

Dear (Foot Trimmer)

Embryonics along with most of the businesses throughout the UK have been affected by the present COVID pandemic putting our training on hold. However, it is a time to reflect on the current Foot Trimming training and review the overall great work being done to keep the feet of cows of the UK lame-free and productive.

With the ongoing COVID restrictions we have had to suspend training since the end of December last year – the second time within 12 months. However, when training did resume last year and when it recommences again this year, we will deliver the courses, exams and check days throughout the UK. Indeed, as soon as training can recommence there are several trimmers to take the exam to become Diploma Holders.

It is very good to see other training establishments coming on board to deliver quality training for trimmers. However, at the same time there has been much discussion about training and some incorrect information circulated which has and is causing some concern amongst yourselves.

The Dutch Diploma training remains of the highest standard. Since its inception 30 years ago it has developed, incorporating all new information and up-to-date research findings. The Check day assessments have developed into its formal arrangement with 2 assessors to ensure fair play and a pass/fail element. This ensures assessments are being conducted to the highest of standards. It is very flattering to see other training courses copy the well-established format of the Embryonics/NACFT Training courses. The recent BCVA 'Position Statement on Cattle Foot Trimming' states that the Dutch Diploma is on the list of Qualifications Recognised within the foot trimming industry.

However, we wish to clear some misinformation which has been put out:

“There is no official regulating body within the UK” - The NACFT was set up to bring together foot trimmers and establish a body of like-minded people to ultimately care for the Welfare of the cow. Incorporated within the NACFT was a method for Dutch Diploma holders to have a list which could be used by clients and other interested bodies (such as Dairy companies and Red Tractor) to find trimmers who have had a very good training and take part in CPD- check days which ensure the trimming remains beneficial to the Welfare of the cow.

“Presently there is no official governing body for foot trimmer” - As you are all aware the RCVS and APHA have recently launched a national consultation to establish whether there is a need for a governing body and if so, how best to incorporate this into legislation within the Veterinary Surgeons act in order to govern activities, including Cattle Foot Trimming, to safeguard the welfare of animals. The NACFT was set up for this very purpose 20 years ago and is the body at the forefront which can help advise and structure events. Foot trimming, being one of the activities closely aligned to animal welfare, is being asked for their feedback and may be incorporated within the future legislation with guidelines to their activity.

There is no such legislative nor governing body presently, and as such there is no officially recognised training or assessment format, for Foot Trimmers by RCVS or governing bodies. If the Foot Trimming profession is eventually incorporated into and overall governed by RCVS and APHA they will adopt “Standards of Training” – they cannot and will not stipulate any one body of trainers to be the only one. A “Training Standard” will be recognised and any training organisation delivering training within their adopted criteria will be accepted. If changes come about, there will be standards any training establishment can deliver.

The Dutch Diploma remains the highest training for the Cattle Foot Trimmer, developed over years, copied by many others. “Be proud of our training” and encourage others to partake in the same path you have taken to become a qualified Trimmer and help reduce lameness in the national herd. We all have the same goal – the welfare of our patients!

If you wish to write to contact the relevant bodies who are involved with consultation, we encourage you to do so, in support of your training.

The following are some of the bodies involved with the consultation:

BCVA. office@cattlevet.co.uk

APHA - Christine.Middlemiss@defra.gov.uk UK Chief Veterinary Officer
Christianne.Glossop@Gov.Wales Chief Veterinary Offices (Wales)
Sheila.Voas@gov.scot Chief Veterinary Officer (Scotland)

RCVS – info@rcvs.org.uk

AHDB, Red Tractor, RSPCA are a few other organisations involved with welfare. If you have any contacts within these bodies, it is worth reminding them of the Dutch Diploma Training and its benefits.

Please respond to any consultation questionnaire. There is one to be found on the RCVS website asking for feedback on the Paraprofessional. And of course, relay any concerns and ideas you have back to the NACFT committee to keep them informed with current views on the ground.

Once training resumes, we will have the foundation 4 day ‘Professional’ diploma course with the option of tagging on a 5th day for RoMS training. We have made the change to include the optional RoMS training to fulfil the demand from many of the trainees wishing to become mobility assessors.

I would also like to dispel one myth (the lack of regional days) about the biannual assessment day (Check Day). For several years we have had regional assessment days. The regions include – SW, SE, South Wales, Cheshire, SW Scotland/Cumbria. When training resumes, we will be organising a series of regional Check Days. Please let us know which one you would like to attend.

We remain committed to delivering the highest quality training. We always have the most experienced trainers with in-depth knowledge and all of the up-to-date information. Let us all be very proud of our training, spread the word to all interested parties and encourage others to attend the Foot Trimmers qualification that matters.

John Dawson
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