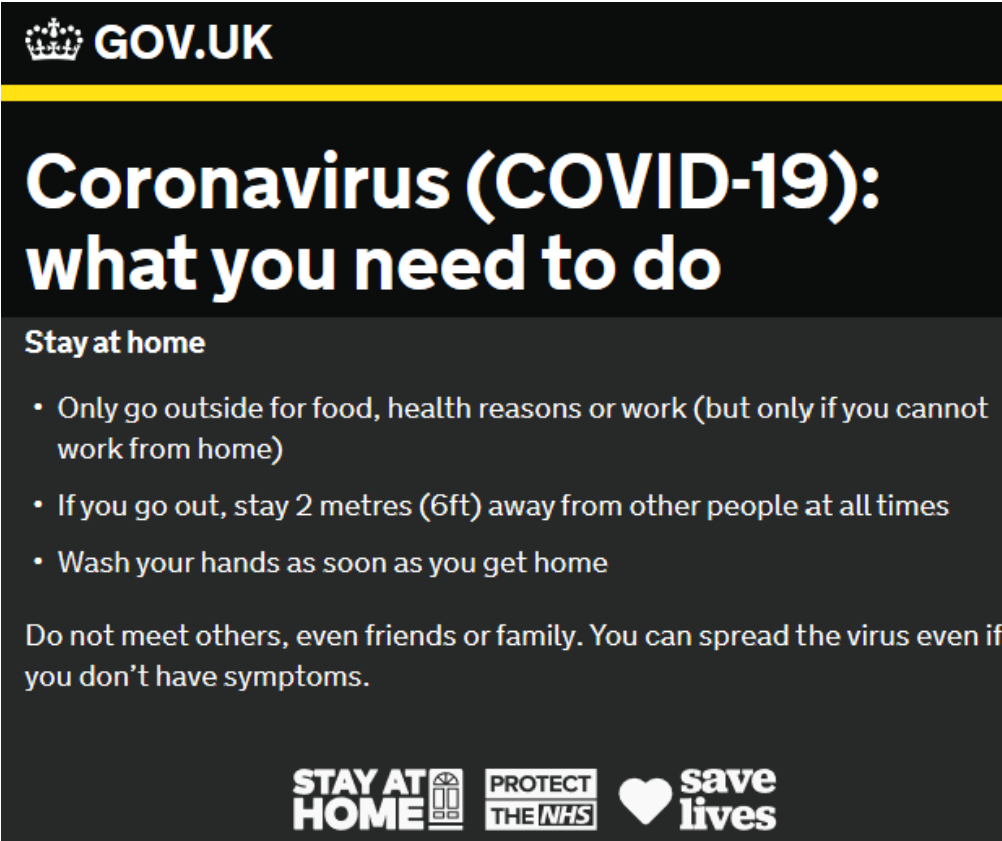



NHS

Do not leave home if you or someone you live with has either:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough

[Check the NHS website if you have symptoms](#)






 **GOV.UK**

Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

STAY AT HOME  **PROTECT THE NHS**   **save lives**

Recommended best practice procedures for hoof trimmers

It is imperative that hoof trimmers follow Government guidance and only travel for work if necessary. Safeguarding human health is the priority. If asked to provide routine trimming on farm, then all risks should be considered and appropriate steps put in place to minimise the risk to people's lives. A key priority is to **maintain social distancing at all times**.

STAY 2 METRES (6 FEET) AWAY FROM OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES

If asked to provide urgent prevention/treatment for lame cows the first option to consider is whether the procedure could be provided by staff already on farm. If on the basis of professional judgement and risk assessment a farm visit to undertake foot trimming is considered essential it is important that steps are taken to preserve the safety of you and your family and any people you might have direct or indirect contact with and their families.

It is recommended:

- not to visit farms where there are inadequate facilities to allow social distancing to be maintained
- that, where possible, only one farm should be visited for the purposes of treating lame cows in any 24-hour period.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Use the following guide to assess all risks prior to visiting, on arrival, during the visit and on leaving the farm.

Pre-farm visit

Before visiting a pre-farm visit risk assessment is recommended.

- Consider whether:
 - the trimming/treatment can be provided by staff already on the farm?
 - the visit is necessary for the welfare of cows?
 - it is possible to foot trim whilst maintaining social distancing?
 - there are adequate facilities to allow social distancing to be maintained at all times?
 - you can safely work alone on this farm?
- If a visit is considered necessary, conduct a pre-visit phone call with your client to :
 - allow your client the opportunity to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with a visit:
 - make sure the farmer is sufficiently aware of the risk of COVID-19
 - inform them if you will have been on another farm on the same day of your visit
 - check no-one is showing symptoms of COVID-19 on farm. If any farm staff are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or are high-risk, ensure they are not present during the visit and communicate electronically.
 - check no-one on the farm or of the farmer's immediate contacts is in a vulnerable category.
 - emphasise the importance of maintaining social distancing throughout the visit
 - discuss and agree arrangements for social distancing, the working area and personal cleaning/disinfection.

