



SOP 10.05 Mustering, drafting and yarding small ruminants

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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. Safe mustering, drafting and yarding of small ruminants such as sheep and goats.

Scope

- (2) This procedure applies to any person who is involved in AEC approved projects involving sheep or goats.
- (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

Mustering:

- (4) When mustering, consider the layout of the paddock (gateways, geography, direction of movement) and plan movement in the required direction with consideration of how stock will react. If moving along or across roads, ensure stock signs are placed to alert other road users. Use an understanding of the animals' flight zone to apply sufficient pressure to move them in the required direction, recognising that flight zone will vary widely between different mobs. Allow the animals to gather in a loose mob using a vehicle, trained dogs or stock people before moving them in the required direction. Use sufficient pressure to move the mob, avoiding excessive noise or hustling, and moving at a pace the slowest animal can cope with and at a speed appropriate for the distance to travel without causing excessive exertion. Animals which cannot keep up with the mob may need to be left behind or transported by vehicle. Care should be used with ewes during late pregnancy or with young lambs at foot to move at an appropriate speed.

Yarding:

- (5) Yards should be designed and maintained to minimise the risk of sheep being injured. Entry point to yards should be large enough to facilitate easy movement of the mob. Animals ideally enter the yards by the same entry point each time and exit via a separate point on the other side of the yards. Animals should be encouraged to enter the yards quietly with as little pressure as required by the stockperson and/or dogs. Animals should not be overcrowded in yards, and larger mobs may need separation into several yards to minimise the risk of crowding and smothering. When mustering has caused physical exertion, animals should be rested before continuing handling. Movement when in yards should use low-stress techniques with appropriate location of handlers and/or dogs to obtain the desired



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movement. Sheep should not be crowded through gateways. Sheep should be yarded for the minimum time necessary for the required procedures, which may include overnight yarding to empty gut fill, as in the case of shearing, crutching and pregnancy scanning. Prolonged periods in yards should be avoided for ewes during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy.

Drafting:

- (6) Drafting should be performed in specifically designed drafting races or through gates which facilitate the flow of animals. The location of people or dogs should be used to utilise the following instinct of animals, with minimal but sufficient pressure applied to keep stock moving. The level of pressure will vary between mobs. The drafter will swing the gate behind the rump of the preceding animal to draft the following animal into a different pen and may need to use hand or leg to block and redirect animals whose head goes the incorrect side. Even flow of animals through the race facilitates drafting. Care should be taken by the drafter to avoid body or hands being crushed by jumping animals, and to avoid injuring animals in the drafting gate. Care should be taken with horned animals (e.g., rams) whose horns may not fit through the race, or animals which may charge through the race.

Drugs, chemicals, or biological agents

- (7) N/A

Impact of procedure on wellbeing of animals

- (8) Minimal if handled quietly. If mustered long distances animals will require water if hot weather and may require rest. Animals which are regularly handled will be less stressed than others.

Animal care

- (9) Animals should be handled with the minimal pressure required before, during and after the procedure. Work should be done during the coolest part of the day in summer and avoid working in extreme temperatures/weather. Ideally, yarding of wet sheep should be minimised. Dogs should be adequately trained and dogs which bite stock should be muzzled.

Pain relief

- (10) N/A

Reuse and repeated use

- (11) Procedures can be repeated if animals remain quiet and are not distressed.

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this procedure

- (12) Competence in handling small ruminants.



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Record requirements

(13) N/A

Associated documentation (including pictures if available)

(14) N/A

Glossary

(15) N/A

References and relevant links

(16) N/A