

Digit amputation:

Indications for the procedure

- ✓ The aim of digit amputation is to relieve pain, return the animal to sound gait and normal production, and to prevent infection ascending proximally in the limb.
- ✓ Digit amputation is indicated for traumatic hoof injuries, severe penetrations of the sole, sepsis and septic arthritis of the distal interphalangeal joint, septic tenosynovitis of the deep flexor tendon or osteomyelitis of the third phalanx.
- ✓ Digit amputation relieves pain and provides a relatively rapid return to a sound gait, with associated increase in body condition and milk yield. It removes a septic focus and allows good drainage, and is simple to perform.
- ✓ In bovines, severe footrot which is complicated by osteomyelitis and is unresponsive to antibiotic treatment, abscessation with distal interphalangeal joint osteoarthritis, tenosynovitis, infectious arthritis, severe phalangeal fractures and phalangeal joint dislocations, all may require amputation of the digit.
- ✓ Digit amputation is an option for treatment of deep pedal infections in cattle.
- ✓ Where one claw is severely affected with infection penetrating to deeper structures of the foot, such as the flexor tendon, navicular bursa and navicular bone, or pedal bone, amputation of the affected claw may be required.
- ✓ Digit amputation may be used for treatment of septic pedal arthritis in sheep. This involves removal of the third phalanx, navicular bone and the distal one-third of the second phalanx. Return to full use of the limb should occur within four to seven days.

Contraindications for the use of the procedure

- ✓ Digit amputation generally results in earlier culling of cattle.
- ✓ Digit amputation is not suitable for individuals in which both digits of the same foot are affected, in very heavy animals (since breakdown of the remaining digit is likely) or for sepsis of the fetlock joint.
- ✓ Digit amputation results in a persistently poor gait in some animals and is not suitable for all cases.

- ✓ Digit amputation in cattle generally results in a shorter productive life and a poor cosmetic result; heavy individuals generally do poorly following digit amputation and walking on hilly or rocky ground, or slatted floors, is more difficult for individuals with an amputated digit.