



Causes of Poor Sheep Well-Being

The following situations or conditions can compromise animal well-being, and cause suffering:

- Cruelty or abuse: causing physical harm, mental harm, pain or suffering to an animal
- Neglect: failing to care for an animal, and:
 - Endangering an animal's health by not providing adequate food or water
 - Restraining an animal in a way that causes pain or jeopardizes animal health
- Abandonment: deserting an animal or leaving an animal without making provisions for the animal's long term care
- Negative feelings such as pain, fear, frustration and distress
- Prolonged periods of thirst or hunger
- Prolonged periods of restraint and immobility
- Illness, injury or disease
- Crowding

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Signs of Poor Sheep Well-Being

- Sheep are prey animals that may not show obvious signs of pain, injury or disease, which may make it difficult to detect problems.
- However, sheep that are sick or in pain may display some of the following behaviors or signs:
 - Less active than usual
 - Fewer social interactions than usual
 - Isolating itself from the rest of the flock
 - Eating and drinking less than usual
 - Dull, dirty appearance
 - Difficulty walking
 - Signs of swelling or injuries
 - Discharge from the eyes, nose or other areas
 - Swollen, red or discolored udder in female sheep
 - Body weight and body condition should be appropriate for the stage of production that the sheep is in. For example, a pregnant ewe should look healthy and will be bigger than an ewe that is not pregnant.

Do You Have an Animal Well-Being Concern?

- Call your local police department.
- For livestock and poultry concerns, contact the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) <http://www.in.gov/boah/>.

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Sheep Well-Being



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Quick Sheep Facts

- Sheep have one stomach with four chambers (rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum)
- Sheep are used to produce meat, milk and wool
- In 1996, the first mammal to be cloned was a sheep named Dolly
- Sheep can distinguish between and remember up to 50 other sheep faces



Important Behaviors

- **Feeding and drinking:** necessary for health and proper biological functioning
 - Lambs need colostrum after birth
- **Grazing and ruminating:** sheep spend a large proportion of the day grazing and ruminating. Sheep need calm conditions to ruminate. Rumination is important for health.
- **Flocking behavior:** sheep have a very strong flocking motivation and display signs of distress when isolated from the flock



Caring for Sheep

- Provide shade and fresh water when temperature and humidity levels are high
- Sheep are social animals that become distressed when isolated from the group - house sheep together
- Ewes that are lambing in the winter or during extreme weather conditions may need access to shelter
 - Lambs born outdoors are at a high risk of dying when weather conditions are bad
- Provide high quality feed
 - Do not give sheep moldy feed
 - Provide roughage
 - Energy and nutritional requirements of animals are higher for 1) pregnant animals, 2) animals that are producing milk and 3) animals that are growing.
 - These animals may need supplemental feed.
 - Consult a nutritionist for proper feed practices
- Handle sheep in a calm way
- When sheep need to be moved, move sheep together as a group
- Check sheep often for diseases, parasites and injuries - contact your local veterinarian if you detect these problems
- Woolled sheep need to be shorn every year
- Protect sheep from predators
 - Have a plan in place to prevent predation, such as having guard animals, having fences to keep out predators, properly disposing of dead animals and penning sheep at night.

What is Animal Well-Being?

Animal well-being or animal welfare is the ability of an animal to cope with its environment and living conditions.

Animal well-being is more than simply being healthy; animal well-being includes:

1. An animal's feelings or emotions, such as contentment
2. An animal's ability to perform natural behavior, such as grooming, stretching and turning around fully
3. An animal's health and biological functioning, such as not having injuries or disease

Behaviors of Concern

- **Wool pulling:** pulling out and sometimes eating the wool of other sheep. Sheep housed in crowded conditions or restrictive environments can develop wool pulling.
 - Can be reduced by giving 1) more space, 2) outdoor access, and 3) roughage in the diet.
- **Lamb stealing:** when many pregnant ewes are kept together, some ewes may steal lambs from other ewes. Identify ewes that are prone to stealing lambs and segregate these ewes from the main group of lambing ewes.