



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock: Sheep



March 2010



ISBN 978 0 7504 5163 5

© Crown copyright March 2010

CMK-22-04-045(278)

E0160910

Note

This Code, comprising paragraphs 1 to 159, which has been prepared following consultation, is issued pursuant to sections 14 & 16 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which allows the National Assembly for Wales to produce codes of practice for the welfare of livestock and to issue such code. By virtue of the Government of Wales Act 2006 the powers under sections 14 & 15 are now exercisable by the Welsh Ministers.

These recommendations will be notified to the European Commission in accordance with Directive 98/34/EC (1998 O.J L204)

Contents

Preface	Page 3
Introduction	Page 6, paragraphs 1-6
Section 1 - Recommendations for sheep	
Stockmanship	Page 7, paragraphs 7-13
Feed and Water	Page 8, paragraphs 14-20
Health	
General	Page 10, paragraphs 21-25
Inspection	Page 11, paragraph 26
Condition Scoring	Page 11, paragraph 27
Lameness	Page 12, paragraphs 28-32
External Parasites	Page 12, paragraph 33-35
Internal Parasites	Page 13, paragraph 36
Casualties	Page 13, paragraphs 37-42
Dosing and vaccination equipment	Page 13, paragraphs 43-46
Notifiable diseases	Page 15, paragraph 47
Management	
General	Page 16, paragraphs 48 & 49
Identification	Page 16, paragraphs 50 & 51
Marking	Page 16, paragraphs 52-55
Handling	Page 17, paragraphs 56-59
Transport	Page 17, paragraph 60
Fencing and hedges	Page 18, paragraphs 61 & 62
Shearing	Page 18, paragraphs 63-68

Section 2 - Specific recommendations for sheep

Mutilations

Castration	Page 20, paragraphs 69-74
Tail Docking	Page 21, paragraphs 75-78
Electro-immobilisation, etc.	Page 21, paragraph 79
Dehorning or Disbudding	Page 22, paragraphs 80

Breeding Techniques

Laparoscopic Insemination	Page 23, paragraphs 81-83
Pregnancy and Lambing	Page 23, paragraphs 84 and 85
	Page 24, paragraphs 86-91
	Page 25, paragraphs 92-100

Management of Hill Ewes on Rough Grazings

Artificial Rearing	Page 26, paragraphs 101-107
	Page 26, paragraphs 108-117

Housing

General	Page 28, paragraphs 118-122
Ventilation	Page 29, paragraph 123
Buildings and Equipment	Page 29, paragraph 124-133
Lighting	Page 30, paragraphs 134-135
Space Allowances	Page 31, paragraph 136
Mechanical Equipment and Services	Page 32, paragraphs 137-139
Contingency plan	Page 32, paragraph 140
Fire and Other Emergency Precautions	Page 32, paragraphs 141-144
Hazards	Page 33, paragraphs 145-149

Milk Sheep

Management	Page 34, paragraphs 150-154
Milking Practices	Page 34, paragraphs 155-157
Milking Parlours and Equipment	Page 35, paragraphs 158-159

Preface

This preface is not part of the Code but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based. Similarly, the legislation quoted in boxes throughout the document is not part of the Code but is intended to highlight some of the legal requirements. The law, as quoted in these boxes, is that in force on the date of publication or reprinting of the Code (please turn to the back cover for this information). Readers should be aware that any of the legal requirements quoted might be subject to change - they should seek confirmation before assuming that these are an accurate statement of the law currently in force.

Regulation 6 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 3070 (W.264)) provides that:-

- (1) A person responsible for a farmed animal:-
 - (a) must not attend to the animal unless he or she is acquainted with any relevant code of practice and has access to the code while attending to the animal; and
 - (b) must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person employed or engaged by him or her does not attend to the animal unless that other person:-
 - (i) is acquainted with any relevant code of practice;
 - (ii) has access to the code while attending to the animal; and
 - (iii) has received instruction and guidance on the code.
- (2) In this section, a "relevant code of practice" ("cod ymarfer perthnasol") means a code of practice issued under section 14 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 or a statutory welfare code issued under section 3 of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 relating to the particular species of farmed animal to which a person is attending.

A person commits an offence if an act or failure of his to act causes an animal to suffer if he knew or ought reasonably to have known that the act or failure to act would have that effect or be likely to do so. The breach of a code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing unnecessary pain or distress under the Act (Section 14(4)).

Regulation 4(1) of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 3070. (W.264)) states that a person responsible for a farmed animal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the conditions which it is bred or kept comply with Schedule 1 of the regulations.

Regulation 4(2) of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 3070 (W.264)) states that:-

- in deciding whether the conditions under which animals are being bred or kept comply with the requirements set out in Schedule 1, a person responsible for a farmed animal must have regard to their species, degree of development, adaptation and domestication, and to their physiological and ethological needs in accordance with good practice and scientific knowledge.

Regulation 7 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that:-

- A person commits an offence if, without lawful authority or excuse, he or she:-
(a) contravenes, or does not comply with a duty in, regulation 4, 5 or 6.

The Code is intended to encourage all those who care for farm animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. Adherence to these recommendations will help stock-keepers to reach the required standard.

The welfare of sheep is considered within a framework, elaborated by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, and known as the 'Five Freedoms'. These form a logical basis for the assessment of welfare within any system together with the actions necessary to safeguard welfare within the constraints of an efficient livestock industry.

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 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.

In acknowledging these freedoms, those who have care of livestock should practise:-

- caring and responsible planning and management;
- skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockmanship;
- appropriate environmental design (e.g. of the husbandry system);
- considerate handling and transport;
- humane slaughter.

Following the recommendations contained within this Code will help establish the cross compliance obligations under the Single Payment Scheme.

This Code has been issued by the Welsh Ministers and applies in relation to Wales only. It replaces (also as regards Wales only) that part of the existing Code, which was issued in 2005.

THIS WELFARE CODE WAS ISSUED ON 26 March 2010.

