



SOP 9.03: Palpation of Ram Genitalia

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Purpose

- (1) The objective of this standard operating procedure is to provide guidance to the Charles Sturt University staff on:
 - a. determining by feel/palpation, any abnormalities in the spermatic cords, scrotal contents (especially epididymis), testes and penis of a ram.

Scope

- (2) This procedure applies to any person who is involved in AEC approved projects involving palpation of ram genitalia.
- (3) All researchers and teaching staff using animals for scientific purposes must be competent. For definition of competency refer to Charles Sturt University's Policy on 'Animal Care Competency Training and Assessment'

Details of procedure

- (4) The ram is restrained in a standing or sitting position. One hand is placed on each side at the base of the scrotum. Palpate the spermatic cords between thumb and fingers and gradually move ventrally to the epididymis and testes. Without excessive pressure, abnormalities can be felt such as firmness and swelling, and a comparison between the testes can be made by simultaneously using one hand on each side. The testes tone and resilience should be palpated and detected, and they should move freely within the scrotum.
- (5) Scrotal circumference can be measured by restraining the testes ventrally in the scrotal sac, and by using a tape measure ascertain the circumference at the widest point of the scrotum with reasonable but not excessive tension on the tape.
- (6) The fibroelastic penis should be palpated through the skin for any detectable swellings, adhesions, or other obvious abnormalities. The glans penis should be extruded through the preputial opening by placing pressure on the subcutaneously palpated shaft of the penis, whilst simultaneously 'milking' the sheath and prepuce over the glans penis. The tip of the penis should be examined for the presence of the vermiform appendage (urethral process), and the glans for any swellings, adhesions, or other abnormalities.

Drugs, chemicals, or biological agents

- (7) None required

Impact of procedure on wellbeing of animals

- (8) The procedure is usually well tolerated.



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Animal care

(9) Observation following examination.

Pain relief

(10) None required.

Reuse and repeated use

(11) In general, rams should not be examined more than 2 days in any week.

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this procedure

(12) Demonstrator – sound experience with the procedure

(13) Students - understanding of the anatomy of the genital tract of the ram and experience with the restraint of rams.

Record requirements

(14) Appropriate monitoring and recording of the use of animals must occur.

Associated documentation (including pictures if available)

(15) Not required

Glossary

(16) Not required

References and relevant links

(17) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/animals/animal-ethics-info/legislation-and-the-australian-code/animal-research-regulation>

(18) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/animals/animal-ethics-info/legislation-and-the-australian-code>

(19) <https://animalwelfarestandards.net.au/welfare-standards-and-guidelines/sheep/>