

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING GOATS

adopted by the Standing Committee at its 25th meeting on 6 November 1992

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PREAMBLE

The Standing Committee of the European Convention on the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes,

Having regard to its responsibility under Article 9 of the Convention for the elaboration and adoption of recommendations to the Parties containing detailed provisions for the implementation of the principles set out in Chapter I of the Convention based on scientific knowledge concerning the various species of animals;

Aware also of the established experience in the implementation of the principles of animal welfare set out in Articles 3 to 7 of the Convention;

Considering that in the light of established experience and scientific knowledge about the essential biological needs of goats certain systems of husbandry at present in commercial use, and in particular those in which animals are closely confined, often fail to meet all the needs the fulfillment of which is essential for the animals' welfare;

Considering therefore that strong and continuous efforts have to be made to adapt both existing extensive and intensive husbandry systems and

develop satisfactory new systems so that these needs can be met for goats kept for farming purposes;

Aware that the basic requirements for the health and welfare of livestock consist of good stockmanship, husbandry systems appropriate to the biological needs of the animals, and suitable environmental factors, so that the conditions under which goats are kept fulfil the need for appropriate nutrition and methods of feeding, freedom of movement, physical comfort, the need to perform normal behaviour in connection with getting up, lying down, resting and sleeping postures, grooming, eating, ruminating, drinking, defecation and urinating, adequate social contact and the need for protection against adverse climatic conditions, attack by predators, injury, infestation and disease or behavioural disorder, as well as other essential needs as may be identified by established experience or scientific knowledge;

Concerned with the possibility that the results of certain developments in biotechnology may add to welfare problems of goats, and aware of the need to ensure that such developments do not diminish their health and welfare;

Bearing also in mind that it is an obligation of the Committee to reconsider any recommendation when appropriate new knowledge is available and therefore wishing to encourage research by all Parties with the object of developing alternative systems which are more likely to provide solutions in keeping with the intentions of the Convention;

Has adopted the following Recommendation concerning goats.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

1. This Recommendation shall apply to all goats bred or kept for the production of food, fleece or skin or for other farming purposes.
2. For the purposes of this Recommendation the word "goat" refers to all caprine stock, and any goat under 6 months of age is considered to be a kid.

Article 2

It should be borne in mind that some important biological characteristics of goats (Capra hircus) are as follows:

- a. They obtain their food by browsing more than by grazing and are best adapted to dry firm ground. Their ability to climb is considerable and this facilitates their browsing. They require warm conditions and are not well

able to tolerate low temperatures, particularly when combined with wet and windy conditions.

b. They are often vocal in their responses to one another and to man. They warn of perceived sources of danger, which may include man, by sounds such as snorts. They may flee or turn and face the danger. If not disturbed they spend much time in exploratory behaviour. In yards and buildings they can be easily disturbed, for example by shadows, reflections and loud noises.

c. They live in social groups, largely composed of family members, and normally seek isolation only when giving birth. Forced isolation can have serious, even fatal, consequences through failure to feed.

d. Goats of most breeds are seasonal breeders but at other times of year, males form separate subgroups. Difficulties at birth are relatively uncommon. One or more kids are born to each dam and they are hiders, usually remaining near the place of birth rather than following the mother. Disturbance just before or after parturition may result in failure of formation of the doe-kid bond.

STOCKMANSHIP AND INSPECTION OF GOATS

Article 3

1. The type of goats kept, the number and the stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the environment, and the likely availability of sufficient feed throughout the year. The stockman should be sufficiently skilled to safeguard the welfare of the stock kept, taking account of the characteristics of the breed and of the husbandry system used as well as all aspects of the environment. The size or density of a herd should not be too large and a large herd should not be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman can safeguard the welfare of each individual animal.

2. The animals should be cared for by sufficient personnel with adequate theoretical and practical knowledge of goats and of the husbandry system used, to be able

- to recognise whether or not the animals are in good health;

- to understand the significance of behavioural changes;

- to appreciate whether the total environment is adequate for the animals' health and welfare.

3. The stockman must be competent and should be experienced in all areas of goat husbandry including handling goats, parturition, milking, foot care,

shearing and combing if necessary, and, as far as this is permitted under domestic law, vaccination, injection and oral dosing. When the stockman with a small number of goats does not have the required experience or does not have at his disposal the necessary equipment he must ensure that he has access to expertise or to such equipment enabling him to solve in an appropriate way any problem encountered.