Introduction

1. In this Code (which applies in relation to Wales only) the word “sheep” refers to all ovine stock, and an animal under 6-12 months of age is considered to be a lamb. Shepherd refers to the person responsible for attending to the sheep.
2. The recommendations are relevant to sheep under all husbandry systems. Following them will help to ensure that the welfare of stock is safeguarded.
3. The number and type of sheep kept and the stocking rate and/or housing density should depend on the suitability of the environment, the capacity of the farm, the competence of the shepherd and the time available to carry out his or her duties. Good stockmanship is of paramount importance in all systems of sheep production.
4. Organic sheep farming is conducted according to additional legally enforced standards. However, nothing in those standards affects the legal responsibilities of organic farmers regarding positive animal welfare. Any matters, which appear to conflict with organic standards should be discussed with your organic certifying body.
5. The relevant animal welfare legislation applies to owners as well as any person looking after sheep on their behalf, wherever the sheep are located. A written contract is of value in ensuring that all parties are clear about their responsibilities in respect of welfare. However, the obligations imposed by law will still apply.
6. If any change in breed or type is contemplated, particularly if farming in difficult, extensive conditions, replacement should only be with a breed or cross of sheep that is suitable for the location. For example, on hill farms sheep should be sufficiently hardy and not prone to suffer as a result of extremes of climate.

Section 1 - Recommendations for sheep Stockmanship

7. The most significant single influence on the welfare of any flock is the shepherd who should develop and carry out an effective routine for continuing care.
8. All shepherds should be aware of the welfare needs of their sheep and be capable of safeguarding them under all foreseeable conditions before being given responsibility for a flock. This requires the acquisition of specific stockmanship skills, which may be developed on-farm, working with an experienced person, or by following a course offered by a suitable training organisation. Wherever possible, the training should be of a type, which leads to formal recognition of competence.
9. Shepherds should know the signs of good health in sheep. These include general alertness, free movement, active feeding and rumination and absence of lameness, visible wounds, abscesses or injuries.
10. Shepherds should also know the signs, which indicate ill health in sheep. These include listlessness, abnormal posture and behaviour, lameness, scouring, absence of cudding, persistent coughing or panting, scratching and frequent rubbing, rapid loss of body condition, excessive wool loss, sudden fall in milk yield and, in some circumstances, being apart from the flock.
11. The capabilities of the shepherd or shepherds in charge of the sheep are a significant factor in determining the size of a flock. The flock size should not be increased, nor should a unit be set up, unless the shepherds have the skills necessary to safeguard the welfare of every animal in their charge.
12. It is important for a farmer to ensure that enough time is available within the shepherd's normal work routine for the flock to be properly inspected and for any necessary remedial action to be taken.
13. It may be necessary to engage extra help such as experienced, competent contractors to provide extra assistance during busy periods such as lambing, shearing, routine dipping and other disease prevention treatments; or when regular staff are unavailable due to holiday or sickness.

Feed and Water

Schedule 1, (paragraphs 22-27) of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)), state that:-

Animals must be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health, to satisfy their nutritional needs and to promote a positive state of well being.

- Animals must be provided with food or liquid in a manner that does not cause them unnecessary suffering or injury.
- All animals must have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their physiological needs (and, in any case, at least once a day), except where a veterinary surgeon acting in the exercise of his or her profession otherwise directs.
- All animals shall either have access to a suitable water supply and be provided with an adequate supply of fresh drinking water each day or be able to satisfy their fluid intake needs by other means.
- Feeding and watering equipment shall be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that contamination of food and water and the harmful effects of competition between animals are minimised.
- No other substance, with the exception of those given for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes or for the purpose of zootechnical treatment shall be administered to animals unless it has been demonstrated by scientific studies of animal welfare or established experience that the effect of that substance is not detrimental to the health or welfare of the animals.

14. The law requires that sheep should have access to suitable feed in sufficient quantity and sufficient fresh, clean water each day. Ideally, water should be available at all times and most particularly during lactation. It is not acceptable to rely on the water content of feedstuffs, including roots.

15. The law requires that the diet of sheep should always be adequate to maintain full health and vigour. Sudden changes in the type and quantity of feed should be avoided.

16. Sheep should be provided with fresh feed, and any, which is stale or contaminated, should be removed from troughs before more is added. Feed should be palatable and of good quality. It is especially important to dispose of silage, which has deteriorated in storage, or in the feed trough.

17. Systems involving the use of high intakes of cereal-based diets require a gradual introductory feeding period, during which sufficient roughage or a suitable high fibre concentrate should also be fed. Care should be taken to prevent individual sheep from

gorging by ensuring that there is plenty of trough space available to the flock. In such systems, mineral mixtures should be specifically designed to avoid urinary problems in male animals.

18. Certain substances, in particular copper, can be harmful to sheep.

Compound feeds or mineral preparations, which have been prepared for other species, should be avoided unless the composition can be assessed as suitable for sheep.

Shepherds should be aware of breed variations in susceptibility to copper poisoning.

19. Sheep farmers and shepherds should consider the state of the flock's dentition when culling. Sheep with poor teeth should preferably be culled. If the sheep are to be retained they should be provided with food which they can eat without difficulty and their body condition carefully monitored.

20. Arrangements should be made in advance to ensure that adequate supplies of suitable feed and water could be made available to sheep in emergencies, such as severe winter storms or summer drought.

Health

General

Schedule 1, paragraph 2 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) requires that:-

- animals kept in husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention shall be thoroughly inspected at least once a day to check that they are in a state of well-being; and
- animals kept in systems other than husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention shall be inspected at intervals sufficient to avoid any suffering.

Schedule 1, paragraph 5 states that any animals which appear to be ill or injured:-

- (a) shall be cared for appropriately without delay; and
- (b) where they do not respond to such care, veterinary advice shall be obtained as soon as possible.

Schedule 1, paragraph 7 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that a record shall be maintained of:-

- (a) any medicinal treatment given to animals; and
- (b) the number of mortalities found on each inspection of animals carried out in accordance with the provisions in Schedule 1, paragraph 2.

The record referred to in Schedule 1, paragraph 7 shall be retained for a period of at least 3 years from the date on which the medical treatment was given, or the date of the inspection, as the case may be, and shall be made available to an authorised person when carrying out an inspection or when otherwise requested by such person.

