

### **GOATS AND ALPACAS – PREVENTATIVE HEALTH**

Like sheep and cattle, goats and alpacas also require annual health management plans tailored to their species-specific needs. To ensure your goats and alpacas have the best chance at optimum production and disease-free life, the following preventative health measures should be followed.

**Annual General Health:** For goats and alpacas this should include examination of the feet, coat, teeth, and the udder of females. The hoof should be examined for signs of redness, swelling or pain, and should be trimmed. Most goats and alpacas will require hoof trimming every 2-3 months. Additionally hoof care should be performed any time an animal is identified as lame. Coats should be shiny and smooth and free of external parasites. Shearing in goats should be performed in breeds with a long fleece, and alpacas should be shorn annually. Goat teeth should be checked to ensure they are not worn or damaged. Alpacas have continuously growing teeth that require trimming if they have grown beyond their upper dental pad. From 3 years old male alpacas grow fighting teeth that also require cutting. Reproducing female goats and alpacas should have their udders checked for hard lumps or and any other abnormalities. Any abnormal findings should be discussed with your veterinarian.

#### **GOATS**

**Vaccination:** After receiving an initial and booster vaccine, goats should be vaccinated annually against cheesy gland (which can be transferred from animals to humans) and clostridial (bacterial) diseases. While tetanus and pulpy kidney are of main concern, other clostridial disease can also affect goats.

**Parasite Control:** Goats are generally more susceptible to internal parasites than sheep and cattle, and resistance to many of the commonly used drenches is reported. Brown stomach worm, Black Scour worm, Barber's Pole and the Large-mouth bowel worm are most commonly seen in goats. Peak internal parasite challenges occur in winter and early spring, so these are good times to consider drenching. Faecal egg counts can be performed to determine if a drench is required and repeat testing performed two weeks after treatment will check drench efficacy. Remember the use of drenches is only one part of a strategic parasite control plan. Elevating feed, low stocking density, nutritional support at times of stress (e.g. pregnancy, weaning) and maintaining pastures greater than 10cm long are just some of the non-chemical strategies to help minimise infection. External parasites such as lice can also affect goats.

#### **ALPACAS**

**Vaccination:** Alpacas should be vaccinated twice a year against tetanus and pulpy kidney and other clostridial diseases using a 5-in-1 or 7-in-1 vaccine as recommended for cattle. Crias should be vaccinated at 6-8 weeks of age and again 4-6 weeks later.

**Parasite Control:** Alpacas can carry parasites of sheep, cattle and goats. The main internal parasites of concern are Black Scour worm, Brown Stomach worm, Cattle Bankrupt worm, Barber's Pole and Liver Fluke. Alpacas are unique in their toileting habits, using set "latrines". Regular latrine removal and paddock rotation combined with low stocking densities can help reduce the risk of infection. Faecal Egg Counts should be performed twice a year to determine if drenching is required. Lice can also infest alpacas. There are currently no drenches registered for use in alpacas but use of cattle or sheep drenches under the direction of a veterinarian is permitted.

If you have any questions or concerns about your goats or alpacas, please do not hesitate to give us a call at Cowra Veterinary Centre.

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