4. Each breed of goat has its own unique characteristics and the stockman should be aware of the particular requirements of the animals in their care. Goats have a natural tendency to browse and range for food and these factors must be taken into consideration in deciding a suitable environment.

5. Goats should always be treated as individuals, even in large herds. When goats have to be kept singly, they require more frequent contact with, and supervision by, the stockman. When forming new groups care must be taken to avoid fighting and stress.

Article 4

1. In order to develop a positive relationship between man and animal, there shall be appropriate careful handling and other contact from an early age of the animal.

2. The stockman should be experienced in handling and moving goats, and understand their behavioural patterns.

3. Goats must be handled calmly as they are more likely to be willing to be led or driven when treated in this way than if excited. When goats are moved their gregarious tendencies should be exploited. Goats should preferably be led but may be driven provided that care is taken. Activities which may frighten, injure or cause agitation to animals must be avoided. Goats should not be lifted by the head, horns, legs, tail or coat. Instruments such as sticks shall be used only for the purpose of guiding animals and must not be used in a manner which causes animals unnecessary pain or suffering.

Article 5

Goats kept for farming purposes shall not be used to achieve any other goal, such as public spectacles or demonstrations, if such use is likely to be detrimental to their health and welfare.

Article 6

1. The herd shall be inspected thoroughly at least once a day, except where goats are kept outside in safe extensive conditions and in clement weather when the frequency of inspection may be reduced but should be at

least once a week. However, these inspections shall be more frequent than once a day or once a week when the welfare of the animals may be at risk, in particular at kidding time, where there is a substantial risk of fly strike or attack by predators, and where management or other conditions change significantly. Such inspections shall be made independently of any automatic surveillance equipment and for this purpose a source of light shall be available.

2. Thorough inspection of a herd does not require each animal to be examined individually. Individual examination shall only be required whenever the overall inspection suggests this is necessary.

3. For this individual examination of goats special attention shall be paid to bodily condition, movements and posture, rumination, condition of the coat, ears, eyes, tail, legs and feet, including any behavioural changes, wounds, injury, lameness or disease. Healthy animals make sounds, show activity movements and posture appropriate to their age, sex, breed and physiological condition. These include: general alertness, good uniform coat condition, clear bright eyes, good teeth, free movement, absence of lameness, good appetite, drinking and suckling behaviour, rumination, freedom from external parasites, with no visible wounds, abscesses or other injuries.

Article 7

1. At any inspection it must be borne in mind that signs of ill health include: listlessness, loss of appetite, fall in milk yield, cessation of rumination, discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth, excessive salivation, persistent coughing, swollen joints or swellings elsewhere on the body, lameness, diarrhoea, discoloration of milk or urine, bloat, vaginal or rectal prolapse, frequent scratching or rubbing, loss of bodily condition, behavioural changes including loss of dominance order, and in some circumstances, being apart from the herd.

2. If animals are not apparently in good health, or are showing adverse behavioural changes the stockman shall take steps without delay to establish the cause and take appropriate action. If this immediate action taken by the stockman is not effective a veterinarian must be consulted and, if necessary, expert advice should be sought on other technical factors involved.

Separate pens providing appropriate comfort and supervision and where possible allowing the animals to remain in visual contact with other goats, shall be available for sick and injured animals.

3. Goats which refuse to eat or which are less thrifty shall be given special treatment and be removed to different pasture or separate accommodation if necessary. Goats with poor teeth shall be provided with feed which they

can eat without difficulty, and if this is not possible and the goats cannot be treated satisfactorily, they shall be killed.

4. If goats are ill or injured to such an extent that transport would cause considerable additional suffering, they must be treated or killed on the spot. Where goats have to be killed on the spot, this must be done humanely and without delay and, where possible, by a person experienced in the techniques of killing.

BUILDINGS, ENCLOSURES AND EQUIPMENT

Article 8

Parties should consider making arrangements for:

a. advice on health and welfare aspects to be sought when new enclosures, housing or equipment are to be constructed or existing enclosures, housing or equipment modified.

b. new methods of goat husbandry or equipment to be tested and, if found satisfactory, approved from the point of view of animal health and welfare before their introduction into commercial use.

Article 9

When accommodation for goats is being considered all external environmental factors, such as noise, light, vibration, atmospheric conditions and pollution, and risks such as fire and flood should be taken into account.

Article 10

For housed goats, all reasonable precautions shall be taken to reduce the risk of fire and expert advice should be obtained from the appropriate authorities.

Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard at any time of the day or night. Fire fighting equipment in working order should be readily available.

There shall be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency.

