

### **Reduce Stress In Show Goats**

Transporting goats to a show can be a stressful experience. Not only is it a different environment, but their routine is broken. There are, however, some things we can do to minimize the negative effects of showing.

Let's begin with transporting. During hauling, protect animals from exposure to wind, rain, dust, excessive heat and cold. When traveling only a short distance to a show, place compatible animals of a similar size together and allow enough space so they can help support each other while the vehicle is in motion. For long hauls, there should be lots of bedding and enough room to permit the goats to lie down.

Several other practices may make showing less stressful. First of all, try to arrive at the show well ahead of time. Place animals in a clean, spacious pen and provide plenty of bedding. Make sure that animals have abundant rest and try to disturb them as little as possible. However, it is good to provide them with periods of exercise. Also, provide drinkable water - many goats refuse to drink chlorinated or other "strange" water at shows. Many who show goats bring water from home.

Goats vary in their ability to withstand the stress of being on the show circuit. Some goats appear to thrive on it and eat well, maintain production and manage to look good most of the time. These animals are very likely to be some of the most reliable performers at home as well. A goat that is easily upset on the show circuit, and needs a lot of individual attention, will probably not show well.

In many ways, showing boils down to survival of the fittest. It is a sort of marathon, where animals that endure the stress the best, will usually also perform the best. That's why it's a good idea to expose your goats to a few shows. It will acclimate them to the show environment and help you identify how your animals respond to the experience. Thus, you will know ahead of time what your management will be for particular animals. This is something at which we all get better with experience.

For additional information, contact the County Extension Office or visit our website at <http://sutton-co.tamu.edu> .

Pascual Hernandez  
Texas Cooperative Extension Agent-Ag  
Sutton County