

## Standard Operating Procedures for

### **Closed Castration of Ram Lambs**

#### Definition and Reason for Procedure:

The removal of both testes at a young age in order to prevent indiscriminate breeding and aggressive behavior.

Facility: [REDACTED]\*

Age: Between 10 and 30 days, depending on potential breeding characteristics.

Equipment: Plier-size commercial elastrator, elastrator bands (latex/rubber), and paint stick or marking chalk.

Restraint: Manual: one, but preferably two, people required.

#### Procedure:

1. Each lamb to be castrated will have its scrotum palpated for the presence of both testicles. Cryptorchid lambs will not be castrated.
2. Place lamb to be castrated on its rump on the edge of a table so that it's scrotum is clearly visible.
3. If two people, have one person hold the lamb's right fore and hind legs in one hand and left fore and hind legs in the other. Tilt lamb back against the body of the assistant.
4. Place one elastrator band on elastrator prongs. Simply slide elastrator band over the closed prongs to the base of the prongs.
5. Squeeze handles of elastrator to stretch band sufficiently to pass scrotum and both testicles through band. With thumb and two forefingers, push down at base of scrotum and force testicles into scrotum, then close fingers and thumb to prevent lamb from retracting testicles back into body cavity.
6. Pass scrotum and testicles through open elastrator band until band is near base of scrotum (be sure both testicles pass through the elastrator band). Be sure not to include either teat within the band.
7. Release elastrator allowing the band to contract. Again, be sure both testicles are still contained within the scrotum. With thumb and forefinger, roll band off elastrator prongs onto scrotum.
8. Mark lamb with paint stick or chalk to indicate that it has been castrated. Put lamb (now a wether) in clean pen or pasture with ewe.

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#### Post-treatment:

It is common behavior for lambs to lay down following this procedure and to remain calm. Lambs should be checked multiple times throughout the day for 24 hours following this procedure. The dried scrotum (with testicles) will fall off by itself during the next few weeks. If after one month this has not occurred, then it can be manually removed. Antibiotic treatment is rarely necessary. Contact the manager and/or veterinarian should a lamb appear ill or to be acting abnormal for the next 2 weeks following this procedure.

#### Precautions:

- Person performing the procedure should avoid distractions.
- All equipment should be laid-out prior to starting this procedure. Do not rush.
- Ewes of lambs to be castrated should have received tetanus toxoid during gestation. Lambs should have received adequate amounts of colostrum during the 24 hours following birth. This procedure will be postponed on any lamb that is ill. Without using anesthesia, the maximum age that this procedure will be performed on any lamb, will be 62 days. Beyond this age a veterinarian will be consulted.
- Only well-trained or well-supervised individuals will perform these procedures. Individuals currently authorized to perform these procedures without supervision are:

The manager— [REDACTED] \*

The assistant manager— [REDACTED] \*

[REDACTED] \*

*Last approved by the IACUC on 12/08/2008*

**\*Indicates information redacted in web version of SOP. Versions without redactions can be requested from the Office for Research Protections after IACUC protocol approval. Send your request to [ORP-IACUC@rtto.psu.edu](mailto:ORP-IACUC@rtto.psu.edu). Please be sure to provide your name, PSU access id (abc123), e-mail address, approved IACUC protocol number and which SOP(s) you need.**