

PREVENTING AND MANAGING INGROWN HORNS IN SHEEP

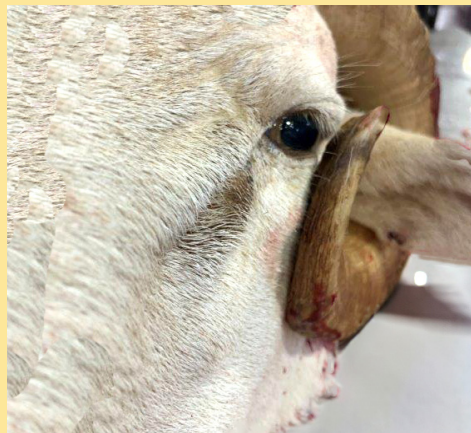


Ingrown horns: A serious animal welfare issue

A horn is ingrown if it **pierces**, **aggravates** or causes **abrasion** to an animal's head, leading to significant pain, blindness, infections and/or flystrike. Unmanaged horns that grow inward or close to the eyes can obstruct vision and interfere with normal eating, drinking and breeding.

PREVENTATIVE ACTION

Manage horns that are not yet piercing the skin or eyes but are in contact with the face or growing in a direction that could result in injury. These should be tipped to prevent them from becoming ingrown or obstructing vision.



URGENT ACTION

If a horn has penetrated the animal's face or eyes, seek veterinary care immediately. Prompt treatment is essential to mitigate pain and prevent further complications.



Know your obligations

Under the NSW Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, anyone who owns, manages or handles livestock has a duty of care and is responsible for ensuring proper welfare standards, including routine horn management. Failure to manage or treat ingrown horns properly may result in severe penalties.

Do not transport animals with ingrown horns



An animal with ingrown horns is not fit to transport. Transport will make the problem worse and cause unnecessary pain. It's essential to manage the ingrown horns and allow any wounds to heal before transport. Properly managed horns can also reduce the risk of injury during handling and transport.

Prevention is best practice

Always adhere to the [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#) when performing husbandry procedures.

- Monitor horn growth regularly
- Perform husbandry procedures such as tipping or trimming
- Consider using polled breeds
- Seek veterinary advice as needed

When to tip horns:

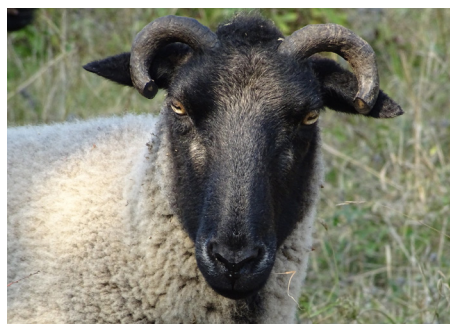
- Growing in a direction that is likely to penetrate the head or eyes
- Touching the skin or eyes
- Obstructing vision
- Sharp and potentially hazardous

Horns will continue to grow and retrimming may be necessary. In cases of poor horn conformation, consider early slaughter.

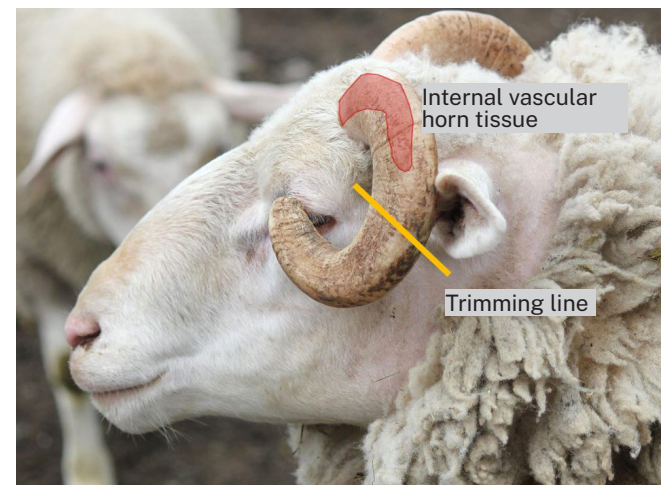
Do the right thing and do it properly



Horn trimmed but continues to grow and cause abrasion and injury to the head.



Horns trimmed. Manage horns regularly.



- **Use appropriate tools:** hydraulic shears, long handled cutters or embryotomy wire saws
- **Minimise trimming:** only trim as much as necessary to avoid damaging the soft internal vascular horn tissue
- **Trim carefully:** trim halfway around the first curl, midway between the ear and the eye, with the cut parallel to the horn serrations
- **Monitor for bleeding:** proper technique should minimise the risk of bleeding from the horn. If bleeding occurs, treat it like any other open wound and consider seeking veterinary advice.