

Key welfare issues for farmed goats in Canada

This is a list of common welfare concerns for goats you can use when filling out the National Farm Animal Care Council's survey on the revision of the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats](#). The deadline to submit comments is May 2, 2019.

Important: please take our suggested topics and put them into your own words.

General comments

If you don't know which of the below issues to submit, you can mention that you are concerned about these key issues: **painful practices, lameness, and infectious disease.**

The BC SPCA advocates that all recommended practices from the previous code become required practices in the updated code. Points marked with an asterisk (*) below are currently recommended practices.

Housing

Housing is a priority issue. Topics that relate to this issue include:

- Welfare science on space allowance must be included.*
- Goats must not be overcrowded.
- Goats must be housed in compatible groups.
- Goats must have access to shelter appropriate for the weather.*
- The whole group must be able to eat at the same time.
- Provide enrichment in housing (e.g. brushes, platforms, pasture)
- Goats must only be isolated if recommended by a veterinarian.

Feed and water

- Goats are at a high risk for reduced welfare at dry off.
- Dry off achieved by restricting access to water or feed must be prohibited.
- Changes to routine, grouping, and diet must be made gradually.
- Kids must be fed at least 15 % of their body weight in milk/replacer.
- Kids must be fed milk/replacer from a bottle or nipple.

Health and welfare management

Lameness is a priority issue. Topics that relate to this issue include:

- Producers must check for signs of lameness daily.
- Lameness must be monitored, recorded, and treated promptly.
- Hooves must be inspected and trimmed at least twice annually.
- All stock people must be trained by a veterinarian to detect lameness.

Other important topics are:

- Annual pre-weaning kid mortality must be less than 5%
- Annual post-weaning kid mortality must be 0.5%

- Annual herd mortality (mature goats) must be less than 2%.
- Producers must check for signs of mastitis daily.
- Mastitis must be monitored, recorded, and treated promptly.
- A program to control infectious disease must be in place.
- Stereotypic behaviour must be monitored, recorded, and addressed humanely.

Husbandry practices

Pain control is a priority issue. Topics that relate to this issue include:

- Only disbudding before 3 weeks of age is permitted.
- Pain control at disbudding must include a local anesthetic and analgesic.
- Dehorning (past 3 weeks of age) must be prohibited.
- Routine tipping of horns must be prohibited.
- Pain control at castration must include a local anesthetic and analgesic.
- Provide pain control for painful conditions (e.g. mastitis, lameness).

Other important topics are:

- Shearing must be done at least annually (fibre goats).
- Shear as often as necessary to maintain health, minimum annually (fibre goats).
- Aversive handling (hitting, shouting, prods) must be prohibited.
- Goats must not be handled by grabbing their hair, fleece, or horns.

Transportation

- Avoid transport as much as possible.
- Keep trips as short as possible, prioritizing local destinations.
- Euthanize or slaughter cull animals on-farm instead of transporting.
- Special provisions are required for cull goats, kids, and lactating does.*
- Lactating does must be milked out or dried off before transport.
- Goats must be fed a minimum of five hours before transport.*
- Kids must not be transported off the farm before two weeks of age.
- Goats must have sufficient space for the group to lie down at the same time.
- Stocking density/ventilation must be adjusted to presence of fleece/horns.

Euthanasia

- The AVMA guidelines for euthanasia are the gold standard.
- A clear guideline for making decisions on when to euthanize should be included.
- Causes of mortality/euthanasia must be reviewed to reduce incidence.