

Fact sheet 3. Preparing your wether for a show



Mohair Australia
Youth Program

Agricultural shows in Australia provide an opportunity to exhibit goats to the public and to have them fairly evaluated. If you decide to take part, you and your goat need to be properly prepared.

This preparation needs to begin several weeks before the show and includes teaching your wether to stand quietly while being handled by people and to be led by a halter. Your wether will need to be well groomed, so the judge can see its conformation and mohair characteristics properly.

Familiarise your wether with people

When beginning to train your wether to behave well at a show, the first step is to familiarise him with people. You want him to be comfortable around people and not panic. Every day when you feed and water him, take the time to approach him quietly rather than chase him.

Try scratching him behind the ears, gently touching his fleece, and offering him some feed from your hands. This can help him want to be around you.

Once he gets used to you coming into his pen and touching him, you can start to let him follow you on short walks around your property. Many tame goats will follow without a leash.

Teach your wether to lead

The next step is to buy or make your own halter and lead rope. In order to teach your wether to lead, you will first need to get him used being tied. Put the halter on and use a quick release safety knot, if you know how to tie one, to secure his rope to a stout fence or post. Make sure you stand close by while he struggles to free himself to prevent him injuring himself.

Gradually walk further away as he starts getting used to being confined in one spot, but do not leave your tied goat unattended as he could potentially strangle and die.

Tie your wether for about 10 minutes daily until he is comfortable with it.

Your next step is to start to teach him to lead with the halter and rope. Do not keep a steady pull on the rope. Just pull and release the tension on the rope with short jerks. When he steps forward, ease the tension on the rope and give him a treat to reward him for good behavior.

To encourage him to move, use gentle taps on the rump with flat hands. Don't pull on his mohair as he will stop and not move forward. Do NOT pull on his tail as it is painful and makes it easier for him to lean against you. Sometimes, it can help to have a friend or another student there to push on the wether's rump if he refuses to move forward with you.

While you lead him, use the halter to keep his head up. If he drops his head, it is easier for him to get control and run away with you. Teach him to lead with his head out in front of your body and his front shoulder in line with your leg.

Teach your wether to set up

So that you can start to teach your wether to properly set up (stand in the correct position), try to get him used to having his legs stroked or touched with your shoe. Every time you halt while you are leading him, set his front legs up first and then set up his hind legs. Use the halter to keep his body and head straight while you are setting him up.

You want his legs to be square, with the front legs positioned directly under his body and in line with each other, not one in front of the other. His hind legs can be slightly apart and back from under his body slightly, so he looks proud and alert, and the shape of his body is clearly on display. He will eventually learn to set himself up without needing you to move his legs around. You can use slight pressure on his shoulders when you want him to set up.

Make sure you don't overwork your goat. Only work for between ten and twenty minutes at a time, several times a week. Try to stop the session when he is really behaving well and make sure you reward him with a treat.

Showing your goat

Make sure you know all the rules for showing your goat in front of a judge. There will be requirements for what health papers are needed. If you are showing breeding stock, and the show requires registration papers, make sure your goat has been registered with Mohair Australia Ltd, with enough time to get the registration papers back before the show. Registered goats need to be properly identified by their tattoos and ear tags.

Refer [Paraders Class Guidelines –three competition teaching manual](#)

Fact sheet 4 [Showmanship and parading](#)

Depending on the show, exhibitors may be expected to wear a white coat in the show ring or just a clean, neat pair of dress jeans and shirt. Make sure you don't wear a hat or cap, and don't stand or walk between your goat and the judge. To avoid this, you may need move to the other side when you are passing the judge. It can be useful to get ready for the show by practicing with a group of friends and their goats. Take turns handling each other's goats.

In the weeks before the show, tie your goat up several times a week and gently remove vegetable matter from his fleece. This will help you to keep his mohair groomed and tame him as well. Trim his hooves regularly, and for the show, plan the last trimming to be about seven to 10 days before and place that on your Management plan

Preparing your wether before the show



Dipping goat in a dip



Dry Mohair Grooming



If he is very dirty, give him a dip with mild detergent, like wool wash called softly, a few days before you show -allow water depth to float their mohair for a best result or by dry grooming him. This technique removes vegetable matter, loose hair from the staple and should be started once your wether has longer mohair. Once your goat is clean and ready for the show, make sure his pen is bedded well or on grating in a draft free shed to prevent any manure and urine stains before transport to the show

To check that your wether is getting the correct amount of food for his age and build, keep records on how he is growing. It is a good idea to keep track of his body condition scores as well, so you can tell how ready he is for the production class, which will give you a mohair value and a carcass score.

Remember that the judge is going to evaluate your goat on how ready he is for showing, and the production class will reflect how he will perform with his mohair growth and carcass evaluation on show day.

Your wether needs plenty of exercise to help develop his muscles. He may still be growing and not quite ready for meat evaluation on show day, or he may have finished a growth spurt and started getting too fat or over-finished at show time.

If your goat does not show well, look at what you might do differently next time. There is a lot more to a wether competition than just showing, so try to look at the whole process and not just the result at the show.

Suggested activities

Watch a goat show and critique the showmanship skills of the different exhibitors.

Participate in an agricultural show that is providing a youth program with a:

- wether challenge competition
- paraders' class competition
- young judges' competition.

Visual activities

- YouTube –How to make your own halters
- YouTube-Training a goat to lead

Homemade Halters and Lead



L Carter

Fitting a bought halter to your wether;

Over the nose, fasten behind the horn, clip hand lead onto ring under the jaw



L Carter

Fitting a handmade rope halter to your wether-

Over the nose, behind the ears and horn, pull lead to tighten



L Carter