

**SOP No:** ATT 027

**SUBJECT:** Handling sheep and goats

**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

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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:**

**DATE ISSUED:** 24.06.2009

**REVISED:**

**REFERENCES**

1. Wolfensohn, S & Lloyd M, 1998, *Handbook of Laboratory Animal Management and Welfare*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Blackwell Science.