



SOP 9.06 Training of Rams for semen collection

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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. Training of Rams for semen collection using an artificial vagina (AV)

Scope

- (2) This procedure applies to any person who is involved in AEC approved projects involving semen collection of Rams using an artificial vagina where ram training is required.
- (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) To accommodate the semen collection by use of an AV, rams must develop a conditioned reflex to mount and ejaculate into an AV in a confined space (shed/pen/animal house) in the presence of a technician. Rams and teaser ewes are introduced to holding pens that are sheltered with non-slip flooring and adequate space for the ewe (that might or might not be restrained initially), the ram and the operator.
- (5) The ram is encouraged to mount oestrus ewes, which are restrained (SOP 9.02). The process occurs over a variable period depending on the ram, typically 5-10 days, to enable acclimatisation to the collecting environment. The ram is encouraged to the mounting area by enhancing the environmental conditions, often with food and without other distractions, and allowed to mount restrained ewes in the presence of an operator. The ewes might be altered depending on the reaction of the ram. Introducing a competitor experienced ram might also expedite or encourage the novice ram to mount a ewe. Once ram mounting occurs regularly in the presence of the operator, the artificial vagina collection is introduced (see AEC SOP 9.01). The training time is variable, dependent on ram and operator, but is typically less than a week.

Drugs, chemicals, or biological agents

- (6) None required.

Impact of procedure on wellbeing of animals

- (7) No adverse effect on the ram's health or fertility.



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Animal care

(8) The procedure is usually well tolerated. Routine management to resume following training.

Pain relief

(9) None required.

Reuse and repeated use

(10) Once trained, only one demonstration per ram per day, up to 2 days in a 14-day period.

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this procedure

(11) A sound knowledge of sheep reproductive behaviour.

Record requirements

(12) Completion of AEC approved daily monitoring forms.

Associated documentation (including pictures if available)

(13) None required.

Glossary

(14) None required.

References and relevant links

(15) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare/animal-care-and-welfare/livestock/livestock-files/national-model-codes-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-livestock>

(16) <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare>