HANDLING SHEEP SAFE WORK PROCEDURE

1) This procedure provides basic introductory guidance on managing the risks of illness or injury when shearing and handling sheep on the Farm.

2) ASHEEP employees and event / workshop attendees should minimise handling sheep where possible and only do so as is required in the scope of their work or training. For example, if a project requires sheep to be weighed, it is preferred that the farm's staff would move and handle their own stock, and the ASHEEP employee would only interact with the stock to the degree that their project task requires.

Moving Sheep

3) Avoid using motorbikes and ATVs during mustering, instead consider mustering sheep on foot, with the help of a dog.

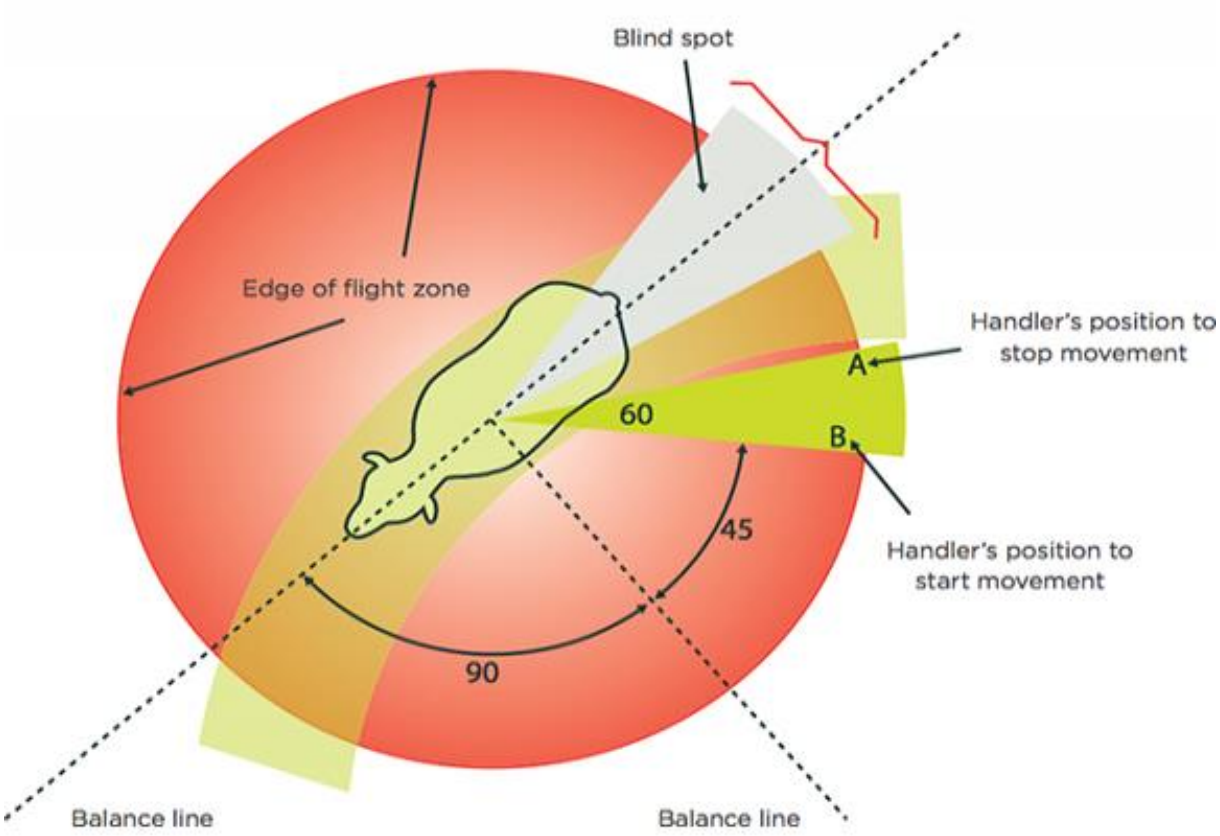
4) Prepare your route in advance.

5) Use flight zones and balance lines to move sheep where you need them.