21. Shepherds should be experienced or trained and be competent across the range of health and welfare skills which should include vaccination, drenching, prevention of and treatment of lame sheep including those diagnosed with CODD (Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis), prevention and treatment of internal and external parasites including scab, lice and fly strike, tail docking, and castration. It is particularly important that shepherds have competence in the skills required at lambing time.

22. A written Animal Health Plan should be prepared for each flock. This should cover the yearly production cycle and should be developed with appropriate veterinary and technical advice, reviewed and updated annually. The programme should include sufficient records to assess the basic output of the flock and should address, as a minimum, vaccination policy and timing, control of external and internal parasites, and foot care. Pasture management should form an integral part of disease control and especially so in the case of internal parasites and foot-rot/scald/CODD where total reliance on drugs is better avoided.

23. Particular attention should be paid to disease prevention in flocks. All sheep, including rams, which are to be introduced into an established flock, could potentially introduce diseases, which can easily spread. It is recommended that such sheep should be segregated for at least 4 weeks and inspected and treated, if necessary, for diseases such as sheep scab, footrot/CODD and internal parasites. It is recommended that newly introduced ewes should be segregated about 4 weeks before lambing and lambed separately, preferably after the main flock, to avoid the introduction of infectious abortion agents at this time.

24. Before introduction of rams to a flock at tupping time, ewes should be checked for fitness (especially for lameness, teeth, udders and body condition) and any ewe, which is sub-standard, should be culled together with any known to have suffered reproductive problems in previous seasons. This is particularly important for animals expected to live under harsh conditions. Rams should also be checked for their suitability for breeding.

25. Records must be maintained (see box before paragraph 21) of any medicinal treatment given and the number of mortalities of all sheep and lambs found at each inspection. Where equivalent information is required to be kept for other purposes, such as for medicine records or sheep identification legislation, these shall suffice.

Inspection

26. The health and welfare of animals depend upon regular supervision. Shepherds should carry out inspections of the flock at intervals appropriate to the circumstances in which sheep are kept and pay particular attention to signs of injury, distress, illness or infestation (e.g. sheep scab, fly strike, lameness and mastitis) so that these conditions can be recognised and dealt with promptly. Frequency of inspection will depend on factors, which affect sheep welfare at any particular time, such as housing, lambing, fly strike and adverse winter weather conditions.

Condition scoring

27. Sheep farmers and shepherds should be aware that the use of condition scoring could contribute significantly to good husbandry. Condition scoring is an easy technique to learn and allows the body reserves of individual sheep to be assessed quickly. The information gained enables high standards of husbandry to be achieved and can prevent a welfare problem from developing. This technique enables the identification of animals requiring special care. For example, a condition score of less than 2 for lowland sheep and 1.5 for those on the hill, in a significant number of the flock can indicate inadequate management and the need for positive steps to rectify the situation.

Lameness

28. Lameness in any animal is usually an indication of pain. Lameness in sheep is one of the most common signs of ill health and discomfort. It has clear adverse welfare implications and also affects the performance and production of both ewes and rams. A significant percentage of sheep with chronic lameness may be indicative of poor overall welfare standards within the flock.

29. Good stockmanship, including frequent and thorough inspection along with correct diagnosis and implementation of a suitable programme of prevention and treatment, will help to reduce the incidence of lameness.

30. Lameness can originate in the feet or joints, although in adult sheep the foot is the most common site. A flock programme of footcare should be part of the written Animal Health Plan referred to at paragraph 22. An effective footcare programme will include regular inspection of the sheep's feet. It may also necessitate regular and careful paring, treatment of infected feet and footbathing with a suitable solution, which is maintained at the manufacturer's recommended dilution and, where appropriate, vaccination. If footrot is a major cause of lameness or if normal treatments are unsuccessful, veterinary advice should be sought.

31. Footparing is a skilled procedure and can damage feet if carried out incorrectly or excessively. If in doubt, specialist advice should be sought.

32. If a chronically lame sheep does not respond to remedial treatment it should be culled and not left to suffer. As such animals cannot be transported in a way, which avoids further suffering, they should be slaughtered on the farm (see paragraph 39). In addition, sheep that cannot get up without assistance or sheep that can bear weight on four legs when standing must not be transported. Sheep that can bear weight on all four feet but are slightly lame should not be consigned to market, slaughter or on any journey, which is likely to aggravate the injury. Alternatively the animals should be kept on farm to regain health or the keeper should seek veterinary advice.

External parasites

33. Where external parasites such as those causing scab or lice, ticks or fly strike, are likely to occur, sheep should be protected by dipping or by the use of an effective preventative chemical agent (these should be used in accordance with the instructions on the label).

34. There are (at the time of publication) only two alternative treatments for the control of scab; either plunge dipping in an insecticide or injection with an endectocide. Showering, jetting or spray race applications are not effective in the control or treatment of sheep scab.

35. Where sheep are clinically infected with external parasites the correct diagnosis must be made and an effective treatment given without delay.

Internal parasites

36. Internal parasites should be controlled by grazing management and/or anthelmintic treatment administered at appropriate times based upon the life cycle of the parasite. Advice on appropriate timing and steps to avoid the development of anthelmintic resistant worms should be sought from a veterinary surgeon or specialist adviser.

Casualties

It is a general offence under the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995 No. 731) as amended by the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2461 No. 208), to cause or permit any avoidable excitement, pain or suffering to any animal during slaughter or killing (regulation 4(1)). The general offence applies in all cases, but the detailed provisions in respect of the method of slaughter or killing do not apply when an animal has to be killed immediately for emergency reasons (regulation 13(2)).

When an animal is slaughtered or killed on-farm this must be done using a permitted method. The animal could be:-

- (a) stunned using a captive bolt pistol, concussion stunner or electrical stunner after which it must be followed by bleeding - or pithed - without delay (regulation 14 and Schedules 5 (Part II) and 6). If the animal is stunned and bled the operation must be carried out by a slaughterman licensed for these operations (Schedule 1), unless the owner is slaughtering an animal for his own consumption; or
- (b) killed by a free bullet (regulation 15 and Schedule 5 Part III). The animal should be killed with a single shot to the head.