- advise that farm staff should Mobility Score all cows and draft all Score 2 and 3 cows for checking during farm visit. If there is any doubt about a cow being score 1 or 2 it should be presented for checking as a precautionary measure. Where it is not possible to examine all lame cows, as a priority inspect new score 2s and all score 3 cows. Guidance on mobility scoring can be found [here](#).
- Check that you have adequate supplies of gloves, other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfectant.
- If only visiting one farm per day is this the farm requiring the most urgent attention?
- Check that none of your own contacts are showing symptoms of COVID-19 prior to leaving for the farm.

On arrival to the farm

On arrival on the farm a rapid risk assessment covering the following areas is recommended to check your safety and the safety of any people on the farm.

- Check that no-one has developed any symptoms of COVID-19. If any farm staff are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or are high-risk, ensure they are not present during the visit and communicate electronically.
- If you start to feel unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature **GO HOME** and follow the [stay at home guidance](#). Inform the farmers of your symptoms and keep them updated over the next 14 days.
- Ensure that strict social distancing can be maintained at all times during the farm visit –
Stand at least 2m (a cow length) away from other people at all times.
- Check the working area and the access to lame cows requiring treatment and ensure that social distancing and personal safety can be maintained.
- If you are working alone agree on any checks needed to ensure personal safety.
- Ensure that you have easy access to emergency contacts on your mobile phone.

Having assessed the risks on arrival to the farm and if social distancing cannot be maintained or other risks to human health cannot be avoided then postpone the visit for your safety and the safety of your client, their staff and their family.

Wash your hands with soap and disinfectant when you arrive on farm and spray your PPE and equipment with a disinfectant solution before starting work.

During the visit to the farm

- While on the farm ensure that you maintain social distancing from all people at all times
Stand at least 2m (a cow length) away from other people at all times.
- Ensure that the minimum people required for the task/work are present
- Where face to face interaction is inevitable then this should only be with **ONE** person per visit.
- Wear clean, disinfected protective clothing at all times.
- Wear gloves, change these regularly and do not touch your face.
- Wear gloves and PPE at all times.
- Aim to minimise your time on farm and your contact with all surfaces and farm equipment.
- Do not enter the farmhouse or other residential buildings and do not accept drinks or food.
- Anyone with any signs of ill health must leave the area immediately.

Precautions to minimise the risk when leaving the farm

When leaving the farm aim to ensure that all risks of contamination are minimised.

- Remove all disposable items used during the visit and arrange safe disposal off farm.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the working area or arrange for this to be done as soon as you leave.
- Pay particular attention to cleaning and disinfection of your equipment and any areas and equipment you have touched or had contact with during the visit (e.g. gates) – anything that could act as a fomite in the event you are infected with COVID-19 but not yet displaying symptoms.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all PPE and arrange further cleaning in a wash at 70°C or over after leaving the farm.
- Contact farm staff remotely (phone, text) to tell them you are leaving the farm and to provide any instructions for after care.
- Do not leave paper records on the farm. Use only electronic form of communication – if you normally use paper records these can be photographed and sent electronically.
- Arrange to update the farm staff if you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 within the following 2 weeks.
- Ask to be informed if any farm staff develop any symptoms of COVID-19 within the following 2 weeks.
- It is recommended not to visit more than one farm per day. However, if it is essential to visit more than one farm, ensure you have separate set of PPE for each farm. Ideally use a separate set of equipment or ensure that it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and disinfectant before entering your vehicle to leave the farm.
- Regularly disinfect all surfaces that are touched frequently - steering wheel, door handles etc.

Policy in this area is changing quickly, please check regularly for the most up-to-date information on risk management and keep monitoring the [government response to coronavirus](#) for further updates.

STAY SAFE

Protect yourself - Protect your family - Protect your clients - Protect their families

Annex 1

Coronavirus Bill, House of Comms, 09 March 2020, Bill 122

(Part 1: Main provisions, page 19)

27 Meaning of “food supply chain” and related expressions

- (1) This section has effect for the purposes of sections 23 to 26.
- (2) A “food supply chain” is a supply chain for providing individuals with items of food or drink for personal consumption, where the items consist of or include, or have been produced to any extent using—
 - (a) anything grown or otherwise produced in carrying on agriculture, or
 - (b) anything taken, grown or otherwise produced in carrying on fishing or aquaculture.
- (3) The persons “in” a food supply chain are—
 - (a) the persons carrying on the agriculture, fishing or aquaculture (“producers”), and
 - (b) any persons in the supply chain between the producers and the individuals referred to in subsection (2) (“intermediaries”).
- (4) The persons “closely connected” with a food supply chain are—
 - (a) persons supplying seeds, stock, equipment, feed, fertiliser, pesticides or similar items to producers for use in agriculture, fishing or aquaculture,
 - (b) persons providing goods or services to producers or intermediaries, where the goods or services relate to—
 - (i) the safety or quality of food or drink, or
 - (ii) the welfare of animals, and
 - (c) bodies representing persons in or closely connected with a food supply chain by virtue of the preceding provisions of this section.
- (5) In this section—

“agriculture” includes any growing of plants, and any keeping of animals, for the production of food or drink;

“aquaculture” means the breeding, rearing, growing or cultivation of—
 - (a) any fish or other aquatic animal,
 - (b) seaweed or any other aquatic plant, or
 - (c) any other aquatic organism;

“plants” includes fungi;

“seeds” includes bulbs and other things from which plants grow