

# Alliance

## Is This Goat Fit to Ship?

Originally Published in *Alliance*, Summer 2015

Making the decision to cull a goat from your herd is never easy. Making that decision in a timely matter is of the utmost importance to the welfare of your herd.

When a goat is culled, you might think that it is fit to ship, but quite often the stress of being loaded on the truck and then co-mingled with other goats at the sale barn can set a goat back pretty quick, especially if combined with other conditions such as:

- Age (very old or very young)
- Illness (pneumonia, mastitis, fever)
- Weak (low body condition)
- Lameness
- Fatigue

If your goat is shipped to the sale barn and it is deemed not suitable by the veterinarian to be sold, several outcomes could result, including:

- Euthanasia (owner would receive bill from sale for deadstock)
- Return the animal to the consignor for treatment (OMAFRA or the OSPCA will be doing a follow up)
- Ring announcement
- Sold for slaughter only
- Sold directly to a local slaughter plant (does not go through the sales ring), (owner only gets paid if it passes post mortem inspection at the plant)

As the owner, it is your responsibility to evaluate the condition of the goat before shipping. If you ship a goat that is not fit for shipping, you could be fined and jailed in extreme cases, under the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. Penalties for an individual convicted of a provincial offence under this Act and its regulations, including the Disposal of Deadstock Regulation, may include: a fine up to \$25,000 for a first conviction and up to \$50,000 for each subsequent conviction (for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues); imprisonment for no more than two years; or both a fine and imprisonment (Ontario Regulation 105/09).



In addition to the action at the sale barn, there may be a follow up action by one of three agencies if unfit animals arrive at the sale barn. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) may investigate and charge the producer if in violation of the fallen animal provisions. "Fallen animal" means a goat that has been disabled by disease, emaciation or other condition that is likely to cause death. The case may be referred to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) for an on farm neglect investigation or the case may be referred to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for an investigation on a transport violation. OMAFRA inspectors for the sales barns have been appointed as federal inspectors by CFIA to assist in the enforcement of the federal transport regulations.

Culling is a necessary action on goat farms, but shipping poor quality goats is a reflection of your management practices and a direct reflection of you as a farmer. When making the decision to cull a goat, it's better to be a week too early than a day too late. Before you ship the next goat off your farm ask yourself: would I be proud to have my name announced as the owner of this goat in the sale ring? If no, don't ship it, euthanize on farm.

Ontario Goat is currently developing a body condition scoring resource and is planning a workshop this fall to help producers evaluate goats before they are culled. For further information about body condition scoring or culling goats, contact Kendra Keels at the OG office.