



Castration Standard Operating Procedure

Corresponds with requirements AW4.18 and AW4.19

Justification

Castration should only be done where the procedure results in benefits to life-time sheep welfare, better flock management and a reduced health and safety risk to handlers.

Lambs destined for slaughter before they are 12 weeks old, or before the onset of puberty, should not be castrated.

Details of procedure

Lambs are restrained on their back by someone holding the lamb and restraining the feet or in a device for lamb restraint (docking cradle)

The scrotum is palpated for evidence of two descended testicles. If evidence of hernia or cryptorchidism exists, castration will not proceed and the lamb will be noted and the veterinarian will be notified.

The following methods may be used:

- a) Application of a rubber ring
- b) Emasculator
- c) Shortening of scrotum
- d) Surgical. Pain relief is mandatory

Pain relief measures

For all methods, pain relief shall be applied when suitable pain relief is available on the market. Pain management options shall be discussed with a veterinary surgeon and options shall be reviewed regularly.

Surgical castration without pain relief is not permitted.

Age

Castration should be done after a secure maternal bond has been established, and after the lambs are 24 hours old. The procedure shall be carried out between the ages of 24 hours and 8 weeks.

Care of animal(s) during/after the procedure

Lambs should be handled quietly before, during and after the procedure.

Following the procedure, lambs will be turned back onto dry, clean pasture or a dry, clean pen with their mothers.



Lambs must be inspected regularly following the procedure and with minimal disturbance for signs of post-operative complications during the healing process, and appropriate action taken as indicated.

Precautions

Good hygiene should be practiced in relation to facilities, hands, handling and instruments with disinfectant being used and changed frequently.

Risk of infection can be limited by ensuring ewes have been routinely vaccinated and that the lambs are vaccinated at lamb marking.

Consideration of weather and yard conditions and fly activity should be made when planning lamb marking (e.g. avoid muddy yards and wet or humid weather).

Qualifications, experience or training necessary to perform this technique

The procedure shall be performed or supervised by a competent stockperson, using well-maintained equipment designed specifically for the purpose.