

Animal Welfare (Milking goats)

Code of Welfare 2013

Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 What is the purpose of this code of welfare?	1
1.2 Who does this code apply to?	1
1.3 What animals does this code apply	1
1.4 What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this code?.....	1
1.5 How does this code relate to other codes of welfare?	1
2. Stockmanship and Animal Handling	2
2.1 Stockmanship	2
2.2 Animal Handling	3
2.3 Restraint and Tethering.....	4
2.4 Mustering and Droving	6
2.5 Mixing Goats	7
3. Feed and Water	9
3.1 Food	9
3.2 Water.....	11
4. Shelter and Housing Facilities.....	13
4.1 Shelter	13
4.2 Farm Facilities	15
4.3 Housing for Goats	16
5. Husbandry Practices	20
5.1 Kidding Does	20
5.2 Hand Rearing and Fostering Kids	21
5.3 Lactating Does and Milking Systems	23
5.4 Drying-off Dairy Does	24
5.5 Reproductive Technologies and Selection of Animals for Mating.....	27
5.6 Painful Husbandry Procedures	27
5.7 Animal Identification	28
5.8 Pre-transport Selection.....	29
6. Health	31
7. Emergency Humane Destruction	34
8. Quality Management.....	36
Appendix I: Body Condition Scoring (BCS).....	37

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this code of welfare?

Efficient goat management requires both experience and the observance of high standards of care. Unless management and handling are done well, the welfare of the goats cannot be adequately protected. This code sets out minimum standards that represent society's expectation of that standard of care and that are based on good practice and scientific knowledge. It is intended to encourage all those responsible for its implementation to exceed the minimum standards and to adopt the best industry practices of husbandry, care and handling. Advice is given throughout the code and is designed to encourage owners/operators to strive for a high level of welfare.

1.2 Who does this code apply to?

This code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of goats. Under the Animal Protection Act (Act.....) the "owner" of an animal and every "person in charge" of an animal is responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. Responsibility for meeting minimum standards relating to the provision, design and maintenance of the facilities and equipment, the allocation of operational responsibilities and the competence and supervision of performance of employees, lies with the owner and every person in charge of the goats.

The owner may place the goats in the care of others for purposes such as feeding and management, rearing, breeding, transport or slaughter. Responsibility for meeting minimum standards during the particular tasks lies with the person responsible for carrying out that particular task. In practice, the identification of the person in charge is determined by the minimum standard in question.

1.3 What animals does this code apply to?

This code applies to milking goats.

1.4 What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this code?

Failure to meet a minimum standard in this code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the [**Animal Welfare Act**].

The recommendations for best practice in this code have no legal effect and are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare.

1.5 How does this code relate to other codes of welfare?

Codes of welfare have been developed, or are being developed, for individual species of animals, painful husbandry procedures, commercial slaughter, and for the transport of animals. Other codes of welfare should be consulted where appropriate.

2. Stockmanship and Animal Handling

Stockmanship and animal handling cover a wide range of skills and personal qualities including having knowledge of animal needs and behaviours, an understanding of the husbandry system and the skills needed to operate within it, a rapport with the animals, an ability to observe them, and skill in the practical aspects of handling, care and manipulation of animals.

2.1 Stockmanship

Minimum Standard No. 1 – Stockmanship

Milking goats must be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel, who collectively possess the ability, knowledge and competence necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the animals in accordance with this code.

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 1 – Stockmanship

- . Milking goats' health and welfare is in accordance with this code
- . Staff training records show that stock handlers and farm managers have completed milking goat husbandry training courses and/or have had training on the job from supervisors who have competence in the husbandry of the goats within the particular locale and circumstances
- . Stock handlers, owners and persons in charge of milking goats document how they keep up to date with developments in goat husbandry, and review their systems and practices regularly to improve the welfare of goats
- . Operational procedures are documented and accurate records are kept of the history of the goats and the treatment that they have received

2.2 Animal Handling

Introduction

Goats are intelligent and inquisitive, and are quick to learn new things. A quiet approach when handling goats is important. The amount of stress experienced by the goats and the risk of injury to both goats and their handlers is decreased when good handling facilities are available, as this will reduce the need to apply pressure to move the goats.

Minimum Standard No. 2 – Animal Handling

- (a) Goats must be handled at all times in such a way as to minimise the risk of pain, injury or distress.
- (b) Goats must not be prodded in sensitive areas, including the udder, eyes, nose, anus, vulva or testicles.
- (c) Only the minimum force required must be used when moving goats.
- (d) Electric goads must not be used on goats.

Example indicators for Minimum Standard No. 2 – Animal Handling

- . Stock handlers' behaviour towards goats is always patient
- . Stock handlers have knowledge of the easiest ways to move goats and do not need to resort to prodding or hitting to make goats move
- . Goats are not lifted by the horns
- . Stock handlers appreciate how goats may react to and interact with other goats, other animals, humans, strange noises, sights and smells
- . Yards and handling systems are designed with knowledge of goat behaviour to ensure that goats will readily move through facilities
- . Stock handlers are trained in the use of handling equipment

Recommended Best Practice

- (a) Goats have a strong instinct to herd and individuals should not be unnecessarily isolated. The amount of time that individual goats are kept alone or out of sight of other goats should be minimised.
- (b) Stock handlers should understand and recognise stress factors for goats and take steps to minimise them.

(c) Aids to facilitate handling of goats, such as vehicles, dogs, sticks and flags (when used as an extension of the arm) should all be used minimally and carefully so as not to distress or injure the goats.

(d) Tails should not be lifted or twisted when moving goats.

(e) If it is necessary to use dogs, they should be under control at all times and muzzled where appropriate.

(f) When performing husbandry procedures on aggressive animals, they should be separated, given additional space and kept in yards for the minimum time necessary to complete the tasks.

General Information

Human-animal interactions can be enhanced by improving handling procedures and facilities, selecting appropriate animals for the husbandry system, getting them used to human contact, and attending to the skill and training of the handlers.

Knowledge of goats' flight (or safety) zone and the point of balance (the line through the animal's shoulder which determines whether it will move forwards or backwards in the presence of a handler) will help with moving animals and in reducing fear. Animals with large flight zones, such as feral goats, become fearful and agitated when people invade this zone and when they are confined or unable to move away. The size of the flight zone depends on an animal's genotype, its previous contact with people and whether this contact was negative or positive.

Goats that are not accustomed to yarding can become stressed, and those that feel pressured are more likely to bully their herd-mates. Goats with horns present additional risk of injury. These goats require patient handling and plenty of space.

Smothering of goats when yarding is a risk, especially when the goats are not accustomed to routine handling (e.g. feral goats). Goats are also at a particular risk of smothering when contained in groups in confined spaces, when backing boards are used, at pressure points such as gateways and yard corners, or when adults and kids are in the same mob. The risk can be minimised by quiet and patient handling, managing animals in small groups, and by appropriate yard design.