

Guidelines For The Care Of Sheep At World Sheep Shearing Record Attempts

1. INTRODUCTION

The care and welfare of sheep at sheep shearing record attempts is of paramount importance. In light of this, the following guidelines have been developed to assist those who organise attempts in implementing procedures that aid sheep care and welfare, monitor and record incidents that may arise. It is envisaged that ongoing documentation and collation of this data will assist in identifying and minimizing animal welfare concerns ensuing best practises are shared and implemented. Responsibilities for meeting these guidelines will lie with the person assigned the task of animal care. In most cases, this is likely to be the convener or someone appointed by the working referees.

Relevant sheep care issues include the following:

- Appropriate access to water.
- Access to shelter where necessary.
- Use of sheep that are fit for the purpose.
- Injury control and/or management.

2. OBLIGATION OF PERSON/S IN CHARGE

The person/s in charge of the record attempt has overall responsibility for the care of the sheep. It is envisaged that there will be a person assigned to this task specifically, to be referred to as the 'Animal Care Officer' (ACO).

3. KEY PERSONS AT A SHEARING RECORD ATTEMPT

Organising referees:

Are responsible at a World shearing record attempt for ensuring there are sufficient skilled personnel available to handle the sheep numbers required and that sheep welfare is paramount.

Prerequisites that help ensure sheep welfare:

- No persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs participate in shearing record attempts.
- Precautions and procedures are implemented that address animal and public safety.
- A designated ACO person with access to an on call veterinarian.

Animal Care Officer:

The ACO to be responsible for the following parameters.

- Overall care of sheep at the record attempt.
- Ensure sheep are injury free prior to record attempt.
- Any injuries to sheep are treated immediately and appropriately.
- Completion of an Animal Care Report and submission of the report to the refereeing convener of the day.

Shepherds and Pen Staff:

Responsible for sensible and careful sheep handling during yard drafting and penning in the woolshed with emphasis on being aware of over filling of pens.

4. CARE AND TREATMENT OF SHEEP AT RECORD ATTEMPTS

Appropriate access to water:

- It is noted that sheep may have been transported from a farm to the record attempt venue and returned later in the day. As per best practise these sheep will have been fasted prior to shearing.
- Sheep should not be off food or water for any longer than 24 hours.
- If sheep are to be held longer than 12 hours, then water needs to be available to them immediately after they have been shorn.

Access to shelter where necessary:

- Sheep should have access to shelter from hot sun or weather extremes while at the record attempt venue.

Injury control and/or management:

- Injured sheep should be removed from the mob and attended to as soon as possible and practical.
- Where a sheep is critically injured a competent person must be available to administer to the animal or a call for the veterinarian. Humane euthanasia is to take place if required.
- A shearer may be disqualified if a sheep is purposely mistreated by that shearer at any time. A referee has the authority to immediately switch that shearer's machine off.

General issues:

- Sedatives cannot be administered to sheep at any point.
- Fireworks must not be used anywhere sheep are nearby.
- Sheep should be moved to pasture as soon as practical following being shorn, the completion of counting and referee's rating.

5. SELECTION OF SHEEP FOR RECORD ATTEMPTS

The selection of sheep for a shearing record attempt is crucial to ensuring they are suitable, sheep that are not fit should be drafted out prior to the official wool weighing.

Sheep to be used for a record attempt must be sighted by the ACO and officiating referees prior to the official wool weighing:

- Sheep used in a record attempt must be in good health, sound and in good condition.
- Any identified sheep with defects to be removed immediately and appropriate attention given.

6. WOOLSHED AND GEAR

- The venue for the record attempt should be fit for the purpose.
- Pen confines should be of a size and height that ensures sheep can be held safely, i.e. avoiding smothering or escaping.
- Sharp and protruding type objects that could cause cuts, bruising or injury must be removed or corrected.
- Adequate ventilation for all sheep --- and personnel.

7. TRANSPORT, YARDING AND HANDLING OF SHEEP

If transport of sheep is required to the record attempt venue they should be transported in accordance with the 'Code of recommendations and minimum standards for the welfare of animal transport' in the Country the record attempt is taking place.

8. LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Sheep must not be used in any form of entertainment where the animal is exposed to an abnormal risk of injury or distress.

9. ANIMAL CARE REPORT

The Animal Care Officer (ACO) is responsible for the completion of the Animal Care Report ***which will be available from the WSSRS secretary?***

The importance of this report being able to assist the World Sheep Shearing Records Society to be proactive in the care of sheep while in a public arena for World record attempts.

Collated information will be used to establish a profile of incidents and injuries and thus enable processes and procedures to be developed to ensure best practises for sheep care in a competitive environment.

This Policy has been formally endorsed by members of the World Sheep Shearing Records Society Inc.

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