SOP No: ATT 027

SUBJECT: Handling sheep and goats

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POLICY: Minimum number of 2 operators.

Demonstrator: Experience in the procedure.

Students: An understanding of sheep and goat handling.

PRECAUTIONS: Wear sturdy footwear and sun protection
Sheep and goats should be handled quietly before, during and after
the procedure.

Understand the flight zone of the animals.

Animals should not be overcrowded in yards.

Wash hands and exposed body parts thoroughly with soap and
water after handling animals.

Procedure may be repeated if animals remain quiet and are not
distressed by handling.

EQUIPMENT: Crush or yards

PROCEDURE:

1. **Mustering.** When mustering, consider the geography of the
paddock, gateways, direction of travel etc so that animals will
move in the direction chosen. Allow animals to gather together
in a loose bunch before attempting to move them in the
required direction. Stock generally move better up hill than
down.

2. **Time of day:** Be aware of environmental factors which may
influence animal behaviour and ease of movement. Shadows,
sunlight, wind, rain etc can help or hinder movement through
the yards.

3. **Yarding.** Animals should always enter yards via the same entry
point and leave by a separate exit gate at the other side of the
yards. This will encourage animals to enter the yard
themselves. Docile animals should be moved through the yards
with the stock person on foot.

4. **Drafting.** Drafting should be performed in specially designed
drafting yards or through gates between yards. The use of
excessive noise or force is unnecessary. The drafted animal
must be able to see where it is to go (ie its 'escape route'). Visual
driving aids are best used to direct animals or block movement.

5. **Tipping:** Handler stands on the left side of the sheep, grasps
under the muzzle with the left hand, being sure not to restrict
breathing and pushes the head away from the operator so that
it faces the tail. The right arm places downward pressure on the far point of the hip and the sheep can be pulled towards the handler. The animal’s spine should be supported by one of the operator’s legs whilst holding the animal’s front legs. Goats are commonly horned which can be a hazard to the handler. They can be grasped by the horns or restrained as per sheep. Goats are not suitable for tipping and physical examination is usually performed in a standing position.

6. Health inspection: With the animal restrained perform a physical examination by checking the eyes, ears, mouth, gums, feet, udder, genitalia, rectum and coat for any signs of external parasites. Inspect faeces by digitally removing into a collection tube.

On completion of procedure observe animal for signs of excessive distress and treat if required.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

REFERENCES