

Transport and Care of Goats

FACT SHEET - GOATS AT SALEYARDS

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There are three types of goats, milk (Saanen, Anglo Nubian, British Alpine) fibre (Cashmere, Mohair) and meat (Boer) goats. Whilst each type has different needs, handling of goats should be carried out in such a manner which will avoid injury or unnecessary suffering.

They can be kept in various situations from extensive grazing to close confinement and housing. Whatever the form of husbandry there is an obligation and a clearly defined responsibility under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals act 1986 to care for their welfare.

Having bought goats from the saleyard or through a private sale you need to ensure that you are prepared to provide adequate transport to your new property.

The Code of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Goats provides details on your responsibilities (www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare). This brochure provides some basic information regarding your obligations towards your goats.

Transporting your Goat Home:

Key Things to Remember:

- Goats can be flighty so move quietly without beating and the use of dogs
- Transport goats in trailers, utilities (with a ventilated crate) or trucks
- All transport must have the front protected from the wind
- All transport must have non-slip flooring
- Goats must be transported in such a manner that they are not overcrowded - make extra trips if necessary
- Separate categories eg females with suckling offspring from mature males, advanced pregnant females from other goats

Do Not :

- Drag goats by their horns
- Drag goats by a rope around their necks
- Tie goats by their legs to restrain them
- Put goats in vehicles without adequate ventilation eg vans
- Put goats in the boots of cars
- Transport goats with other species

Speak to your stock agent if transport is required for your new purchase.



Photograph by Bruce McGregor

Caring for your goats: Handling Facilities and Shelter

It is important that the unloading facilities, sheds and yards on your property be constructed and maintained in such a manner to minimise the risk of injury, disease, overcrowding and trampling.

The goats should be put into a small paddock or yard for the first few days to allow them to acclimatise to their surroundings and enable you to inspect them for any injuries and lameness. During this time, it is important to drench them for internal parasites to prevent resistant parasites being introduced to your property.

Goats are sensitive to extremes of weather and adequate accommodation and shelter should be provided to prevent heat and cold stress.

Feed and water requirements: Food

Goats should not be deprived of food for periods longer than 24 hours.

Considering the types of goats you may have purchased, (ie. meat, milking, fibre) the food available should meet the requirements of maintaining their growth, pregnancy, lactation and fibre production. Consult your local veterinarian or DPI Animal Health staff for advise.

Goats are selective feeders and both graze and browse. Browsing is usually of scrub which has a low feed quality so a supplementary feed should be supplied.

If goats are confined to yards they should be supplied with a forage daily in the form of good quality hay or pelleted feeds which contain 30% forage.

Remember, sudden dietary changes can predispose goats to serious disease. A conditioning period to allow them to adjust to a change of feed must be considered. It is best to give them hay for at least the first few days, so that their rumen (stomach) has time to adjust gradually to the pasture feed on your property.

Water

Goats should have ready access to clean water.

Intake depends on the temperature and the category of goat, eg a large milking goat could drink 10 litres a day.

Assessment of health of the goats:

While the goats are being held in the yards/ small paddock use the opportunity to assess them (i.e., before you put them out on your paddocks). The most important things to look for are:

- any injuries that might have occurred during transport
- lameness or uneven gait
- making sure any suckling kids are feeding on their mothers before you let them out into a paddock to

**Diseases of Goats:****Table 1. Common diseases of goats**

Disease	Description For more information go to www.dpi.vic.gov.au/farming , then click on 'Animals & Livestock' and then 'Goats'
Internal Parasites	Because of the way parasites in goats have been controlled in the past there is a resistance by most parasites to many of the commonly used drenches. This has been caused by overuse and incorrect dose rates. History of product and drench usage is important knowledge in the control of parasitism. Goats should be drenched before putting onto clean pastures. Minimum drenching and strict pasture management should be used to control parasites.
CAE (Big Knee)	CAE is caused by a virus. Blood testing surveys indicate that 75% of the domestic goat population has been exposed to it. Young goats tend to get the nervous form of the disease while the arthritic signs are seen in older animals. There is no treatment for either form of the disease. When buying a goat, it is important to know the history of the herd the goats are coming from.
Ovine Johnes disease	A chronic wasting disease caused by one or more strains of the bacteria (<i>Mycobacterium paratuberculosis</i>). For more information please refer to Agnote: Ovine Johnes disease .
Footrot	Footrot is an infectious and contagious disease caused by the bacteria, <i>Dichelobacter nodosus</i> (<i>D. nodosus</i> for short). It was previously known as <i>Bacteroides nodosus</i> and before that as <i>Fusiformus nodosus</i> . For more information please refer to Agnote: Footrot in Sheep : Disease facts .
Coccidiosis	Coccidiosis is a contagious enteritis caused by infection with <i>Eimeria</i> spp. causing diarrhoea and dysentery and in some cases anaemia. Preventive measures against coccidiosis should be carried out as soon as goats enter your property. Contact your local veterinarian or DPI Animal Health staff for advise.
Clostridial diseases	Tetanus and Pulpy Kidney are the two main clostridial diseases that most commonly affect goats, causing significant productivity losses, including death. Goats are not commonly affected by the other clostridial diseases. It is recommended that goats are vaccinated with 3 in 1, unless there is a history of Black Disease, Blackleg or Malignant Oedema on the property, when 6 in 1 should be used.

Property Identification:

All owners of goats must register their property with Department of Primary Industries to receive a Property Identification Code (PIC). For more information please call 1800 678 779.

Please remember that goats require ongoing supervision and maintenance to stay healthy. For further information about the management of a small flock please refer to the Code of accepted farming practice for the welfare of goats (Victoria). Agnotes dealing with Cashmere, Dairy and Boer Goats are also available from www.dpi.vic.gov.au/farming (click on 'Animals & Livestock' and then 'Goats').

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For more information about transport and care of goats contact: please consult your private veterinarian or local DPI Animal Health staff via the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or email customer@dpi.vic.gov.au, or visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare and follow links to Animal Welfare information notes.