

Animal

ROUNDAABOUT



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Produced for people with an interest in the exhibition of animals in zoos, circuses, mobile farms, fauna and wildlife parks in NSW.



NSW Agriculture

Open Wide



"Looks like it's our turn for a check-up"

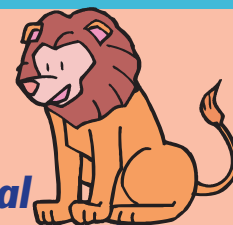
There are times when camelids such as alpacas and llamas need dental work to improve the functioning of their incisors and cheek teeth.

The incisors (front row of cutting teeth) of alpacas and llamas, should be kept in line with the leading edge of the upper dental pad. Like sheep and cattle, alpacas and llamas have lower incisors only. Evolution has seen the upper incisors replaced by a hard, resilient dental pad that helps the cutting of tough vegetation. High-quality stock feeds contain excellent nutrition but often do not provide sufficient wear to keep the teeth in optimal condition.

An equine dentist or a veterinarian familiar with dental anatomy should be called in if the animal is having difficulty eating or the teeth appear overgrown or uneven. To maintain good health it's important the teeth of camelids are kept in good condition.

For more information about camelid dentistry, click on the following web site: www.purdyvet.com/dentist.html

Photo courtesy of Cath Norman and the Australian Alpaca Association



National Zoo Standards

The push is on for national standards for animal exhibition.

The National Consultative Committee for Animal Welfare (NCCAW) is considering introducing standards that will lead to similar requirements for animal exhibits in each state and territory.

NCCAW has already endorsed a model standard for circus operators that most states and territories have adopted. NCCAW is also examining a proposal for adoption of uniform guidelines developed by the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA).

The Federal Government will contact organisations that could be involved in regulating zoo animal operations to establish the capacity and commitment for such an idea. It is hoped that consistency of standards and guidelines will improve and streamline interchange of ideas, zoo personnel and animals between states and territories. At the same time, it should increase the confidence of zoo operators that animal welfare concerns are being properly addressed.

Looze Lipz



Snake virus

A newly discovered virus called Inclusion Body Disease (IBD) has recently been found in snakes in Australia. IBD is a significant disease resulting in lethargy, loss of appetite and neurological symptoms such as tremors, disorientation, agitation and convulsions, and death. The disease was first observed in exotic reptiles seized by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service early in 2001 and it may already be widespread in private collections throughout Australia. Exhibitors holding reptiles are advised to limit the transfer of snakes and maintain high standards of hygiene to minimise the spread of the disease. If reptiles are acquired from private collections, there is an increased risk of bringing the disease into your collection. If you suspect the presence of IBD virus in any of your reptiles, seek urgent advice from a veterinarian.

New policy

A new policy has been established dealing with concerns about animal exhibits that support businesses that do not have animal exhibition as their primary activity. Applicants will have to satisfy NSW Agriculture that:

- the welfare of the exhibited animals is maintained to the prescribed standards
- there is sufficient, qualified staff available each day and during all public viewing times
- the animal exhibit should not be used primarily to promote the sale of a product or service that is unrelated to the appreciation of the animals on display.

A copy of the new policy titled "Policy authorising new animal display establishments at premises where animal exhibition will not be the primary activity" can be obtained by phoning Tammy Kirby on (02) 6391 3725

Notable Birth

Sarah Joan Thompson arrived on 9 November in Orange with all the pomp and glory deserved for such a notable birth. Proud parents, Angela (Licensing Clerk) and Andrew did not allow all the practical advice given by the staff of NSW Agriculture's Animal Welfare Unit to diminish the joyous occasion. The birth is part of a breeding program and has been registered with the international stud-bookkeeper.

Paperwork, paperwork!

Mobile exhibitors must submit itineraries to the Animal Welfare Unit each month. The regular submission of itineraries helps exhibited animals inspectors to cooperatively plan routine inspections as a requirement of the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986. Itineraries also assist in identifying activities of non-approved operators and in the investigation of complaints. It is accepted that timetables change at short notice and bad weather can ruin the most carefully planned schedule. Despite this, the provision of monthly itineraries remains a necessary

on-going responsibility for all exhibitors operating mobile displays.

Reminder

Exhibitors who wish to acquire or dispose of animals should have the transaction approved by NSW Agriculture before taking possession of an animal. For exemptions, refer to Schedule 1 of the Exhibited Animals Protection Act Regulations 1995. To obtain an "Application to Acquire or Dispose of Animals" form, contact Tammy Kirby on (02) 6391 3725 or fax your application to (02) 6391 3570.

Exotic animals

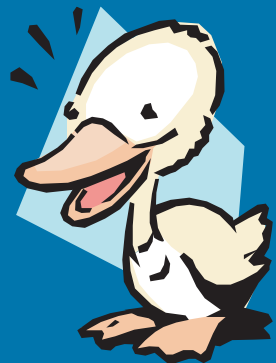
Up until now, exhibitors who wished to obtain a new exotic animal species had to make two separate applications to NSW Agriculture. Approval is now obtained directly through NSW Agriculture's Animal Welfare Unit. The Unit may request additional information from the exhibitor if it needs to seek the advice of the Non-Indigenous Animals Advisory Committee regarding security. Further information is available from Liz Etherton, Licensing Clerk on (02) 6391 3276.

