

Restraint of Goats and Administration of Medications

Our topics for this week are:

- Restraint of kid goats and adult goats
- Administration of medications to goats

Restraint of Individual Goats and Portions of Their Bodies

Pressing Against a Wall

A goat can be restrained by backing the goat into a corner with a solid wall. The handler then presses it against a wall with one leg between its neck and shoulder and the other leg against its chest.

Jaw and Neck Hold

Small and medium-sized goats can be restrained by a hand under their jaw and the other hand on the upper part of the back of their neck.

Straddling

Some goats can be straddled for restraint. The goat is backed into a corner and the handler straddles its neck holding the goat still with his knees on both sides of the goat's neck. Straddling can be hazardous if attempted on horned goats or adult meat goats.

Flanking

A handler can flank a goat by standing next to it and reaching over the neck to grasp the foreleg nearest the handler's body. His other hand grasps the flank. While lifting the goat, it should then slide it down the front of the handler's leg onto its side. The hand on the flank is moved to the bottom hind leg and the handler's elbow presses on the goat's neck while the hand on the front leg continues to restrain that leg.

Platform and Stanchion

Milking of goats is typically done with the doe standing on an elevated stand. Some include stanchions similar to cattle chutes with headgates. The goat may voluntarily walk up onto a platform if trained with grain as a reward, or it can be led by its collar to the platform and walked up onto the platform. Stanchions also aid in performing foot trimming and grooming.

Side Sticks and Neck Cradles

Sticks from a halter to a chest strap (suringle) or neck cradles can be used to prevent chewing on the legs or to prevent a dairy goat who has learned how to nurse itself.

Spanish Halter

Spanish halters are similar to a tie-down used for horses. A strap or cord from a halter is run between the front legs and attached to a surcingle. The Spanish halter allows most normal

grazing but prohibits the goat from eating from lower tree branches.

Tattooing

Most goat breed registries require an identification tattoo on the ear flap, or in breeds with small ears, the tail web. Restraint that is used is holding the head or having the head in a stanchion.

Trimming Hooves

Hooves need to be trimmed about every 8 weeks depending on how abrasive the ground is in their enclosure. Goats are usually trimmed while they stand in the same manner as horses. An assistant handler may be needed to manually restrain the head and is preferred rather than tying the goat by a halter lead. Elevated platforms or small tilt tables may also be used for hoof trimming restraint.

Restraint for Kids

Kid goats are captured as if picking up a small dog. Small kids can be carried with an arm under their chest and abdomen while the hand of the same arm grasps the kid's front leg nearest the handler's body. Kids should never be restrained by an ear, horn, the neck or a leg.

Kids up to 20 lb. can be held with their heads up and back to the handler and the handler restraining the kid's right front and rear legs with the right hand and the left front and rear legs with the left hand. The same hold can be used while the handler sits and holds the kid on its back on the handler's lap. This positions male kids for castration.

Larger kids can be restrained by straddling the kid, holding the body by pressing the kid just behind the shoulders with the handler's legs while the handler blocks forward movement with a hand behind the kid's jaws.

Another method is to straddle the kid, grasp each front leg and raise the kid onto its hindfeet and hold its chest between the handler's thighs.

Kids should be disbudded within 4 days of birth. Horns present a hazard to other goats and to handlers. In addition, the goat may entrap its head more easily with horns than without. Properly performed disbudding will also remove the adjacent skin containing the scent glands. Dehorning older goats should be avoided due to the stress involved and risk of complications. Restraint for disbudding a small kid is to hold the kid on the handler's lap in sternal recumbency while restraining the head movement with both hands on the neck just behind its ears. Alternatively, a goat holding box may be used which is similar to a suitcase but with a hole for the goat's head to stick out.

Handling for Common Medical Procedures

Most handling and restraint of goats are similar the methods used in sheep, except that goats should not be restrained in the tipped position. Unless they are obese or very muscular, their rump has little padding. Tipping is uncomfortable for them and they will not tolerate it without a continual struggle. Since goat tails are held in an elevated position rather than against their anus like sheep, tipping goats may also injure their tail.

A goat should not be restrained by its horns or pulling on an ear which will be resented and cause struggling. Grasping the base of a horn of an adult may be done with little risk of it breaking off, but grasping the end of a horn or anywhere on a young goat horns may result in the

horn breaking off and bleeding profusely.

Some goats become catatonic with fear. The proper handler response is to back off and resume moving or handling in a less intimidating way. Catatonic response is different from fainting goats which have a genetic disorder called myotonia. Fainting goats do not really faint. Their muscles will go into involuntary extreme contraction causing them to stiffen and fall on their sides.

Groups in small pens can become aggressive against small or timid members. Large goats should not be penned with small ones. Horned goats should not be penned with goats without horns, and bucks should not be penned together.

Injections

Subcutaneous injections are generally given under the skin behind an elbow or fold of the flank. Intramuscular injections should only be administered in the side of the neck, except for nursing kids. Nursing kids should receive IM injections in the semitendinosus and semimembranosus in the back aspect of the thigh.

Administration of Oral Medications

For up to 8 to 10 ounces, drenching is more practical than using a stomach tube. To drench a goat, a handler straddles its back, places a hand under its lower jaw, and raises its head slightly. The nozzle of the drench syringe is inserted between the cheek and the back teeth. The plunger is pushed in slowly allowing the goat to swallow the liquid medication. Handlers should wear gloves and not put their fingers in the goat's mouth. A speculum for insertion of a stomach tube is placed in the same way.

Balling guns are used to administer solid medications. Goats are caught individually and backed into a wall and straddled. The goat's head is lifted under the jaw but its nose should not be lifted higher than the poll. Otherwise, its ability to swallow will be impeded. The balling gun is inserted in the mouth and the plunger pushes the bolus onto the back upper surface of the tongue. The balling gun should not be inserted too far, which could impair swallowing and allow the bolus to go into the larynx or trachea.

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

- 1. Young goats should not be restrained by their horns.**
- 2. A Spanish-halter can prevent goats from eating lower limbs of trees.**
- 3. Intramuscular injections should only be given to adult goats in the side of the neck.**

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.