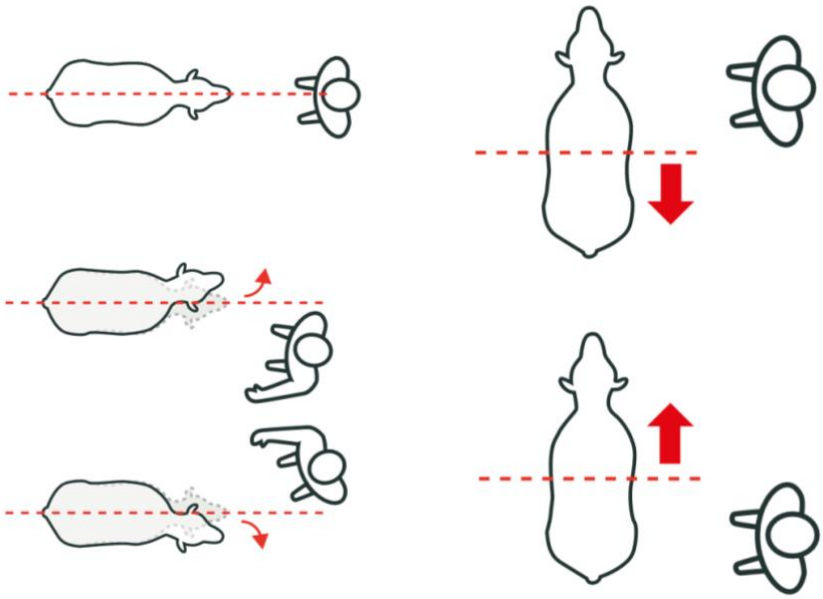
6) The flight zone is how close you can get to sheep before they start moving.

7) The closer you get, the faster they will move away. To stop them from moving, step out of their flight zone.

8) Flight zones are bigger for sheep that haven't been handled often, in contact with people, mustered or brought into the yards for a while.



9) Sheep have two balance lines. One runs across the shoulders and the other runs along the backbone. When you're working up close, whichever way you move through those lines, the animal will move the other way:



10) It is easier to catch a sheep if it is part of a mob, rather than by itself. Catching sheep is also easier in a pen. The smaller the pen, the better. If you can, use gates or hurdles to make the pen as small as possible. If you are in the paddock, gather the sheep into a corner for catching.

11) A well-trained dog can save a farmer a lot of effort when working with sheep. Sheep see dogs as a threat, making them afraid, especially if the sheep are unfamiliar with them. If you are using dogs, they must be well trained

Lifting Sheep

12) Sheep can weigh up to 100kg so it important to use safely lifting techniques.

13) Avoid lifting sheep. Use gates and ramps where available. If you have to lift sheep, use your legs, not your back.

14) To correctly lift sheep:

    a) Hold the sheep against the rail and straddle the sheep's rump. Put one hand on the rail, the other under the sheep's neck.

    b) Using the rail for support, pull the sheep onto its hind legs.

    c) Move your hand from the rail, under the sheep's nearest leg to grasp the opposite front leg.

    d) Move the other hand from the neck and firmly grasp the fold of skin between the belly and hind leg.

