

Digit amputation by Sharp Dissection

Amputation of one digit at the proximal interphalangeal joint or just above is a common procedure in cattle practice. After preparation a skin incision is made in the interdigital space and then beginning about 2 cm proximal to the interdigital cleft angling upward to a point on the lateral or medial side of the leg even with the distal margin of the accessory digit or dewclaw. All soft tissues can be sharply incised along the line of the skin incision. The scalpel blade is then placed between the digits and the distal end of the first phalanx and amputated by sharp dissection to disarticulate the proximal interphalangeal joint. If the articular surface of the first phalanx is intact it should be roughened with a knife. Some practitioners ligate one or two arteries and others simply use a very tight bandage. The cut surface of the removed portion should be carefully examined for evidence of sepsis or necrosis. If damaged tissue extends above the amputation and it is not debrided the outcome will be poor.