

## Relocating from tying stall to free stall barn: Pay close attention to hooves!

Cows that are able to move freely around a barn are healthier, more fertile and produce greater milk yields. Nevertheless, the transition to a new husbandry system initially represents a big challenge. The hooves, in particular, have to get used to the added movement. Healthy hooves are a prerequisite for healthy cows in free stall barns. Therefore, measures must be taken to ensure relocation is as hoof-friendly as possible.



### Implementing good practice for hoof trimming

Cows that were previously housed in tying stalls are not used to moving around on concrete floor all day. Further, if the hooves are cut too severely right before relocation, there will not be enough hoof horn to prevent hoof abrasion and to dampen compression. The result is lameness, which in turn negatively impacts udder health and milk yield. It is, therefore, important that animals are re-barned with the thickest possible hoof sole. After the cows have settled in to their new surroundings, professional hoof trimming is essential to gradually correct the hoof angle and to establish a good wall edge. This helps to relieve pressure on the hoof sole.

### Covering rough floors

If the cows move around on concrete floor, it is often too rough for their sensitive hooves – and the floor should, therefore, be covered with a soft material (e.g. manure, sawdust). The better solution is to permanently equip walking alleys with rubber mats.

### Rubber mats for hoof-friendly acclimatization and as a long-term solution for healthy hooves

Rubber mats help to simulate natural soil conditions in barns. The longer outer claw of the cow sinks into the soft material, thereby optimizing pressure distribution over the entire hoof. This is the precondition for healthy hooves and active, agile cows in free stall barns. The rubber flooring, therefore, not only helps protect hooves after leaving tying stalls, but also provides the best solution for a well-managed free stall barn in the long term. The KRAIBURG KURA walking alley mat has been proving its effectiveness in dairy barns around the world for the past 20 years.