Article 11

1. Buildings and equipment shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimize the risk of injury or distress. They should not predispose animals to disease. As goats are very inquisitive all gate and door

fastenings should be goat-proof. Surfaces shall not be treated with paints or wood preservatives which present a risk to the health or welfare of goats.

2. Hay and silage racks shall be designed, situated and used so as to avoid the risk of injury, eye damage or either racks or bales falling on goats or kids. Hay nets should not be used for young kids and horned goats to avoid the danger of their becoming entangled.

3. Water bowls, troughs and nipples shall be constructed and sited so as to minimize contamination from urine and faeces, to minimize the risk of water freezing or spilling and to prevent injuries. They should be kept thoroughly clean and be checked at least once daily, and more frequently in extreme weather conditions, to ensure that they are in working order.

Where the water supply is automatic, waterbowls are to be preferred to nipples; a sufficient number of bowls or nipples shall be accessible in each pen. Where nipples are provided goats which are not accustomed to these should be trained in their use.

4. Floors shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, distress or injury. Solid floors should be well drained and goats shall be provided with suitable and adequate bedded areas large enough for all goats to lie down simultaneously. Slatted or perforated floors shall not allow the feet of goats to be trapped or injured. In order to avoid injury to the udders, slatted floors should not be used as a lying area for milking goats. Slatted floors should not be used for kids.

MANAGEMENT

Article 12

1. The health of herds shall be safeguarded by careful husbandry and management. Advice from a veterinarian should be followed in planning pasture management to minimize the risk of spread of disease, drawing up a treatment plan adapted to the requirements of the herd and including in particular, appropriate vaccination, foot care, anthelmintic and other treatment. Before herds are mixed or before newly acquired goats are introduced into a herd, they should be checked to ensure that they are healthy and free from infectious or contagious diseases and infestations.

2. All necessary measures must be taken to prevent and control external and internal parasites. Where infestations are likely to occur goats shall be given routine preventive treatment. Used chemicals and their containers shall be disposed of with regard to any danger to other species and the environment.

3. Measures shall be taken to minimize the risk of bullying which is

particularly serious in goats. Housing strange goats together could result in fatalities, either through physical violence, or subordinate goats being refused access to food and water.

4. Special care shall be taken by the stockman to ensure that all equipment used for combing, shearing, marking, dosing, where appropriate vaccination, and treatment is maintained in a satisfactory condition. Equipment for injections applied by the stockman in accordance with national legislation must be cleaned and sterilised before and after use and frequently during use. The nozzles of dosing guns must be of a suitable size for the age and breed of goats on which they are being used.

5. Where mechanical devices are used for restraining goats they must be properly maintained and adjusted.

Electro-immobilisation shall not be used.

6. Electro-ejaculation shall not be used other than for veterinary diagnosis when there is no other method available. In such exceptional circumstances, it shall be carried out under strict veterinary control.

Article 13

1. Goats should be maintained in a clean condition.

2. Those parts of the accommodation with which the animals come into contact should be thoroughly cleansed, and where appropriate disinfected, every time the accommodation has been emptied and before new animals are brought in. While the accommodation is occupied by the animals, the interior surfaces and all equipment therein shall be kept satisfactorily clean.

3. Any dead goat must be removed promptly and disposed of hygienically in accordance with national legislation.

Article 14

1. Where there is a risk of attack by predators, measures shall be taken to minimize the risk in accordance with domestic law and other legal instruments for the protection of animals or for the conservation of threatened wild species.

2. Where goats have to be marked, this shall be done as painlessly as possible using non-toxic aerosols or paints, tattooing, tagging the ear, or the implantation of electronic devices where this is permitted under national legislation. In as far as these operations could cause harm to the animal they shall only be carried out by a skilled stockman using instruments in a proper state of repair and should not be undertaken under

unsuitable circumstances such as during the fly or tick season.

3. Goats should be kept loose in groups where possible. Goats shall not be restrained permanently. If they are temporarily tethered, which should be allowed only for a short period, this shall not be done where there are obstacles, or a risk of the tether becoming entangled; neither must goats be tethered where they are at risk of being attacked by dogs or other predators. Tethers shall be made of suitable materials, be properly fitted and adjusted to ensure that they are comfortable and do not rub. Particular care must be taken to provide water, food and shelter. If kids have to be restrained, they shall be penned and not tethered.