Article 4 of the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 2007 (S.I. 1047 No. 105) provides that:-

- It is an offence to transport any animal in a way, which causes or is likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering to that animal.

37. Injured, ailing or distressed sheep should be identified and treated without delay. Where the shepherd is able to identify the cause of ill health, he or she should take immediate remedial action. When in doubt, veterinary advice should be obtained as soon as possible.

38. Provision should be made and used when necessary, for the segregation and care of sick or injured animals. Unfit sheep (which includes infirm, diseased, ill and injured animals) should be removed from flocks.

39. If an unfit sheep does not respond to treatment, it should be culled or humanely killed on-farm. **To cause or allow unnecessary suffering by leaving a sheep to suffer is an offence.**

40. In an emergency, it may be necessary to kill an animal immediately to prevent suffering. In such cases, the animal should be destroyed in a humane manner and, where possible, by a person experienced and/or trained both in the techniques and the equipment used for killing sheep.

41. If animals are killed or slaughtered on-farm, other than in an emergency, the operation may only be carried out using a permitted method and in accordance with current welfare at slaughter legislation. Dead animals cannot be buried or burned on farm and must be disposed of in accordance with the Animal By Products (Wales) Regulations 2006 (box after 81).

42. An unfit sheep may **only** be transported if it is being taken for veterinary surgeon for treatment or diagnosis and even then only if the transportation does not cause any unnecessary, additional suffering. Further information about the fitness for transport is available from Rural Affairs Department or on the Welsh Assembly Government Website.

Dosing and vaccination equipment

43. You must make sure that all the equipment you use for dosing, vaccinating and treating animals is in good working order. Ideally, use equipment from your own farm. If you must borrow it, make sure it is cleaned and disinfected before use on your farm. You should clean and sterilise any equipment you use for injections to avoid infections and abscesses. Ideally a different needle should be used for each animal but multi needle systems are available taking into account manufacturers' instructions (may use disposable needles). The size of a dosing-gun nozzle should be suitable for the animal's size. Products should be administered according to manufacturer's instructions and operators should be trained to give treatments - such as injections or boluses by mouth - as animals could be injured by poor technique.

44. You should regularly review the medicines held on the farm with your veterinary surgeon. As medicines have a limited shelf life you should only hold enough veterinary medicine that can be effectively used within that time. Remember to store veterinary

medicines in a safe accessible place that is away from animals and sunlight and out of the reach of children. Certain medicines are restricted and can only be used under the prescription and direction of a veterinary surgeon.

45. Remember to dispose of used and expired medicine containers safely; needles should be put into secure (sharps) containers. Waste from veterinary medicines used on farms is (will be) included in the Agricultural Waste Regulations. Most veterinary practices operate a take-back system for veterinary medicines, needles, used containers and syringes.

46. Where necessary, the shepherd should receive training in the use and maintenance of equipment used for dosing, vaccination and treatment.

Notifiable diseases

47. If you suspect that any animal is suffering from a notifiable disease, you have a legal duty to notify the Animal Health Divisional Office as soon as possible.

Management

General

Schedule 1, paragraph 17 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that:-

- animals not kept in buildings must, where necessary and possible, be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health and must, at all times, have access to a well-drained lying area.

48. All fields and buildings should be kept clear of debris such as wire or plastic which could be harmful to sheep.

49. When sheep are outdoors in winter, and particularly when fed on root crops, they should be either allowed to run back to pasture or to a straw bedded area which gives a more comfortable lying area, as well as limiting the build up of mud or dung on the fleece. Where there is no natural shelter for the sheep, artificial shelter, such as the placement of straw bales, should be provided.

Identification

50. New rules for officially identifying sheep were introduced on 31 December 2009, these rules implement Council Regulation (EU) 21/2004 introducing electronic identification and individual recording for lambs born on or after that date. Detailed guidance has been distributed directly to all registered sheep keepers.

51. Lambs born on or after 31 December 2009 must be identified with one of the following options:-

- **Full EID** - one visual identifier and one electronic identifier.
 - Lambs that are retained as flock replacements or sold for breeding.
- **Slaughter Derogation** - single (conventional or electronic) batch slaughter tag.
 - Lambs intended for slaughter in the UK before reaching 12 months of age can be identified with one of these slaughter tags, both types of slaughter tag only have UK and a flock number printed on the outside.

Keepers are advised to discuss the slaughter tag options with those they supply.

Marking

52. Permanent marking of sheep, by, for example, ear tattooing or tagging should be carried out only by a skilled stockman using properly maintained instruments. Ear tags or the Electronic Identification Device (EID) bolus used should be suitable for use in sheep.

53. Wherever possible marking should not be undertaken during the fly season. If marking does have to be carried out during the fly season, farmers should take measures, which will prevent or reduce the threat of fly strike.

54. Where, for flock management purposes, ear marking is by notching or punching, this should be done using proprietary equipment. If horned breeds of sheep are to be marked for flock management purposes, horn branding is to be preferred.

55. Aerosols or paints used for temporary marking should be non-toxic.

Handling

56. All sheep farmers should have easily operated and efficient handling pens, to facilitate routine management and treatment, on a size and scale to suit the flock numbers. Pens and floors should be maintained in good repair and should not have any sharp edges or projections, which might injure sheep.

57. When sheep are to be transported, well-designed collecting, loading and unloading facilities should be available on the farm or on site.

58. Sheep should **not** be caught by the fleece alone. They should be handled or restrained by means of a hand or an arm under the neck (holding the neck wool, if necessary) with the other arm placed on or around the rear. **Lifting or dragging** sheep by the fleece, tail, ears, horns or legs is unacceptable. Care should be taken with horns, which may be broken off if sheep are roughly handled.

59. Devices such as raddles, harnesses, tethers and yokes should be of suitable material and should be properly fitted and adjusted to avoid causing injury or discomfort. They should be checked regularly and should not be used for longer than necessary. Tethering by the horns is unacceptable.

Transport

60. High standards of welfare for animals transported requires:-

- Well-maintained vehicles, designed with the welfare of animals in mind, and
- sympathetic handling by properly trained and competent personnel.

