

# JERSEY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE WELFARE OF

## GOATS

### THE CODE

The Code of recommendations for the welfare of goats is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic animal needs, known as the "Five Freedoms".

#### The Five Freedoms are:

##### 1. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST

- by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;

##### 2. FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT

- by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;

##### 3. FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE

- by prevention or by rapid diagnosis and treatment;

##### 4. FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

- by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals' own kind;

##### 5. FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS

- by ensuring conditions and treatment to avoid mental suffering.

Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. The Code is designed to help stockkeepers particularly the young and inexperienced to reach the required standard.

For the purposes of this Code the word 'goat' refers to all caprine stock, and an animal under which six months is considered to be a kid.

### HOUSING

#### BUILDINGS

1. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when constructing and modifying buildings. Goats are very inquisitive and all gate / door fastenings should be goat-proof.

#### Ventilation and temperature

2. Effective ventilation of buildings is essential.

#### Buildings and equipment

3. Internal surfaces of housing and pens should be made of materials which can be cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

4. Fittings and internal surfaces of all buildings and equipment to which goats have access should not have sharp edges or projections. Fittings should be so arranged as to avoid injury.
5. Surfaces should not be treated with paints or wood preservatives which may cause illness or death.
6. Hay racks and nets should be properly positioned and designed to avoid the risk of injury, in particular to the eyes of all types of goats. Hay nets should not be used for young kids and horned goats as there are the danger of them becoming entangled.
7. When goats are fed in groups, there should be sufficient trough space or feeding points to avoid undue competition for food.
8. Water bowls and troughs should be constructed and sited so as to avoid fouling and to minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather. 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.
9. Floors should be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid discomfort, distress or injury to the goats. Solid floors should be well drained. Sufficient clean dry bedding incorporating straw or other suitable material should be provided to ensure comfort and reduce the risk of injury to the udder.
10. If housed, male goats should be within sight and sound of goats or other animals and in strongly constructed buildings which allow sufficient room for exercise.
11. Housed goats should have access to a yard or pasture.

### **Lighting**

12. Throughout the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed goats can be seen clearly. In addition, adequate lighting for satisfactory inspection should be available at any time.

### **Space allowance**

13. The space allowance when penned should be calculated in relation to the age, size and class of stock. This and the size of the group should be based on appropriate advice. Horned and polled goats should not be put in the same pen unless reared together.
14. The introduction of a new goat or goats to an existing group can result in bullying. This may be alleviated by increasing the space allowance or by penning the new animal adjacent to the existing group for a short period.

### **EQUIPMENT**

15. All equipment and services including drinkers, milking machines, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept clean and in good working order. Any automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device maintained in good working order and, where the goats' welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system should also be installed to warn the stockman of failure. These should be regularly tested. Defects should be rectified immediately or alternative measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the goats.
16. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to goats, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and properly earthed.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **Feed and water**

17. Goats should receive daily a balanced diet which is adequate to maintain full health and vigour. They should have access to sufficient fresh, clean, water at all times. If this is impossible for any reason, such water should be provided at least twice daily. Goats prefer water which is not excessively cold.

18. Feed should be palatable and should be placed in suitable racks or containers. Stale and fouled food should be removed.

### **Grazing**

19. Grazing should include a variety of plants to ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals. If grazing is poor, supplementary feeding may be required. Goats should be moved at appropriate intervals to clean pastures to control parasite infestation and this should be combined with a regular parasite control programme.

20. Being browsing animals, goats should be denied access to poisonous shrubs, trees and plants within grazing areas.

### **Fencing**

21. Goats have a tendency to jump and clamber. Fencing should be strong enough and of sufficient height (at least 1.2m) to prevent them from escaping. It should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid the risk of injury.

22. Electric fences should be so designed, installed and maintained that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the goat. Electric mesh type fences are not suitable for horned goats and young kids.

### **Tethering**

23. Outdoor tethering should be avoided wherever possible, but if carried out, requires a high degree of supervision with inspections at frequent intervals. Tethered goats are particularly vulnerable to worrying by dogs and teasing by children. Goats should not be tethered where there are obstacles and a risk of the chain becoming entangled. Tethers should be designed and maintained so as not to cause distress or injury to the goats. Collars should be light but substantial and attached to a strong chain not less than 3 metres in length with at least two swivels. Particular care should be taken to provide food, water and shelter. Extra care needs to be taken during winter months and periods of inclement weather.

24. Kids should never be tethered.

25. Tethering of goats by the horns is unacceptable.

### **Foot care**

26. Close attention should be given to the condition of the feet and, where necessary, regular foot trimming by a trained operator should be carried out. Goats should be kept in accommodation which is dry underfoot.

### **Disbudding and dehorning\***

27. These operations must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon. If disbudding is to be carried out, this should be done at the earliest possible age; 2 -3 days is ideal but

not later than 10 days. Dehorning an adult goat is a stressful procedure and should be avoided.

### **Castration \***

28. Castration, if necessary, must be carried out by a trained operator in strict accordance with the law.

\*see notes at end

### **Shearing and combing (fibre production)**

29. When shearing, care should be taken not to nick or cut the skin. Where a wound does occur, immediate treatment should be given.

30. The goat is particularly susceptible to changes in temperature. Unless housed, goats should only be shorn in suitable weather conditions. Combing is preferable to shearing in adverse weather conditions.

31. Protection by housing or by the use of a coat should be provided if inclement weather occurs after shearing.

### **PREGNANCY AND KIDDING**

32. Heavily pregnant females should be handled with care to avoid distress and injury.

33. Pregnant and nursing females should receive sufficient food to maintain the health and bodily condition of the goat and ensure the development of healthy kids. This is particularly important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Water should always be available.

