



Caring for Livestock

Livestock includes sheep, pigs, llamas, alpacas, donkeys, goats, cattle, and horses. In urban areas it's easier for these four-legged friends to create a nuisance for your neighbours and other residents.

Caring for your livestock

Whether kept as pets or for the purpose of being farmed, responsible ownership is vital. We've put together some information to help you ensure they have happy and healthy lives.

As with all animals, livestock rely on their owners to provide a number of essentials. As their owner, it's up to you to ensure your animals do not create any nuisance or welfare related issues. Your animals need fresh food and water daily. It's also important to remember that you are responsible for their health, including veterinary care.

Housing

Before obtaining any livestock the suitability and size of your property should be considered for the type of stock in mind. All of your animals need to be provided with shelter and a form of housing. They must be contained on a property with fencing, drainage, and waste disposal to limit any potential nuisances.

Stock animals need to be kept in clean environments with dry and warm sleeping areas. A number of materials such as hay, sawdust, and untreated wood chips can be used for this. These should be replaced and their space cleaned out at least once a week.

Hygiene

Responsible ownership includes ensuring your livestock do not cause public health concerns. Owners need to ensure they do as much as possible to keep the area in and around a stock housing structure clean.

It is strongly recommended that cleaned out bedding is removed from the property within a week. Rats and mice can become an issue if food is left out. Rat and mouse excrement can contaminate livestock feed and water, as well as expose humans to diseases. There are vermin-proof feeders which also keep out the rain, providing stock with good access to food.

Tethering

Tethering is sometimes used as a method of confining animals. Routine tethering is unacceptable as tethering should only be used as a temporary solution for short periods of time. If tethering is necessary, the animal must be checked on regularly to make sure there's enough food and water, and that they aren't tangled up in the tether. Shelter and clean water should be in reach of the tethered animal, as well as extra food where grazing isn't possible. A durable collar and a strong tether, such as a light chain, are recommended to keep your animal secure.

Walking your stock in public

Exercise and mental stimulation is important for all animals. As with dogs, it is important that stock be kept on a lead and under control at all times. This will ensure the safety of the animal and members of the community. Any mess left by the animal should be appropriately cleaned up and disposed of.

Emergency preparedness

As a livestock owner, you should develop a plan to care for your animal during emergencies as part of the household emergency plan and kit. This should include:

- At least 7 days' worth of food and water per animal.
- A means of moving your animal to a safe a location in case of the need to evacuate.
- A back up plan in case you're unable to take care of your animal.

Goat tags

The population of feral goats is managed in Wellington. To indicate they are not feral, all owned goats must wear a collar or an ear tag such as an RFID (radio frequency identification device) or similar.

End of life

When your pet reaches the end of its life, it'll be your responsibility to make suitable arrangements for your pet's body. This can usually be arranged through a vet. Burials at home should be done in an appropriate manner and away from waterways. If your pet is euthanised by a vet, they cannot have a shallow burial due to the toxins in the injection. Alternatively, you can take your pet to the landfill. It is an offence under the Animal Bylaw to bury a carcass in a manner that is or is likely to become a nuisance, injurious or hazardous to health or safety.

For livestock that are kept for meat, you may consider homekill. This is when your animal is slaughtered and butchered for your consumption and use. It's illegal to sell or trade homekill meat. The animal can be killed by you on your property, or a listed homekill service provider can be hired. There are legal requirements to ensure there is no unreasonable suffering, pain or distress. You are responsible for meeting these legal requirements for animal welfare in the Animal Welfare Act and Codes of Welfare. If you are considering homekill, please see www.mpi.govt.nz/homekill

Resolving disputes

If your neighbour's livestock has become a source of nuisance, it's recommended you speak with your neighbour about the situation first. This often results in the matter being resolved quickly. If problems persist, please call Council on 499 4444

If you suspect there are animal welfare issues, please call the SPCA on 389 8044

Further information

- www.wellington.govt.nz/animalpolicy
- Animal Bylaw (2016)
- Animal Policy (2017)
- Animal Welfare (Goats), Code of Welfare 2012
- MPI: www.mpi.govt.nz/homekill