You must make sure that:-

- animals have water, feed and 24 hours' rest before starting a journey;
- animals are fit for the journey;
- transport (including trailers) does not cause injury or unnecessary suffering;
- competent and trained people load, unload and transport animals;
- vehicles meet the construction rules and are appropriate for sheep and journey;
- you fill in and carry the correct documents;
- you meet the cleansing and disinfection rules.

Do	Do NOT
Plan the journey beforehand, avoiding unnecessary delays.	Use too much force to make the animals move.
Load, transport and unload animals calmly and without rushing.	Overstock the vehicle.
Use partitions where necessary to divide the vehicle or separate groups of animals, to prevent animals falling or being injured.	Brake, accelerate or corner sharply if it can be avoided.
Give the animals enough floor space and headroom.	Leave the animals unattended in the vehicle for long periods of time.
Use a vehicle that protects the animals from the weather and has effective fresh air circulation.	Unload animals unless a responsible person has taken charge of them.
Drive carefully with consideration for the animals.	
If necessary, stop and check the animals during the journey.	

Fencing and hedges

61. Fences and hedges should be well maintained so as to avoid injury to sheep and prevent entanglement. Where any type of mesh fencing is used, particularly for horned sheep, and around lambing fields, it should be checked frequently so that any animals, which are caught, can be released.

62. Electric fences should be designed, installed, used and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the sheep. Electric mesh fencing should not be used for horned sheep.

Shearing

63. Every mature sheep should have its fleece removed at least once a year.

64. Shearers should be experienced, competent and have received adequate training in shearing techniques. Inexperienced shearers should be supervised by suitably competent staff. When shearing, care should be taken not to cut the skin of the sheep. Where a wound does occur, immediate appropriate treatment should be given.

65. Shearers and all contractors should clean and disinfect their equipment between flocks to minimise the risk of spreading disease.

66. Full use should be made of weather forecasts and shelter to avoid excessive cold stress to newly shorn sheep at whatever time of year shearing is carried out.

67. Winter shearing is not a suitable practice unless the sheep are housed.

68. Sheep, which were shorn and housed in winter, should only be turned out to grass in spring when the fleece has regrown to 15-20 mm in length and when weather conditions are favourable. Where adequate natural shelter is not available, other means should be adopted, such as the provision of straw bales.

Section 2 - Specific recommendations for sheep

Mutilations

Castration

Under the Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/1029) (W.96) when the method used is the application of a rubber ring or other device to constrict the flow of blood to the scrotum, the procedure may only be carried out on an animal aged not more than 7 days. When any other method is used, anaesthetic must be administered where the animal is aged 3 months or over.

Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, as amended, only a veterinary surgeon may castrate a lamb which has reached the age of three months.

69. Castration may only be carried out in strict accordance with the law (see box below). The procedure should be performed by a competent, trained operator. Once a lamb is over three months of age, castration may only be performed by a veterinary surgeon using a suitable anaesthetic. Shepherds should only carry out surgical castration after having first considered and ruled out alternative methods, in discussion with their veterinary surgeon.

70. Provided lambs of different sex can be managed separately after weaning castration may not be needed. Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether castration is necessary where lambs will be finished and sent to slaughter before reaching sexual maturity.

71. When lambs are to be castrated the decision should be agreed with the farm's veterinary surgeon as part of the farm's health plan. The procedure should only be carried out when lambs are likely to be retained after puberty, when feed and forage supplies are not adequate to finish entire males and where it is necessary to avoid welfare problems associated with the management of entire males.

72. Castration should not be performed on lambs until the ewe/lamb bond has become established and not, in most situations, before the lambs are 24 hours old.

73. Pain relief reduces the impact of castration on welfare and should be used whenever possible. Any decision about pain management and its relief should be made in discussion with a veterinary surgeon.

74. Account should be taken not only of the pain and distress caused by castration but also the stress imposed by gathering and handling, and the potential risk of infection. For very young lambs gathered in large groups there is real risk of mismothering which may lead ultimately to starvation and death.

Section 5 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 makes it an offence for any person to carry out a procedure on an animal which involves interference with the sensitive tissues or bone structure of the animal, otherwise than for the purpose of its medical treatment. Penis amputation and other penile operations, tooth grinding and freeze dagging are all prohibited under section 5.

Tail Docking

Tail docking of sheep is permitted by the Permitted Procedures (Mutilations) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/1029) (W.96) only if sufficient tail is retained to cover the vulva in the case of female sheep and the anus in the case of male sheep. In addition when the method used is the application of a rubber ring or other device to constrict the flow of blood to the tail, the procedure may only be carried out on an animal aged not more than 7 days. When any other method is used an anaesthetic must be administered.

75. Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether tail docking within a particular flock is necessary. Tail docking may be carried out only if failure to do so would lead to subsequent welfare problems because of dirty tails and potential fly strike. If it is considered that both tail docking and castration are necessary, thought should be given to performing both operations at the one time of handling, so as to minimise disruption and the potential for mismothering and distress.

76. If the lambs tails are to be docked, this decision should be agreed with the farm's veterinary surgeon as part of the farm's health plan.

77. Tail docking must be carried out only in strict accordance with the law. The procedure should be performed by a competent, trained operator.

78. Tail docking of lambs above 3 months should be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon using pain relief/anaesthetic.

Electro-immobilisation, vasectomy and electro-ejaculation

Schedule 1, paragraph 30 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264), states that:-

- An electrical current must not be applied to an animal for the purpose of immobilisation.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, as amended by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 1988 (S.I. 1988 No. 526)) prohibits the performance of a vasectomy or the carrying out of electro-ejaculation by anyone other than a veterinary surgeon.

79. The electro immobilisation of sheep is prohibited by law. Vasectomy or electro-ejaculation may be carried out only by a veterinary surgeon.

Dehorning or disbudding

Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, as amended, only a veterinary surgeon may dehorn or disbud a sheep, apart from trimming the insensitive tip of an ingrowing horn which, if left untreated, could cause pain or distress.

80. The trimming of in-growing horn is permitted in certain circumstances. Horned sheep, especially rams, should be regularly inspected to ensure that neither the tip nor other part of the horn is in contact with the face.