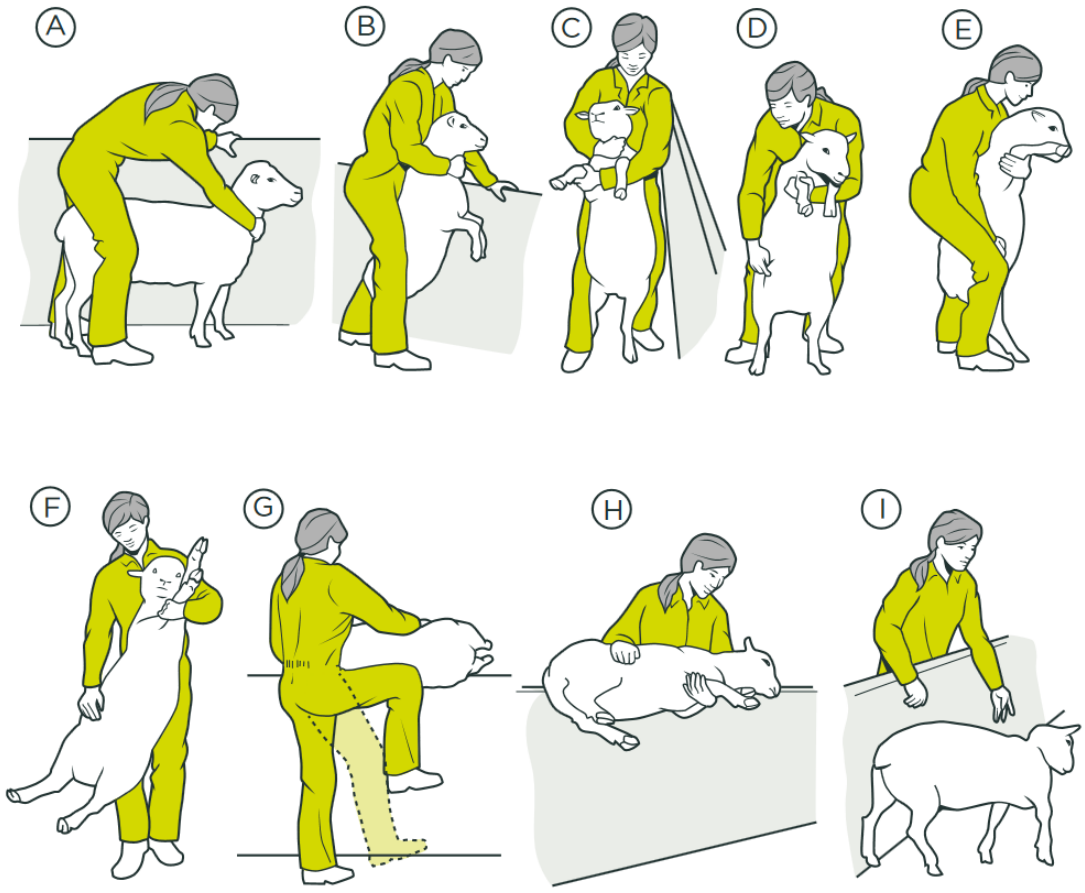
    e) Crouch behind the sheep, bend your knees, take the weight on your knees and hold it firmly.

    f) Stand up using your legs (not your back) and lift the sheep off the ground.

    g) Swing the sheep towards the top of the fence, boosting it with your leg.

    h) Put the sheep on top of the rail and let it see the ground.

    i) With a slight rolling movement, let the sheep fall onto its feet.



Shearing – ASHEEP staff and contractors are not required to shear sheep. Should this be required in future, a "Shearing and Sheep Handling Policy" is available and should be prepared for use.

Working with Rams

15) Rams can be aggressive and can injure people by charging and butting. They are particularly dangerous in close quarters, such as in the yards.

16) If available, use drop gates when working with rams in the race.

17) Take special care when handling rams. Be confident, but always keep a ram in clear view and never let your guard down.

18) Protect yourself when working with rams in a race. A well-positioned drop gate can reduce this hazard if one is available. Never lower your head when working with rams, they view this as a challenge and may charge and butt you.

Zoonoses

19) Zoonoses are diseases that people can catch from animals. They cause mild to life-threatening human health problems. People working with livestock may be exposed to these diseases.

20) You can catch diseases from animals in a number of ways:

a) Having animal blood, urine or faeces splashed in your eyes, nose or mouth (e.g. when picking up dead sheep).

b) Through cracked skin or open cuts.

c) Breathing in dust or micro-organisms in the air.

d) Eating or drinking infected animal products.

e) Being bitten by a fly, mosquito, tick or flea that has also bitten an infected animal.

21) Avoid catching diseases from animals with good health and hygiene practices:

a) Maintain vaccination and parasite control programmes.

b) Maintain good hand hygiene practices.

c) Provide eating areas away from animal areas and stop personnel from eating, drinking and smoking in animal areas.

d) Keep sheds and yards clean and don’t let manure build up.

e) Use protective equipment to avoid the skin and the face touching animal body substances. For example, wear disposable gloves to examine a sheep’s wound.

f) If using veterinary sharps – like needles and syringes – carefully dispose of sharps in a rigid walled, puncture resistant sharps container.

g) Do not to touch areas (such as the muzzle) where saliva or snot can be transferred to personnel's face.

h) Cover cuts and scrapes with a water-resistant dressing. If personnel are wounded at work, properly clean the wound and cover it with a water-resistant dressing.

i) Isolate any animals showing signs of illness from people and other animals.

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