Article 15

1. If shearing is carried out it must be done by a competent operator in a way which causes the least possible harm or distress to the animal. Shearing instruments must be regularly disinfected and be in a fully serviceable condition appropriate to the size and age of the animal. Prior to, and during shearing, goats shall be handled carefully to avoid injury. Any shearing wounds must be treated immediately.

2. Goats kept for fiber production should be shorn at least once a year. Unless housed, goats shall only be shorn in suitable weather conditions. If inclement weather occurs after shearing, the shorn goats shall be protected by housing or by the use of a suitable securely fitting warm coat.

3. Housed goats should not be turned out within 2 months of shearing, unless weather conditions are suitable and natural or artificial windbreaks are available to provide protection.

Article 16

Fences should be high enough to prevent escaping, be properly erected and maintained to avoid the risk of injury to goats. Barbed wire should not be used. Where any type of mesh fencing is used, and particularly for horned goats it shall be inspected frequently and kept taut to minimize entanglement. For kidding fields the use of mesh fencing should be avoided and the installation of moveable or fixed open fences is recommended. Electric fences shall be so designed and maintained that contact with them causes no more than momentary discomfort to the goats. Electrified mesh fences shall not be used for horned goats if they could present a risk for the animals.

Article 17

For housed goats, the space allowance per animal, the total area available to all animals and the group size shall be determined according to the age, size and other biological characteristics of goats. Horned and polled goats

should not be put in the same pen unless reared together. In intensive systems, adult males should be housed singly, at least during the breeding season, but should not be denied the sight of other goats.

Article 18

1. Preferably, goats should not be housed throughout the year. If they are housed for a considerable part of the year, they should be within sight and sound of goats or other animals, and have sufficient room for exercise. They should be regularly allowed outside.

2. Pastures and enclosures should be selected and managed in such a way as to ensure that goats are not subjected to physical, chemical, parasitic or any other health hazard which can be reasonably avoided and account should be taken of the risks presented by access routes.

3. Reasonable precautions shall be taken to ensure that the welfare of goats is not adversely affected by unfavourable weather conditions including the provision of appropriate shelter.

4. Goats should be prevented from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow and should be shepherded into safer areas whenever possible. All goats shall be removed in time from any land which is in danger of being flooded.

Article 19

1. Care must be taken to ensure that each goat has access to an adequate supply of nutritious, hygienic and balanced feed every day including appropriate mineral supplementation when necessary. The great nutritional demands of lactation, particularly of intensively kept high yielding dairy goats, must be met as accurately as possible, with due regard to the varying needs during the annual reproductive cycle.

2. The biological need of goats for water shall be met each day, either by making available to them an adequate supply of water of satisfactory quality, or by providing them with a diet with an appropriate moisture content, or both. However, in case of milking goats, water of satisfactory quality shall be permanently available. Water obtained from bores, wells, rivers, streams and dams should be monitored for suitability for goats.

3. Feed shall be palatable. When goats are fed in groups sufficient trough space must be available to allow all goats to feed simultaneously and avoid undue competition for feed except where feed is always available. Stale or contaminated feed shall be removed from troughs before fresh feed is added. Sudden changes in the composition or quantity of the feed should be avoided, and sufficient roughage shall be available when goats are fed

high intakes of cereal based diets.

4. Goats shall be provided with a suitable quantity of bulky feed, preferably with some coarse forages and leafy branches. Grazing should include a variety of plants to ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals. If grazing is poor, or if weather conditions are bad, supplementary feeding should be provided.

5. Goats should be denied access to poisonous shrubs, trees and plants.

Article 20

Throughout the hours of daylight the level of lighting, natural or artificial, should allow all housed goats to see and to be seen clearly.

Article 21

Buildings shall be adequately ventilated, naturally or artificially, to avoid high humidity, condensation and draughts. The rate of air exchange should be sufficient for comfortable breathing and should provide for removal of excess heat, moisture and noxious gases, and minimize the effects of dust.

Article 22

1. All equipment, including milking equipment, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units should be kept clean, inspected daily and kept in good working order. Inspection devices shall be checked daily. Fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be checked and tested regularly. The stockman must ensure prompt action is taken to prevent suffering whenever electrical or mechanical failures occur.

2. Any automated equipment shall incorporate a fail-safe device maintained in good working order, and where the life of goats is dependent on such equipment, an alarm system shall also be installed which will warn the stockman of failure of automated equipment. These alarm systems must be regularly tested. Defects shall be rectified immediately or alternative measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the goats.

3. All electrical installations at mains voltage shall be inaccessible to goats, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and properly earthed.