Breeding Techniques

Schedule 1, paragraph 28 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that:-

- (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures, which cause, or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned must not be practised.
- (2) Sub-paragraph (1) shall not preclude the use of natural or artificial breeding procedures that are likely to cause minimal or momentary suffering or injury or that might necessitate interventions, which would not cause lasting injury.

Schedule 1, paragraph 29 states that no animals shall be kept for farming purposes unless it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of their genotype or phenotype, that they can be kept without detrimental effect on their health or welfare.

81. The body condition of the ewe and nutritional management prior to tupping have a marked effect on the ovulation rate and eventual litter size. The ram should also be in appropriate body condition. Farmers and shepherds should be aware of the influence of pre-mating management upon the subsequent needs of the ewe in pregnancy and plan accordingly.

82. It is possible to manipulate the time and pattern of lambing, if you want to take advantage of this, expert advice should be sought. If the lambing date is changed and/or litter size is increased, account should be taken of the special requirements for feed, labour and other inputs both before and at lambing time, when the welfare of ewes is under particular pressure. In particular, housing or shelter should be available if lambing is to take place in adverse weather conditions.

83. Any person using artificial insemination should be trained and competent in the technique.

Laparoscopic Insemination

84. Laparoscopic artificial insemination is a surgical technique, which must be carried out only by a veterinary surgeon.

85. Treatment of ewes using hormones to produce multiple embryos and subsequent embryo transfer must be carried out only by a veterinary surgeon. Embryo transfer, however, is an act of veterinary surgery and must only be carried out by a veterinary surgeon and an anaesthetic must be administered.

Pregnancy and Lambing

The Animal By-Products (Wales) Regulation 2006 (SI2006/1293) (W.127), require that fallen stock are disposed of by:-

- (a) despatch to a knacker's yard, hunt kennel or similar premises;
- (b) incineration;
- (c) rendering in approved premises.

This provision applies to the disposal of stillborn or unborn lambs, as well as to older sheep.

86. The nutritional management of pregnant ewes is particularly important. Both condition scoring and scanning can be of benefit.

87. Pregnant and nursing ewes should receive adequate food to ensure the development of healthy lambs and to maintain the health and bodily condition of the ewe.

88. Scanning can be a valuable aid to management. However, scanning is an addition to good husbandry not a replacement. The scanning procedure allows barren, single, twin and triplet bearing ewes to be managed as separate groups. A combination of scanning and condition scoring allows ewes carrying more than one lamb and thin ewes to be separated for special feeding and supervision. Equipment should be properly cleansed and disinfected between flocks.

89. Heavily pregnant ewes should be handled with care to avoid distress and injury, which may precipitate premature lambing. However, if a heavily pregnant ewe requires treatment e.g. for lameness, she should receive appropriate treatment as soon as possible and not be left untreated until after lambing.

90. A large proportion of ewe mortalities occurs during the period around lambing so particular skill and expertise is required at this time. Severe damage can be caused through inexperience when assisting a ewe in difficulties. Shepherds should therefore be experienced and competent before having responsibility for a flock at lambing time. Where necessary, they should receive training.

91. Shepherds should pay particular attention to cleanliness and hygiene of equipment and pens during pregnancy and lambing. Personal cleanliness is essential when assisting ewes to lamb. Attention to cleanliness and hygiene is also important in the lambing area and pens used in treating or assisting lambing ewes. Lambing pens, sufficient in number and size, should be easily accessible and on a dry, well-drained site. Each pen should be provided with a hayrack, feed trough and water bucket. If the pens are outdoors their tops should be covered.

92. Every effort should be made to prevent the build-up and spread of infection by ensuring that lambing pens are provided with adequate, clean bedding and are regularly cleansed. It is particularly important to ensure that dead lambs and afterbirth are removed and disposed of in a suitable manner without delay.
93. There may be times when even a proficient shepherd experiences difficulty in delivering a lamb single-handed. In such cases, assistance should be sought immediately.
94. Any ewe with a prolapse should be treated immediately using an appropriate technique and where necessary veterinary advice should be sought.
95. Shepherds should be able to recognise lambs in need of resuscitation and be familiar with resuscitation techniques and survival aids such as feeding by stomach tube and use of a warmer box. A DEFRA booklet on improving lamb survival gives further information (see Appendix).
96. It is vital that every newly born lamb receives colostrum from its dam, or from another source, as soon as possible and in any case within three hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should always be available for use in emergencies, when a ewe lambs with poor milk supplies.
97. A source of heat (for example a warmer box) should be available to revive weakly lambs but care should be taken to avoid overheating.
98. Where lambing takes place out-of-doors some form of shelter or windbreak should be available.
99. The problem of mis-mothering should be minimised by ensuring that group sizes are not too big. Mismothering is more likely to occur when lambing indoors, when ewes with young lambs at foot are fed supplementary feed and grass and during gathering, handling, transport or dipping of ewes and lambs. Identifying lambs and mothers is also beneficial, using either numbered plastic lamb coats or non-toxic colour markers.
100. Wherever possible, young lambs, other than with their mothers, should not be sold at market. Arrangements for the direct transfer of orphan lambs from farm-to-farm, rather than through a market, should be encouraged in order to minimise disease risk. The law forbids the transport and the sale at market of lambs with an unhealed navel.

Management of Hill Ewes on Rough Grazings

101. The nutritional requirements of hill ewes outwintered on rough grazings should be assessed and compared with the nutrients provided by the available forage. If either the quantity or the quality of natural forage cannot support the number of sheep stocked, overgrazing will occur. This could constitute a breach of cross-compliance rules. If grazing cannot support animal requirements without compromising their welfare, supplementary feed should be supplied without causing environmental damage.

102. The feeding of additional forage should be planned carefully because it can disrupt the natural grazing behaviour of the sheep. Hay is preferable to silage as any rejected feed will cause less environmental damage and there will be less rutting with transport onto the grazing.

103. When feeding a concentrated feed, all ewes should have adequate access and be able to eat at the same time. Feed blocks and liquid feed points should be spread over the grazing with three feed points per 100 ewes.

