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OABP Position Statement

The Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners (OABP) aims to improve the welfare of all cattle. Regarding hoof health, prevention of disease by proper housing, hygiene, and regular trimming are paramount to success.

In the rare occasions where drastic intervention is required, OABP considers claw amputation to be a surgical procedure, and it is therefore by law, a procedure that can only be performed by a licensed veterinarian. Claw amputation requires sedation, regional intravenous anesthesia, appropriate hemorrhage control, proper bandaging post-surgery, effective pain management, and post-surgical monitoring, all of which require the skill and training of a veterinarian.

In cases where the attending veterinarian does not feel qualified to perform a claw amputation where indicated, the OABP recommends that he/she provide their client a referral to a qualified veterinary colleague who has indicated that they would be willing to perform the procedure, and who through experience and/or reputation, is judged to be skilled in the amputation of the bovine digit. Failing this, the animal in question should be slaughtered on farm or euthanized.

Maintenance of hoof health on farms is the shared responsibility of the farm owner/caretaker, the herd veterinarian, the hoof trimmer and the nutritionist, all of whom must work as a team to achieve success. The OABP recommends that the hoof trimmer contact the herd veterinarian **directly** in cases where they feel claw amputation may be necessary to correct the lameness in question. This protocol will help ensure that the lameness is addressed in a timely fashion.

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