Article 23

When changes are made which involve the installation of more complex or elaborate equipment than has been previously used, animal welfare shall be taken into account. Systems involving a high degree of control over the environment shall be put into operation only where conscientious staff,

skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment, are available.

Article 24

For housed goats, the stockman should in advance, make plans for dealing with emergencies such as floods, disruption of supplies, or failure of automatic equipment, and must ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.

PREGNANCY AND KIDDING

Article 25

1. Heavily pregnant females shall be handled with special care to avoid distress and injury which may result in premature kidding.
2. Care must be taken to ensure that pregnant and nursing goats shall receive sufficient feed to maintain their health and body condition and to foster the development of healthy kids. This is particularly important during the last weeks of pregnancy when feeding should be carefully regulated to avoid pregnancy toxaemia.

Article 26

1. The stockman should be familiar with the signs of difficult birth and be able to deal with these or have access to expert assistance. Particular attention must be paid to hygiene at kidding and adequate supplies of water of satisfactory quality, disinfectant and obstetrical lubricant should be available. If kidding areas are used, they shall be freely accessible at all times. Every effort should be made to prevent the build up and spread of infection by the provision of adequate clean bedding, and by ensuring the kidding pens are cleaned and disinfected regularly. The umbilical cord shall be disinfected where necessary. Dead kids and fallen afterbirths shall be removed without delay and disposed of in a hygienic manner in accordance with domestic legislation. Causes of mortality should be investigated.
2. The stockman should be familiar with resuscitation techniques. Some form of heating should be available to revive weak kids and suitable pens should be available for emergencies. Animals must be kept under surveillance to ensure that maternal bonding occurs.
3. Each newborn kid should receive an adequate amount of colostrum from its dam, or another source supplied at body temperature. Where this may involve a risk of disease transmission, which could be the case when using colostrum from another farm, it should be subjected to an appropriate treatment, for example being heated for an hour at 56°C, but in any case,

it shall not be overheated as this destroys antibodies. Colostrum should be supplied as soon as possible and in any case within 4 hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should be stored under hygienic conditions for emergencies.

4. Where kids have to be reared artificially, they should be given milk or a suitable substitute about 4 times each day for about the first two weeks with the liquid feed being reduced over weeks 3 and 4 to encourage solid feed intake. Milk feeding shall continue for at least the first eight weeks of life. However, from the end of the first week of life, kids should have access to grass or other fresh, fibrous food, and water of satisfactory quality. Where concentrated feed will be fed after weaning, kids should be accustomed to it before being weaned.

Where automatic feeding is provided, kids should be trained in its use to ensure an adequate feed intake. Automatic feeders providing milk shall be thoroughly cleaned regularly, preferably daily.

5. Kids which are not required for rearing must be cared for as humanely as those kept for rearing and if they are to be killed, this must be done in accordance with the provisions under Article 7 paragraph 4.

MILKING

Article 27

1. To avoid injury to teats and mastitis special attention shall be paid to hygiene, milking techniques and the efficient functioning of milking machines. Good milking practices should include careful handling, an examination of foremilk and the avoidance of excessive stripping. Before and after milking, hygienic measures should be taken to reduce the risk of spread of disease.

2. Lactating goats shall be milked sufficiently often according to their yield in order that udders are not kept uncomfortably full.

CHANGES OF PHENOTYPE AND/OR GENOTYPE

Article 28

1. Procedures resulting in the loss of a significant amount of tissue or the modification of bone structure, or which cause a significant amount of pain or distress shall be forbidden.

2. Exception to the prohibitions under paragraph 1 may be made:

(a) for procedures performed solely for veterinary purposes to relieve or to

prevent pain or suffering;

(b) for ear marking by tagging or tattooing; freeze branding and implantation of electronic devices for identification purposes;

(c) where still allowed under existing national legislation, for notching and punching of ears, for disbudding, dehorning and, if necessary, for castration.

3. Due to the anatomy of the kids'skull, disbudding even under anaesthesia is a difficult procedure. If disbudding is to be carried out it should be done as soon as the bud is sufficiently developed for the operation to be effective. Dehorning and caesarian section or any other laparotomy and, unless the existing national legal system allows otherwise, disbudding and castration shall only be carried out by a veterinarian using an anaesthetic. Castration of goats should be avoided. Other procedures under subparagraph 2 a) shall be carried out only by a veterinarian or, if allowed under national legislation, under veterinary supervision.

Article 29

Breeding or breeding programmes which cause or are likely to cause suffering or harm to any of the animals involved shall not be practised.
