

3.2 Management procedures at weaning and beyond

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Management procedures at weaning time

A range of procedures are routinely done at weaning time when the young is removed from the dam

This is a convenient time given animals must be yarded anyway, and also a learning experience for the young animal as it will be removed from its dam



Condition score and fat score

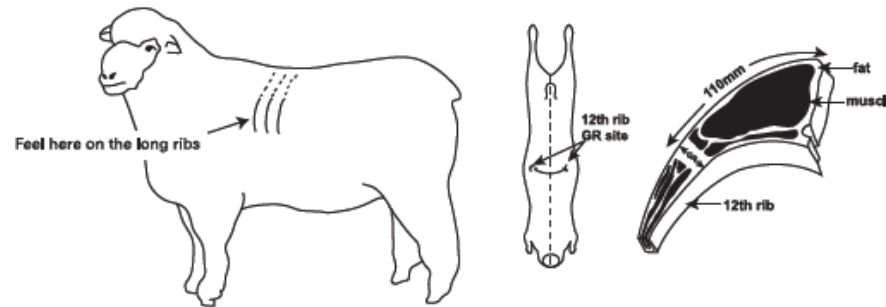
- Both of these assess relative amounts of fat and muscle on an animal
- Fat score is commonly used on lambs to assess readiness for sale while condition score is used to follow weight loss/gain on older livestock

Fat score

- In beef cattle the P8 site and 12th rib are used as landmarks to assess fat score that ranges from 1-6 (condition score in beef cattle in Australian system goes from 1-5)
- Lambs as per table

Fat Score	1	2	3	4	5
GR tissue depth in mm	0 to 5 mm Not eligible for MSA	6 to 10 mm	11 to 15 mm	16 to 20 mm	20 mm and over
Feel at the 12th long rib	Individual ribs felt easily. Cannot feel any tissue over the ribs	Individual ribs easily felt but some tissue present	Individual ribs can still be felt. Can feel more tissue over the rib	Can only just feel ribs. There is fluid movement of tissue	Ribs cannot be felt. Tissue movement very fluid

Locating the GR site on both the live animal and the carcass



On the slaughter floor, GR is usually measured with a 'cut and measure' knife or AUS-MEAT probe.

Condition score

Cheap and quick to perform on each animal

Requires animals in race to be able to feel

Actual condition score range varies from species to species (some are 1-5, some 1-8)

Low number = skinnier animal, high number = fatter

Ideally animals should be in middle range to be healthy (or higher end of middle)

Use both eyes and hands to assess

Drenching

In this context drenching means applying a product for parasite control

Drenching historically refers to administration of oral compounds (including anthelmintics), can now also refer to using anthelmintics via subcutaneous or transdermal (pour-on) routes

Frequently done at time of weaning, allowing weaned stock to go onto “clean” paddock (low parasite contamination) – ideally part of IPM

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External parasite management

Main classes are flies, lice and ticks

Flies can be problem for all species – particularly animals producing fibre = fly-strike, but can be annoying and spread disease in all

Tick and tick borne diseases historically mostly Northern Australia but also higher rainfall coastal areas

Treatment should incorporate understanding of lifecycle of parasite

Treatment includes dipping, pour-on, injection etc

Mites less common, generally controlled through endectocide use

Branding

Range of methods to temporarily or permanently brand a hide/skin

Freezebranding

- Freezes skin and leaves no pigment for a white brand (or longer to lose all hair), liquid nitrogen or dry ice

Firebranding

- Burns skin and leaves lifelong brand, more common where difficult to do freeze branding

Paintbranding

- Common short term identification such as at sale yards
- Oil based brand used for sheep (not actually paint)

Dry raddle

- For identifying sheep in a mob short term. Similar raddle used for rams when mating sometimes.

Ageing stock

- Checking stock to see if will be retained – check ear tag colour but also teeth

Species	2 teeth	4 teeth	6 teeth	8 teeth
Cattle	24 months	36 months	48 months	60 months
Sheep	12-18 months	24 months	36 months	48 months
Goats	12 months	24 months	36 months	48 months

- 8 teeth = full mouth, table shows adult incisor teeth
- Deer not routinely aged by teeth
- Alpaca have 3 sets of incisors, first erupt at 2 years, then 3 years and third at 3-6 years

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Male reproductive examination

Generally performed a few months prior to when due to be mated

Also frequently done on young males at weaning in stud enterprises to see if capable of being used for breeding

At minimum usually examines testicles, penis and prepuce, feet/legs (ability to walk), condition score & lastly teeth and eyes.

Role of male in extensive livestock is to be capable of successfully inseminating a certain number of females – needs all these areas to achieve this

Post weaning process

- Young animals often educated to novel feeds at weaning time (ideally already trained pre weaning)
- Managing in yards enhancing any future intensive feeding as already used to it
- Train to dogs/noises etc and novel feedstuff they may experience
- Feedlots prefer animals that have already experienced this environment

Management of feet

- Range of soil type and climate – impacts foot growth and wear
- May require intervention to manage feet (although better if can be managed by genetics/environment)
- Disease often requires increased foot management e.g. footrot
- Range of devices to trim feet, also options for foot bathing



Fibre maintenance

Maintenance of wool/fibre on small ruminants will be covered in week 9-12 however is important on 6-12 month basis (varies according to demand for certain fibre length and growth rate on different breeds)

Main wool removal = shearing

Shearing around breech area removed during crutching (commonly a few months prior to shearing) – reduces fly risk

Shearing sheds in Australia for this but in other countries may be done outside

Powered handpiece used for shearing (historically blade shearing)

Regular yearly livestock activities



Vaccination

Drenching

Feeding stock (we cover this next week), comes back to weighing stock and condition score and pasture assessment/management

Joining (mating)

Removing males