104. Condition scoring and pregnancy scanning would allow twin bearing ewes and those in poor condition to be moved to a separate management group. They should have access to better quality grazing plus supplementary feed, as appropriate to meet their higher nutritional needs. The nutritional requirement of the ewe increases further after lambing. It is unlikely that rough grazings will provide sufficient feed to meet the demands of ewes in early lactation unless supplemented by additional concentrate feeds.

105. If supplementary feeding is required for prolonged periods because there is insufficient forage available or because of adverse weather, then the overall stocking rate and suitability of the hill pasture for wintering sheep should be reassessed.

106. If you receive payments from an agri-environment scheme you should be aware of any restrictions your agreement imposes on winter feeding sites.

107. It should be noted that grazing rights on common land are for grazing only and do not confer any right to supplementary feed, except in circumstances of extreme winter weather for the temporary welfare of livestock.

Artificial Rearing

108. Artificial rearing of lambs requires close attention and high standards of supervision and stockmanship if it is to be successful. It is essential that all lambs should start with an adequate supply of colostrum.

109. All lambs should receive an adequate amount of suitable liquid feed, such as ewe milk replacer, at regular intervals each day. Weaning should not occur until lambs are eating adequate quantities of an appropriate lamb diet, manufacturers instructions would provide details of recommended quantity.

110. From the second week of life, lambs should also have access to palatable and nutritious solid food (which may include grass) and always have access to fresh, clean water.

111. Where automatic feeding equipment is provided, lambs should be trained in its use to ensure that they regularly consume an adequate amount of food and the equipment should be checked daily to see that it is working properly.

112. Troughs should be kept clean and any stale feed removed. Automatic feeding systems must be well maintained and checked daily. Equipment and utensils used for liquid feeding should be thoroughly cleansed and sterilised at frequent intervals.

113. A dry bed and adequate draught-free ventilation should be provided.

114. Where necessary, arrangements should be made to supply safe supplementary heating for very young lambs.

115. Suitable accommodation should be available for sick or injured lambs. This should be separate from other livestock.

116. Until weaning, housed lambs should be kept in small groups to facilitate inspection and limit the spread of disease.

117. Where young lambs are being reared at pasture without their mothers, care should be taken to ensure that they have adequate shelter.

Housing

General

Schedule 1, paragraph 4 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)), states that, where any animals (other than poultry), are kept in a building:-

- they shall be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which either has well-maintained dry bedding or is well-drained; and

Schedule 1, paragraph 6 states:-

- where necessary, sick or injured animals shall be isolated in suitable accommodation with, where appropriate, dry comfortable bedding.

Schedule 1, paragraph 9 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that:-

- the freedom of movement of animals, having regard to their species and in accordance with good practice and scientific knowledge, must not be restricted in such a way as to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury.

Schedule 1, paragraph 10 states that where animals are continuously or regularly tethered or confined, they must be given the space appropriate to their physiological and ethological needs in accordance with good practice and scientific knowledge.

118. Winter housing of sheep can improve welfare but problems of both disease and welfare can arise when large numbers are kept together and advice should be sought on the design, construction or modification of buildings. Adequate ventilation without draughts is of particular importance, as also is the provision of sufficient trough space and lying area.

119. The greater the restriction imposed on a sheep through housing systems, the less the animal is able to use its instinctive behaviour to minimise the effects of any imposed, unfavourable conditions. Housed sheep require continuing conscientious attention by staff well-trained in the nutritional and environmental needs of the sheep.

120. When changes are made to sheep husbandry systems, which involve installing more complex or elaborate equipment than had previously been used, consideration should be given to the welfare of the animals and the need for the training of the shepherd.

121. Dry, clean, comfortable conditions under foot should be provided to minimise hygiene and lameness problems. Regular provision of fresh bedding is particularly important at lambing time.

122. When first housed, sheep should be both dry and free from footrot or CODD. Sheep affected by footrot or CODD should be segregated and treated immediately in order to prevent it from becoming a flock problem.

Ventilation

Schedule 1, paragraph 13 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2001 No. 3070 (W.264)) States that air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations must be kept within limits, which are not harmful to the animals.

123. Effective ventilation of buildings (to avoid high humidity, condensation and draughts) is essential, as sheep are particularly susceptible to respiratory diseases. Properly designed ventilation will permit the free circulation of air above sheep height and avoid draughts at sheep level.

Buildings and Equipment

Schedule 1, paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)), state that:-

- materials used for the construction of accommodation, and, in particular, for the construction of pens, cages, stalls and equipment with which the animals may come into contact, must not be harmful to them and must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected;
- accommodation and fittings for securing animals shall be constructed and maintained so that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury to them.

124. The law sets minimum requirements for the housing of sheep.

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

126. Surfaces should not be treated with paints or wood preservatives, which may cause illness or death. There is a risk of lead poisoning from old paintwork, especially when second-hand building materials are used.

127. All floors should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, stress or injury to the sheep. Regular maintenance is essential.

128. Solid floors should be well drained and the sheep provided with dry bedding.

129. Newly born and young lambs should not be put on slatted floors unless suitable bedding is also provided.

130. 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 should be checked at least once daily and more frequently in extreme conditions, to ensure that they are in working order.

131. Troughs should be designed and installed in such a way as to ensure small lambs cannot get into them and drown.

132. For sheep given concentrate feed, when all animals are fed together, it is important to have adequate trough space to avoid competition and aggression. In normal practice, approximately 30 cm of trough space is needed for hill ewes and approximately 45 cm for the larger lowland ewes. Excessive competition is detrimental to sheep welfare.

133. When feeding hay and silage *ad lib*, trough space should be provided within the range 10-12 cm per ewe, dependent upon size. Racks and troughs should be positioned and designed to avoid injury, discomfort and damage to sheep.

Lighting

Schedule 1, paragraph 3 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)), requires that where animals are kept in a building adequate lighting (whether fixed or portable) shall be available to enable them to be thoroughly inspected at any time.

