

CARING FOR SHEEP



Recommendations

Sponsored by

The Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

The Basics

Terminology

Female - Ewe

Male - Ram

Castrated male - Wether

Young sheep, either sex - Lamb

Sheep Care

- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times. About 1-2 gallons of water per day per adult animal should be provided.
- Sheep are natural grazers, pastures are highly recommended. Approximately 0.2 – 0.3 acre of pasture per mature animal per year is sufficient. It is essential to section off the pasture into paddocks and move animals from paddock to paddock and let the pasture regrow for at least four weeks.
- Sheep should have good quality forage or mixed ration available. Supplemental grain should be provided if needed to meet the additional nutritional demands of lactation, gestation, growth, cold weather, or to compensate for poor forage or pasture quality.
- Sheep are sensitive to copper poisoning. Sheep should not be grazed on pastures fertilized with pig or poultry manure as these manure contain potentially dangerous concentrations of copper. Mixes of commercial grain can include various grains but the mixture must say SHEEP feed. Grain mixtures for cattle and horses have too much copper.
- White salt or "sheep salt" block should be available at all times. Red salt blocks or salt blocks formulated for cattle and/or horses should be avoided because they contain excess copper. Loose salt is recommended for lambs.

Shelter

- Even though sheep's wool allows them to endure much lower temperatures than humans can tolerate, they should be provided with shelter that affords them protection from heavy rain, snow, high wind, and intense summer sun, and provide a dry place to rest.
- A three-sided shelter with an open front facing south away from prevailing winds will meet the needs of sheep. The shelter should be located on an elevated, well drained site.
- It is recommended to have 20 -25 sq. feet of space per mature animal in enclosed housing and 50 sq. feet of exercise yard area.

Additional Recommendations

- Sheep should be de-wormed 2-4 times per year, or as needed, to prevent disease.
- Lambs may need routine worming over the summer, about every 4-6 weeks, based on veterinary advice.
- Veterinary care should include being vaccinated for rabies, enterotoxemia (over eating disease), and tetanus once a year.
- Sheep must have their hooves trimmed once a year.
- Sheep must be sheared each spring to prevent matting and infestation with maggots, known as flystrike.



Possible Signs of Illness, Neglect, or Intentional Cruelty

Appearance of Animal

Thin (Note: An unshorn (unclipped) sheep, the body of the animal must be felt to determine if it is underweight.); maggots in genital area of unshorn female sheep; excessive hoof length (Sides of hoof should be checked to see if overgrown and curled under the bottom of hoof); limping; animal "walking" on knees.

Housing Conditions

The lack of food, water, or shelter (natural or man made) are not acceptable practices. Over-crowding or insufficient feeding area may cause the less aggressive sheep to be excluded from the food source.

Behavior

Dull, minimally responsive; drooping head; animals rubbing up against objects in an effort to relieve itching from lice and wool on objects that sheep rub against. Sheep are flock animals, animal off by itself would indicate possible problems. Note: Sheep are naturally fearful of strangers.

Reporting Cruelty

Animal cruelty should be reported to the police department of the town in which the animal lives. Please leave your name and contact information so that a follow-up response may be made.

Additional Resources

Sheep (NH)

<http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AGDLEP/Sheep.htm>

American Sheep Industry Association

www.sheepusa.org

Housing and Space Guidelines for Livestock

extension.unh.edu/resources/category/Agriculture

For more information about animal cruelty, visit

www.humane.nh.gov

Be sure to view the **Interactive Presentation** on the **Welcome Page**.