



ANIMAL WELL-BEING

Sheep

Quick Sheep Facts

- Sheep have one stomach with four chambers (rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum).
- Sheep are used to produce meat, milk and wool.
- In 1996, the first mammal to be cloned was a sheep named Dolly.
- Sheep can distinguish between and remember up to 50 other sheep faces.

What is Animal Well-Being?

Animal well-being or animal welfare is the ability of an animal to cope with its environment and living conditions. Animal well-being is more than simply being healthy; animal well-being includes:

- An animal's feelings or emotions, such as contentment;
- An animal's ability to perform natural behavior, such as grooming, stretching and turning around fully;

- An animal's health and biological functioning, such as not having injuries or disease.

Important Behaviors

- **Feeding and drinking** are necessary for health and proper biological functioning.
- Newborn lambs need **colostrum** after birth.
- Sheep spend a large proportion of the day **grazing and ruminating**. Ruminating requires calm conditions and is important for health.
- Sheep have a very strong flocking motivation and display signs of distress when isolated from the flock.

Behaviors of Concern

- **Wool pulling** occurs when sheep pull out and sometimes eat the wool of other sheep. Sheep housed in crowded conditions or restrictive environments can develop wool pulling. The behavior can be reduced by giving sheep

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more space, providing outdoor access, or increasing roughage in their diets.

- **Lamb stealing** occurs when many pregnant ewes are kept together and some ewes steal lambs from other ewes. Identify ewes that are prone to stealing lambs and segregate these ewes from the main group of lambing ewes.

Caring for Sheep

- Provide shade and fresh water, especially when temperature and humidity levels are high.
- House sheep together, as sheep are social animals that become distressed when isolated from the group. When sheep need to be moved, move sheep together as a flock.
- Provide shelter to ewes that are lambing in the winter or during extreme weather conditions. Lambs born outdoors are at a high risk of dying when weather conditions are bad.
- Provide high-quality feed. Do not give sheep moldy feed and be sure to provide roughage.
- Remember that energy and nutritional requirements for animals are higher when pregnant, producing milk, or growing. These animals may need supplemental feed. When in doubt, consult a nutritionist for proper feed practices.
- Handle sheep calmly to avoid agitation and injury.
- Check sheep often for diseases, parasites, and injuries; contact your local veterinarian if you detect these problems.
- Remember that sheep with wool need to be shorn every year.
- Protect sheep from predators. Have a plan in place to prevent predation, such as having guard animals, using fences, properly disposing of dead animals, and penning sheep at night.

Causes of Poor Sheep Well-Being

The following situations or conditions can compromise animal well-being and cause suffering:

- **Cruelty or abuse** is causing physical or mental harm to an animal. This includes generating negative feelings such as pain, fear, frustration, and distress.
- **Neglect** means failing to care for an animal. This could mean endangering an animal's health by not providing adequate food and water; restraining an animal in a way that causes pain or jeopardizes animal health; crowding animals; not treating illness, injury, or disease.
- **Abandonment** occurs when owners desert an animal or leave without making adequate provisions for the animal's long-term care.

Signs of Poor Sheep Well-Being

Sheep are prey animals that may not show obvious signs of pain, injury or disease, which may make it difficult to detect problems. However, sheep that are sick or in pain may display some of the following behaviors or signs. The animal might be:

- Less active than usual
- Engaging in fewer social interactions than typical
- Isolating itself from the rest of the flock
- Eating and drinking less than usual
- Dull or dirty in appearance
- Having difficulty walking
- Displaying signs of swelling or injuries
- Experiencing discharge from the eyes, nose or other areas
- Swollen, red, or discoloration of the udder area of a female sheep
- Displaying a body weight or condition that is not appropriate for the stage of production that the sheep is in. For example, a pregnant ewe should look healthy and will be bigger than an ewe that is not pregnant.

If You Have an Animal Well-Being Concern

- Call your local police department.
- Contact the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) for livestock and poultry concerns at <http://www.in.gov/boah/>.

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