SOP No: ATT 073

SUBJECT: Feeding animals.

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POLICY: Demonstrator: experience in this procedure
Students: competence in handling animals and in reading and understanding instructions.

PRECAUTIONS: Wear sturdy footwear, and use face masks and gloves as appropriate; use sun protection if necessary.
Animals should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure.
Be aware that large animals (horses and cattle) may react adversely to people entering a stall, pen or yard.
Be aware that a hungry animal may approach new feed eagerly and in doing so force you out of the way or knock the feed from your hands.
Avoid lifting heavy items; where necessary, have an assistant help with these items.
Use correct lifting procedure, i.e. bend knees, not back.
Avoid ingesting or breathing in dust and/or contacting bare skin with particles from packs of concentrated feed supplements such as minerals and vitamins.
Wash hands and exposed body parts thoroughly with soap and water after handling animal feed and feeding equipment.

EQUIPMENT: weighing scales, feed containers, feed bins or troughs.

PROCEDURE:

(a) Care of feeding equipment: Scales should be checked annually, and more frequently if they have been damaged or mis-handled and calibrated annually. Carry out equipment maintenance on reusable equipment. Clean reusable equipment after use and dispose of single-use equipment.

(b) Use of volumetric measuring equipment: If feed is measured by volume, ensure that the bulk density is checked for each batch of feed (especially forages) as this may change between batches with consequent over- or under-feeding.

(c) The feeding procedure:

- If necessary, weigh animals and ascertain their production status (e.g. early or late pregnancy, lactating, laying, in work) to determine the level and type of feed required.
- Check the feed troughs and hay racks or nets before feeding to make sure that they are in good repair; if the animals are group-fed, ensure that adequate trough or rack space is available for each animal.
- Clean feed troughs and feeders and remove uneaten feed (refusals) before feeding.
- Check the feed ingredients for quality.
- Measure out correct quantities of feed and deliver them to the specific animals as specified by the supervisor.
- Do not over-fill feed troughs or racks as this will lead to wastage of feed.
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- Break open and tease out bales of hay or straw before placing them in hay racks.  
- Ensure feed is spread evenly throughout troughs and feeders to ensure accessibility to the feed by all animals in the group.  
- If automated feeding systems are used, ensure that these are working correctly and deliver the required amounts of feed to all animals.  
- Avoid over-feeding as this may cause the animal to scour or suffer from other digestive disorders, and will lead to wastage of feed.  
- Observe animals for signs of ill health which may be related to feed type or quality, or unsuitable feeding methods or welfare issues.  
- Look for shy and dominant feeders when animals are fed in groups; separate these if necessary to ensure that all animals receive their correct amount and type of feed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

REVISED:

CHAIR OF AEC

REFERENCES