

MPI Code of Welfare: Goats

1 October 2018

2.3 Restraint and Tethering

Introduction

The facilities that are available for restraining goats on farm will depend on the farming system used but may include races, backing gates, crushes, cradles and head bails. This equipment can be used to guide a goat in a required direction or to hold it in position to enable efficient examination and treatment. Stock handlers need to be aware that head bails and crushes can cause injury to goats and people if they are not managed properly. Goats are sometimes tethered or restrained in order to keep areas of land grazed and free of weeds. Goats tethered in this way are usually restrained by a collar or halter and chain or rope. Tethered goats have some particular requirements that must be met in order to ensure that their needs are satisfied. In addition, the food, water and shelter requirements described in Section 3: Feed and Water and Section 4.1: Shelter, apply to all goats, including tethered goats.

See summary of regulations appended to this Code:

- Regulation 16 – Tethered goats must have access to food, water, and shelter
- Regulation 47 – Collars and tethers

Minimum Standard No. 3 – Restraint and tethering

- (a) Equipment used for restraining goats must be fit for purpose and applied in such a manner that stress and risk of injury to the goat are avoided.
- (b) Methods of mechanical restraint must allow for the animal to be released quickly.
- (c) Goats that are restrained by tethering must be:
 - i) placid and trained to the conditions;
 - ii) provided with access at all times to food, water, and fully shaded and dry shelter that provides protection from extremes of heat and cold (except as allowed by regulation 16(2) of the Animal Welfare (Care and Procedures) Regulations 2018);
 - iii) able to walk and move around without undue hindrance; and
 - iv) inspected at least once every 12 hours.
- (d) Kids, sick goats, pregnant or nursing does, or goats physiologically compromised in any other way must not be tethered.
- (e) Tethers used on goats on roadside verges must prevent goats from getting into the path of vehicles.

Example Indicators for Minimum Standard No. 3 – Restraint and Tethering

- Maintenance of goat restraint equipment is up-to-date and recorded, and there are no protruding parts or sharp-edged parts on the equipment that might injure goats
- If any difficulty is encountered when restraining a goat (e.g. the goat panics, is distressed or is at risk of sustaining injury to itself), it is released quickly
- Collar is made of leather, nylon or other pliable and durable material
- Goats that are tethered are calm and have been trained as kids to accept approach and handling by humans, and have been trained to accept tethering after weaning, but before one year of age
- Where a goat is on a roadside verge, the placement of the anchor and length of tether is such that the goat cannot get into the path of vehicles but the tether is of sufficient length that the goat is able to exercise and access sufficient amounts of feed
- Sites that are to be used for tethering goats are examined beforehand for potentially

harmful objects that a goat could eat such as toxic plants or litter, and for objects or vegetation that might snag or catch on the tether or collar and prevent the animal's movement

- Tethered goats have access to suitable shelter and are not showing signs of cold stress
- Food and water requirements of restrained (including tethered) goats are met according to food and water minimum standards and indicators (see Section 3 Feed and Water)
- Tethered goats have the ability to walk and move around within the constraints of the tethered range

Recommended Best Practice

- a) Goats should be kept in herds, or at least with one social companion. If this is not possible, goats should be kept where they can see or hear other goats (or other animals).
- b) Stock handlers should be trained in the safe operation and rapid release of goats from restraints and facilities.
- c) Backing gates should be used carefully and should not be used in a manner likely to result in pain, injury or distress.
- d) Goats should not be tethered as they are social animals.
- e) Chains should not be used as a collar for goats.
- f) Tripod collars or hobbles should not be used to limit a goat's ability to move.

General Information

Goats are social animals and need to be provided with one or more companions. While interaction with humans (in the case of pet goats) may provide a substitute for some of their social and behavioural needs, the welfare of goats that are tethered on their own is compromised. Providing a goat with the company of other goats is preferable, however, goats can also live with companions such as sheep, cows or horses. If it is not possible to keep a goat in a herd with social companions, providing goats with the opportunity to see or hear other goats (or other animals) can provide some welfare benefits. When tethering goats in close proximity to other tethered goats, they need to be a sufficient distance away from each other so that the tethers cannot become entangled.

When tethering goats, the use of an aerial running line, in which the chain of the tether is attached to an aerial wire or rope so that the goat can move along the line, can be beneficial and provide a goat with additional space in which to exercise and access feed.