Schedule 1, paragraphs 14-16 state that:-

- animals kept in buildings shall not be kept in permanent darkness;
- where the natural light available in a building is insufficient to meet the physiological and ethological needs of any animals being kept in it appropriate artificial lighting must be provided;
- animals kept in buildings must not be kept without an appropriate period of rest from artificial lighting.

134. The law requires that fixed or portable lighting be available so that sheep kept in buildings can be thoroughly inspected at any time.

135. Throughout the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed sheep can be seen clearly by the shepherd.

Space Allowances

136. The space allowance and group size for housed sheep should be determined according to age, size and class of livestock. Some examples of current good practice, with adequate ventilation and well bedded on straw indoors, are set out below:-

Category of Sheep	Space Allowance
a. Lowland ewes (60 - 90 kg liveweight).	1.2 - 1.4 m ² floor space per ewe during pregnancy.
b. Lowland ewes after lambing with lambs at foot up to 6 weeks of age.	2.0 - 2.2 m ² floor space per ewe and lambs.
c. Hill ewes (45-65 kg liveweight).	1.0 - 1.2 m ² floor space per ewe during pregnancy.
d. Hill ewes after lambing, with lambs at foot, up to 6 weeks of age.	1.8 - 2.0 m ² floor space per ewe and lambs.
e. Lambs up to 12 weeks old.	0.5 - 0.6 m ² floor space per lamb.
f. Lambs and sheep 12 weeks to 12 months old.	0.75 - 0.9 m ² floor space per lamb/sheep.
g. Rams.	1.5 - 2.0 m ² .

Shorn sheep

The space allowances may be reduced by 10% for winter-shorn sheep. However **no** corresponding reduction should be made in respect of the amount of trough space allocated - see paragraphs 112 and 113 above.

Group size

Where possible pregnant ewes should be kept in-groups of less than 50 to allow for better individual recognition and attention at lambing time.

Mechanical Equipment and Services

Schedule 1, paragraph 18 of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007 No. 3070 (W.264)) states that all automated or mechanical equipment essential for the health and well-being of the animals shall be inspected at least once a day to check there is no defect in it.

Schedule 1, paragraph 19 states where defects in automated or mechanical equipment of the type referred to in paragraph 18 of Schedule 1 are discovered, these must be rectified immediately, or if this is impossible, appropriate steps must be taken to safeguard the health and well-being of the animals pending the rectification of those defects including the use of alternative methods of feeding and watering and alternative methods of providing and maintaining a satisfactory environment.

Reference should be made to the regulations if automated systems are used in a sheep shed.

137. All equipment and services including water bowls and troughs, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, milking machines, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept in good working order.

138. The law (see box before paragraph 124) requires all automatic equipment used in intensive systems to be thoroughly inspected by the shepherd, or other competent person, not less than once each day to check that there is no defect. Any defect must be rectified immediately.

139. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to sheep, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and properly earthed.

Contingency Plan

140. Owners and keepers of livestock have a duty of care for the animals at all times and are encouraged to follow the highest possible standards of husbandry for their livestock. Owners should have contingency plans incidents or eventualities that are likely to affect their animals. They should ensure that the animals can be inspected, fed, provided with sufficient water and shelter by an experienced or qualified person in the place of the owner or keeper of the animals.

Fire and Other Emergency Precautions

141. Farmers 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.

142. Design advice is important when constructing or modifying a building. There should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in the event of an emergency. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems, which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.

143. If sheep are housed, knowledge of fire precautions by the farmer and all staff should be a priority.

144. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from fire prevention officers of local fire brigades and from the Fire Prevention Association.

Hazards

The Animals Act 1971 lays down measures with respect to civil liability for the protection of livestock from dogs, and the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 makes it an offence to allow a dog to worry livestock.

145. To minimise the risk of sheep being trapped in snow or being unable to gain shelter, care should be taken in siting shelters, shelterbelts and fences.

146. As far as practicable, sheep should be prevented from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow; where possible they should be allowed to move naturally or be shepherded into safer areas.

147. All sheep should be removed from areas, which are in imminent danger of flooding.

148. Young lambs should be protected, as far as possible, from hazards such as adverse weather conditions, predators and open ditches.

149. Any dog is a potential hazard to sheep and should be kept under control on agricultural land. Well-trained sheepdogs, however, can greatly facilitate gathering and handling, particularly under extensive conditions. They should be trained so that they do not grip sheep. Sheepdogs should be well cared for and maintained in good health. They should be regularly wormed to eliminate endoparasites.

Milk Sheep

Management

150. Milk sheep flocks are in many cases subjected to a more intensive system of husbandry than a conventional flock and will require especially vigilant stockmanship to ensure that their health and welfare are maintained.

151. Shepherds should be aware of specific problems relevant to milk sheep and the ways in which these may be avoided.

152. Some breeds of milk sheep appear to be especially susceptible to foot problems and these can be exacerbated by the husbandry methods under which the sheep are kept. The roadway, entrances and exits to buildings and fields should be well maintained and kept as clean as possible.

153. Routine treatments to prevent foot problems should be adopted but care should be taken in the observance of withdrawal periods for any medicines used, particularly during lactation. Efforts to combat footrot or CODD during the drying-off period are particularly important.

154. Milk sheep are naturally prolific and require particular attention to the level of nutrition provided during pregnancy and lactation.

Milking Practices

155. Special attention should be paid to milking techniques, the adjustment of milking equipment and dairy hygiene. Milking should take place at least daily, on a regular basis, ensuring that ewes are not left with unrelieved, distended udders.

156. Before and after milking, hygiene measures should be adopted to reduce the spread of diseases of the mammary gland.

157. Good milking practices include careful handling, and examination of foremilk and the avoidance of excessive stripping.

Milking Parlours and Equipment

158. Pens, ramps, milking parlours and milking equipment should be properly designed, constructed and maintained to prevent injury and distress.

159. 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 the manufacturers' recommendations.

Copies of the publication can be obtained, free of charge and subject to availability, from:-

Welsh Assembly Government
Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Tel: 029 20823059

If you would like any more information or advice about this code, please contact Animal Welfare and By Products team 029 20823059 or
www.wales.gov.uk/animal_welfare
welsh:
www.cymru.gov.uk/lles_anifeiliaid