



LIVESTOCK WELFARE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Established 1978

Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee
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POSITION STATEMENT

DEHYDRATION ASSESSMENT & ACTION GUIDE

Dehydration		Clinical signs	Action	
Degree	%			
Slight	(1+)	5%	Habitus normal. Skin elasticity normal. Eyes normal. History of reduced intake or increased loss of fluid.	Water or rehydration fluid (water plus electrolytes) offered per os.
Mild	(2+)	7%	Habitus normal. Skin elasticity slightly reduced. Eyes slightly sunken.	Rehydration fluid offered per os, dosed if animal does not drink.
Moderate	(3+)	9%	May lie; stands if helped. Skin elasticity reduced. Eyes sunken.	Rehydration fluid dosed per os by means of a stomach tube.
Severe	(4+)	12%	Unable to rise. Eyes very sunken. Skin elasticity very reduced.	Intravenous rehydration necessary.

The skin elasticity is tested by the "skin tent" test where the skin is pinched and raised.

Normal: skin returns to previous position immediately.

Slightly reduced: takes two seconds to return to normal

Reduced: takes longer than two to five seconds to return to normal position.

Very reduced: takes longer than 10 seconds or more to return to normal position.

This should assist those tasked with making judgement and decisions related to transport, detention or lairage of especially cattle, sheep and goats.
This guide is intended for use mainly in cattle, sheep and goats.

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