

Handling Camelids to Administer Medications and Transporting Small Ruminants

Our topics for this week are:

- Handling camelids for common medical procedures
- Transporting small ruminants

Handling for Common Medical Procedures

Injections

Intramuscular injections in camelids are generally given in the triceps muscle in the forelegs or the semitendinosus and semimembranosus muscles of the hindlegs. Intramuscular injections should not be given in the neck of camelids regardless of age. Subcutaneous injections are given under the loose skin low on the chest just behind the elbow.

Administration of Oral Medications

Oral administration of liquids is the same as with sheep and goats, except straddle restraint is not possible. Restraint is similar that used for horses and achieved with a halter and lead rope or camelid stocks.

TRANSPORTING SMALL RUMINANTS

Loading Chutes

Loading chutes for sheep and goats can be side by side and should be solid walled on the outside to prevent seeing handlers and high enough to prevent attempts to jump out. Partitions between chutes for sheep should be see-through so that they can see other sheep moving forward. There should be narrow divisions in the loading chutes to prevent animals from being able to turn around in the chute. Cleats are needed in floors to eliminate or reduce slipping.

Sheep or Goats

As with transporting all livestock, driving of the vehicle should be smooth. Accelerating or stopping suddenly should be avoided. Turning corners should be slow enough for the animals to shift their weight and stay on their feet. Sheep or goats should not be transported alone. They should be transported with at least a favored herdmate.

During travel, sheep or goats should be rested every 5 consecutive hours and off loaded, fed, and watered after 24 hours of travel, or more frequently. Title 49, U.S. Code, Chapter 805, Section 80502 prohibits 28 hours of continuous travel of livestock. However, sheep may be transported up to 36 hours if travel is completed at night. Dust-free, mold-free bedding over sand or rubber mats should be used to provide foot traction and cushion, and to be able to clean soiling. Enough room between the animals should be allowed to permit moving without crashing into each other or the sides of the transport vehicle and to lie down, if desired. However, animals

should be close enough to brace against each other, if needed. If too much room is present, straw bales can be tied down to provide bumpers. Horned or aggressive sheep or goats should be partitioned from others or haltered and tied. The lead rope should be tied with just enough length to allow the animal to get up if they fall or lie down but not so long that it could easily get tangled.

Goats must be transported in completely enclosed containers to prevent escapes. Dog crates can suffice, if they are large enough for the goat to stand up and lie down comfortably. Goat sized livestock crates are available for the bed of pickup trucks. Crate doors should be doubly latched.

Unshorn sheep, alpacas, and Angora and cashmere goats are especially susceptible to heat stress. They need to be provided extra space and ventilation and travel in early morning or late in the day and at night if transported in warm weather.

South American Camelids

South American camelids can be trained to travel in horse trailers or in the back of station wagons, minivans, or pickup trucks with stock sides. They kush during travel and because of this, they occupy relatively small space during travel. If they have enough room to stand as in a horse trailer and are tied, they should be tied with enough lead line to be able to kush.

Now let's recap the key points to remember from today's episode:

- 1. Intramuscular injections should not be given in the neck of camelids, only the front or hindleg, that is: triceps or semitendinosus/semimembranosus muscles.**
- 2. Small ruminants should not be transported alone and preferably with a favored herd mate.**
- 3. During transport, small ruminants should be permitted to rest at least every 5 consecutive hours of travel and offloaded every 24 hours to eat and drink.**

Abby says it is time to wrap up this episode.

More information on animal handling is available in my book, *Animal Handling and Physical Restraint*, published by CRC Press. It is also available on Amazon and from many other fine book supply sources.

Additional information is available at: www.betteranimalhandling.com

Don't forget, serious injury or death can result from handling and restraining some animals. Safe and effective handling and restraint requires experience and continual practice. Acquisition of the needed skills should be under the supervision of an experienced animal handler.