ACP in Rams

Pre shearing sedation is now considered a routine procedure. It is indeed sensible from all points of view particularly the ram but also the shearer and owner. For OH&S reasons, sedation of all sheep over 75kg before shearing has become a standard request by shearers.

There are many issues with dispensing and the use of sedatives which must be addressed to protect owners, the dispensing veterinarian and to ensure animal health and welfare needs are met.

The use of ACP should be in consultation with your vet, as they need to supply the product and they can assist with administration of the product and providing professional advice on the optimal use of the product for your situation.

THE SEDATIVE

Acetylpromazine (ACP) is the drug of choice for sedating rams and large sheep. It is relatively safe and provides consistent results with regard to the onset and duration of sedation. As with all sedatives there are risks associated with the use of ACP. Attention to detail and careful management will help reduce the risk of complications. ACP causes a decrease in blood pressure and should not be used in dehydrated, old or sick sheep.

If accidental self injection does occur, seek medical advice immediately.

DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION

The dose of ACP 10 is 1ml/100kg bodyweight by deep intramuscular injection a minimum of 30 minutes prior to shearing. The ACP is administered using a 3ml syringe and an 18g 1 ½ inch needle.

As for all intramuscular injections in food animals: Avoid Carcase Damage

1. Preferably use a sterile needle and syringe every time. Alternatively sterilise all injection apparatus by boiling before use. Avoid use of strong disinfectants on apparatus.

2. Maintain cleanliness at all times.
3. Keep needles sharp and clean.
4. Use needles of appropriate gauge and length.
5. As far as possible avoid injection of animals during wet weather or under dusty conditions.
6. This product must be injected only into muscle tissue.
7. If possible inject into muscle tissue on side of neck.

Injection should be a two person procedure, with one person preparing and administering the dose of ACP, the second person assisting to restrain and mark (with a raddle ETC) rams that have been sedated.

If a ram appears to receive a partial dose, or does not appear sedated after 30 mins DO NOT give a second dose of ACP. Wait another 30 mins, if possible then attempt to shear again. “Top Up” doses are not recommended as the sedative effect is not increased by increasing the dose and ACP can cause life threatening reduction in blood pressure.

ACP has an onset of action of about 30 mins and lasts, at this level for another 30 mins to an hour. Thus rams should be sedated in approximate hour “blocks” as estimated by the shearers and the owner.

ANIMAL WELFARE

ACP is a relatively mild sedative. Rams sedated with ACP should be able to still stand and walk but may sit down if not disturbed. Because they have reduced strength and coordination, sedated animals should be handled gently and extra care should be taken when being put down the chute and when being counted out.

Sedation will take about 4 hours to wear off, so within 4 hours of sedation:
• Do not expose rams to extreme hot or cold. Rams have a reduced capacity to manage temperature when sedated
• Do not drive rams more than a few hundred metres
• Do not drench or otherwise medicate rams
• As a precaution avoid the use of Organophosphates immediately after shearing as these may increase the adverse reaction to the drug
• Do not administer to dehydrated, sick or debilitated rams

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