Hot Gossip

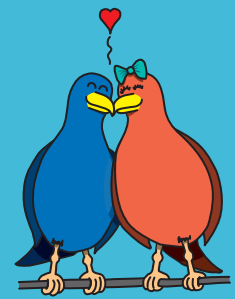
Al Mucci has left Fairfield City Farm to join the team at Australian Reptile Park, replacing Rob Porter. Rob has moved onto greener pastures in Queensland, and is setting up a business breeding mice and rats for herpetologists. Rob will start supplying mice and rats in the New Year, and can be contacted on (07) 5533 8339. Al's wife, Peggy has recently been appointed Secretary of the Fauna and Marine Parks Association.

Congratulations to Featherdale Wildlife Park on their recognition at the recent NSW Tourism Awards. They won both the Tourism Retailing and Most Significant Regional Attraction categories.

Mike Brocklehurst joins the Mogo Zoo team as head keeper. Mike was formerly employed at Healesville Sanctuary.



Happy Husbandry



Good cleaning practices

A well-managed cleaning program is essential for all animal exhibitions. Failure to clean enclosures adequately can result in a risk of disease and give the impression that an exhibitor lacks concern for the animals. And, the sight and smell of animal waste or vermin may offend visitors.

Frequency of cleaning obviously depends on stocking rates and the extent to which visitors interact with the animals. Most mammal and bird enclosures should be cleaned daily. Faeces and spoilt food should be swept or raked up and vegetation, perches, floors and enclosure barriers should be hosed down.

Fish displays can be cleaned less frequently as tank filtration works continuously to remove waste. Because amphibians and reptiles produce smaller amounts of waste, cleaning

frequently may not need to be as regular as for mammal and bird enclosures

While clean enclosures should be strived for, there are some occasions when too much cleaning can be detrimental. Some mammals scent-mark their enclosure and if they have to replace scent daily, kidney damage can occur. Other animals such as rhinos may be frustrated if their attempts to establish a dunging pile are continuously disturbed.

There may also be situations where overuse of water can encourage moulds or create unsuitable damp or cold conditions for the animals.

Don't forget that flighty animals may be upset by the appearance of new cleaning staff in their enclosure. To avoid stress to the animals, make sure the new keepers are briefed on established routines and introduced gradually to the animals.

Here are some suggestions that may help to make cleaning easier

- To avoid contamination by faeces, locate feeding and drinking points so they are not under perches.
- Areas where animals congregate regularly could be discretely concreted so they can be readily hosed, scrubbed or disinfected.
- Check with your veterinarian before trying new cleaning products to make sure they are not dangerous to the animals.
- Vehicles and containers used to remove waste should not be used for food delivery.
- Waste should be disposed in a way that will prevent disease organisms being transferred to other animals.



Sweeping up

Johne's disease in macropods

Johne's (pronounced "Yo-nee's") disease is a serious wasting disease that affects grazing animals such as sheep, goats, cattle, deer and alpacas.

However, recent research findings suggest that in some circumstances, wallabies and kangaroos can also contract the sheep strain of this disease. The organism that generates Johne's disease has been confirmed in a small number of western grey kangaroos and tamar wallabies on Kangaroo Island (off South Australia).

Johne's disease is caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*. The bugs attack the wall of the gut, which subsequently thickens, disrupting normal digestion. This causes affected animals to progressively lose weight, despite having an adequate diet and regular treatments to control worms.

Johne's disease works insidiously, killing

infected animals over an extended period of time. Although the organism is not considered to be highly-infectious, affected animals shed lots of the bugs in their faeces and the bacteria can live on the ground for many months, providing a constant source of infection.

The more infected animals there are, the greater the contamination. Animals ingesting contaminated feed, water or soil can spread the disease. Heavy contamination may facilitate the transmission of Johne's disease from one species to another. This could explain the findings from Kangaroo Island, where the macropods had been grazing on pastures contaminated by endemically infected sheep.

If you are concerned about Johne's disease, contact your local District Veterinarian at the Rural Lands Protection Board.



Hints to prevent Johne's disease

- Don't bring infected animals onto your property.
- Determine the history of animals such as sheep, goats, cattle or alpacas before you introduce them.
- Obtain a vendor declaration from the person selling susceptible animals that they are free of Johne's disease.
- If buying sheep, make sure they come from a low risk area.

Circus Safety

Lennon Bros Circus has reviewed its work practices since Geoffrey Lennon sustained serious injuries in an attack by two male lions during a weekend performance last August.

Following the incident, it was determined that the presence of another highly experienced person known to the lions should be in the performance cage with the trainer. This would help to reinforce the established hierarchy that maintains the trainers above and in control of the animals. Prior to this recommendation, the lion trainer worked alone in the arena.

The team now consists of a trainer, backup trainer and tunnel attendants, arena door attendants and spare cage attendants.

Extra safety procedures have been put in place for the movement of the lions into and out of the arena.

The doors at the arena-end of the tunnel are now manned while other

staff keep members of the public at a safe distance from the tunnel and the edge of the arena.

Two trained and experienced staff are stationed at the entry door, ready to enter the arena if necessary, and there is an extra person to control the slide gate on the tunnel. Door attendants check that the trainer's entry door is closed and safeguarded during the performance.

Other safety measures include members of the team equipped with safety poles stationed outside the arena and high-pressure water hoses can be easily accessed as an extra precaution.

When the performance is over, the lions leave the arena by the tunnel. As soon as the tunnel door is secured, the trainers assist the attendants to usher the lions back into their trailer. Once the doors of the trailer are secured, the trainers give the signal to the cage crew to begin dismantling the arena cage.



Geoff Lennon with Sultan, during a performance at Lennon Bros Circus

Joel West and Pearl, Lennon Bros Circus



Photos courtesy of Lennon Bros Circus

NEXT ISSUE

New Standard Free Range Fauna in Protected Areas

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (July 2001). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up-to-date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Agriculture or the user's independent adviser.



NSW Agriculture