34. Stockkeepers should pay particular attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Every effort should be made to ensure that kidding pens are provided with adequate clean bedding and are regularly cleansed and disinfected. A kidding pen within sight and sound of other goats is desirable. Any dead kids should be removed without delay.

35. Stockkeepers should be sufficiently familiar with problems arising at kidding to know when to summon help. Veterinary advice should be sought when the need arises.

36. It is vital that every newly-born kid receives colostrum from its dam or from another source as soon as possible and in any case within 6 hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should be stored for emergencies but pooled colostrum, for example, from other premises, may constitute a disease risk.

### **ARTIFICIAL REARING**

37. Artificial rearing can give rise to problems and, to be successful, requires close attention to detail and high standards of supervision and stockmanship. Particular attention should be paid to cleanliness and hygiene.

38. Young kids should always have access to milk substitutes or be fed at least 2 or 3 times each day. Milk from other dams could constitute a disease risk. Fresh fibrous food should be available from 1 to 2 weeks of age.

39. Some form of safe supplementary heating, particularly in the early days of life, may be necessary.

40. A dry bedded lying area and adequate ventilation should be provided at all times.

## **MILKING**

41. The stockkeeper should be aware of the specific problems of a lactating goat and the ways in which these problems can be avoided or alleviated. Veterinary advice should be sought where necessary.
42. Special attentions should be paid to milking techniques so that injury to teats can be avoided. Good milking practices should include careful handling, an examination of foremilk and the avoidance of excessive stripping.
43. Before and after milking, hygiene measures should be adopted to reduce the spread of disease.
44. Goats can milk through to 24 months but this should be supported by adequate nutrition.
45. Lactating goats should be milked daily or sufficiently often according to yield.

### **Milking Parlours and Equipment**

46. Pens, ramps, milking parlours and milking equipment should be properly designed, constructed and maintained to prevent injury and distress.
47. It is essential to ensure that milking machines are functioning correctly by proper maintenance and adjustment of vacuum levels, pulsation rates and ratios, taking account of manufacturers' recommendations.

## **HEALTH**

48. The stockkeeper should know the normal behaviour of goats and recognise the signs which indicate good health. These include good appetite, alertness, good coat condition, absence of lameness, firm round droppings (similar to those of a sheep or rabbit) and no visible wounds, abscesses or injuries. Purchased stock should be healthy and free from infectious disease.
49. Goats should be inspected regularly, particularly for foot condition and parasitic infections of the skin (e.g. lice and mange), to which they are susceptible.
50. The health of the goat should be safeguarded by the appropriate use of preventive measures such as parasitic control and vaccination programmes based on veterinary advice.
51. When goats are ill they soon lose the will to live. The stockman should identify the cause of the goat's deterioration, should separate injured or ailing goats and take immediate remedial action. Prompt veterinary advice should be obtained if the goat appears to be seriously ill or in pain, the cause of the deterioration is not clear or if the stockman's action is not effective.
52. If a goat has to be destroyed on the farm, this must be done humanely by a person who is experienced in both the technique and the equipment used for slaughtering goats. Slaughter using a method incorporating stunning may only be carried out by a licence holder.

### **DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED KIDS**

53. Unwanted kids should be treated as humanely as those being kept for rearing and, if they are to be killed, arrangements should be made for this to be done as humanely and expeditiously as possible.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

### **STOCKMANSHIP**

54. Goats cover a variety of breed types each with its own unique characteristics. The recommendations in this Code are appropriate to goats under various husbandry systems, and their application will help to ensure that the welfare of the stock is safeguarded.

55. The goat has a natural tendency to browse and range for its food and these factors should be taken into account in deciding on a suitable environment. Many breeds of goat require more protection from inclement weather than cattle or sheep and, whatever husbandry system is adopted, some form of shelter should be provided.

56. Goats, being gregarious animals, prefer to live in social groups and appear to enjoy human contact. If kept singly, they require more frequent contact with, and supervision by, the stockman. They should always be treated as individuals, even when kept in large herds. When forming new groups care should be taken to avoid fighting and stress if adult animals are mixed. Goats prefer to be led but can be driven if care is taken.

57. The number and type of goats kept and the stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the environment and the skills of the stockman.

58. Although very large herds can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of the unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animal.

## **EMERGENCIES/FIRE PREVENTION**

59. Stockkeepers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.

60. Fire precautions should be a major priority. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the Fire Safety Officer.

61. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance. Adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

62. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls

outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.

63. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the Fire Brigade on how to reach the buildings where the goats are housed.

## **TRANSPORT**

64. Goats should be transported in a way that does not or is not likely to cause suffering.

65. Goats should only be transported if they are fit for the intended journey. An animal is not considered fit for its intended journey if it is ill, injured, infirm or fatigued and the intended journey is likely to cause it unnecessary suffering

66. An unfit Goat may be transported **only** if it is being taken for veterinary treatment/diagnosis and then only provided that it is transported in a way which is not going to cause it further suffering.

## **LEGISLATION**

67. The following legislation is of relevance:

- Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 2004
- Animal Health (Jersey) Law 2016
- Veterinary Surgeons (Jersey) Law 1999
- Community Provisions (Welfare of Animals during Transport) (Jersey) Regulations 2013

### **68.\* Note:**

1. It is not permitted to castrate an adult goat or kid, without an anaesthetic, other than:

- by the use of a rubber ring or other device to restrict the flow of blood to the scrotum, if the device is applied during the first week of life.
- by using Burdizzo pliers if the operation is performed before the animal reaches the age of 2 months

2. It is not permitted to dehorn or disbud a goat, without anaesthetic, except the trimming of the insensitive tip of an ingrowing horn which, if left untreated, could cause pain or distress.

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