



## Show Preparation For Lambs and Goats



### **EXERCISE**

Exercise tones and builds muscles; stimulates appetites; and produces a firm finished animal. Athletes exercise and work out with weights to build muscles. For the same reason, lambs and goats need exercise to build muscles, stimulate appetite and produce a firm finish.

A regular exercise program should be started between November 15<sup>th</sup> and December 1. The amount of exercise needs to be increased in order to tone, build muscles, and burn off excess finish. The amount of daily exercise is gradually increased until show with the amount of finish on the animal as the major determining factor. Therefore, a fatter animal needs more exercise than one bordering on enough finish.

You may not want to run your animals the last couple of days before the show as they may injure themselves and not show well.

### **HOOF TRIMMING**

Lambs and goats are like horses, they cannot be expected to brace and show well if they are standing on long, crooked feet. A lamb's feet should be trimmed at least 45 days prior to show day and again approximately 2 weeks before the show. This will allow time for healing if one should cut into the quick and the animal comes up sore after trimming.

### **SHEARING**

The shorter the time period between washing, shearing, and show day, the better. Wash with mild detergent; rinse & blow dry. Some exhibitors do not wash their goats prior to shearing, and that's okay (but be aware that clipper blades will dull quicker).

- ☺ If your goats need more muscle, shear with the hair; if the goat is thick, shear against the hair.
- ☺ The clippers should run parallel to the body; this will give better balance and the appearance of being longer-bodied.

In either case shear all the hair/wool off the head and body. Leave only the hair/wool from the knee and hock to the hoof (and the tip of the tail on goats). Cut the hair directly above the hoof even with the hoof line, and blend in the hair/wool at the hock and knee. As soon as the animal has been sheared, cover with a "sock" and blanket. A clean, well-bedded pen should be provided to keep him clean and dry.

### **FEEDING**

You should handle the lambs or goats to check their finish (fat) every chance you get. This will give you the experience you will need to determine the lamb's condition (whether it is too fat or too thin). Lambs and goats should be fed 2 ½ to 3 ½ lbs. of feed per day depending on weight, skeletal size, finish, and the ration being fed. Just remember, if a lamb or goat is too fat, cut the total amount of feed fed daily and increase the protein. If a lamb is too thin, decrease the protein and increase the fat (energy) of the ration. Do not increase the volume of feed unless necessary. Weigh the animals weekly. This will tell you what your weight gains are and if you need to adjust your feeding program. There are minimum and maximum weights for the show. Each area is a little different so know the requirements for the show or shows you plan to attend. Try to feed on a fixed time schedule as close as possible.

## Managing Feed & Water

A week before weigh day check your animals to determine how they will need to be managed. For those that are deep-middled (big gutted) or carrying a little too much weight, you might reduce the feed intake, and spread it out during the day. Do this for approximately 2-3 days prior to weigh-in.

**For example, if you will “hold” the animal on 1 ½ pounds of feed per day, you should feed ½ lb. in the morning; ½ lb. at noon; and ½ lb. in the evening. Some of your lambs or goats, you may need to hold on 1 lb. per day. By feeding more often the feed will go through the goat faster and they will always be empty, thus they should lose any belly they have.**

Do not leave animals on full water prior to weigh-in. Water should also be managed two days before weigh-in for those animals that require it. Remember that a gallon of water weighs 8.3 lbs, so a quart will weigh approximately 2 lbs. If you leave your animals on full water, you will be weighing feed and water when they go through the scales. This may place them in a heavier weight class where they will be competing against larger-framed, heavier-muscled animals.

**For example, if you will hold the animal on 1 quart of water per day: give 1/3 of it in the morning; 1/3 at noon; and 1/3 in the evening. This can be made easier by using a drench gun.**

This **DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU SHOULD STARVE** your animals. What you are trying to do is to give them enough feed and water for maintenance. This will allow them to feel comfortable, and at the same time clean out the excess weight (waste).

**Liquid supplements should be started about a week prior to show and are a good alternative because they contain nutrients and supply fluids. There are many choices of liquid supplement (ForSure, Dyne, Showshake, etc.)** At the show you may need to drench with electrolytes to keep their system running.

### AT THE SHOW

- Continue with your feed and water management.
- Take hay...in case your animal refuses to eat or is a bit gaunt, you can offer a little hay.
- Use muzzles on your animals to prevent them from eating wood shavings.
- Continue with the liquid supplement. It may be necessary for some animals to receive 120-150 cc's every 2-3 hours. You may include electrolytes in this to prevent dehydration.
- Walk your animals a couple of times a day. This will provide needed exercise and allow them to stretch their muscles as well as prevent stiffness.
- Have available lamb/goat blankets in case it gets cold.
- Have grooming supplies on hand to clean up your animal prior to entering the ring.