

FACT SHEET

WORKING WITH SHEEP IN YARDS



OVERVIEW OF TOPIC

Working with sheep in yards presents a number of hazards due to the unpredictability of the animals. Sheep can also get agitated by being squished into an often unfamiliar environment. This may cause them to charge at people, step on people's toes, or jam people in between themselves and fences/rails.

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

There are many ways farmers can keep themselves and their workers safe while working with sheep in yards.

- Yards should be free of rocks, rubbish and other debris that could cause trips, as well as sharp objects that could injure people or frighten livestock
- Fences and rails should be kept in good condition, gates should have working latches and can be quickly opened and closed, and the yards should be well lit
- Ensure that there are escape routes for workers
- Make sure you are aware of the layout of the pens before putting sheep in them
- To help sheep calm down, leave them in the yards for 30 minutes before working with them
- When you are in the yards, move smoothly and slowly, and make sure the sheep can see you, to keep them calm
- Understand and use the flight zone and balance lines to make sheep move in the desired direction
- Never put your arms between the rails and into a race or pen
- Close gates behind you so animals can't enter or escape unexpectedly
- Wear suitable footwear

ACTIONS

There are actions you can take right now to ensure you are as safe as possible when next working with sheep in yards.

- Check that your yards are free of rocks, rubbish, other debris, and sharp objects
- Regularly check that your fences, rails and gates are in good working order, and repair any issues that arise
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of all of your penning areas and if you see opportunities to optimise these layouts, do so
- When preparing to move sheep around, ensure you are leaving enough time to let sheep sit in the yards for 30 minutes before they need to be moved again
- Get training in sheep handling so that you can better understand flight zone and balance lines and how to keep calm around them
- Ensure you have adequate footwear to wear while you are in the yards

KEY CONTACT

For further information please contact:

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