

At-a-glance: Goat Survey Results


363 RESPONDENTS

DOMINANT CONCERNS

- Housing
- Painful procedures
- Feed & water
- Transport
- Health & health management

PROVINCE WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE

BC 72%



A few findings taken from the survey, Apr 11 – May 2, 2019

OTHER CONCERNS

- Lameness
- Handling
- Euthanasia & slaughter
- Infectious diseases

TOP 4 GROUPS OF SURVEY-TAKERS

- General public
- Animal welfare advocate
- Consumer
- Goat producers

Background

The Codes of Practice serve as Canada's guidelines for the care and handling of farmed animals. The first such Code for goats (Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats) was drafted in 2003.

It was envisioned at the outset that as the goat industry evolved through science, technology, and on-the-ground experience, so too would the Code: as practices beneficial to goat production and welfare emerged, Code updates would keep pace to reflect current, relevant industry changes and best practices.

With the passage of more than 15 years, the Canadian National Goat Federation recently resolved to update the Code, utilizing the Code development process of the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC).

As a first step, NFACC created a survey to engage interested parties and stakeholders, including farmers, animal welfare advocates, transporters, veterinarians, researchers and all others who wished to participate.

Survey Response

The online survey was open for three weeks, from April 11 to May 2, 2019. During that time, interested members of the public were invited to share their top-of-mind considerations relating to goat welfare.



We heard from 361 survey respondents from across Canada (plus two from other jurisdictions), and are grateful to all who took the time to participate, contributing their personal insights and priority concerns.

There was a notable survey response from BC. While some degree of goat farming for meat, dairy, and fibre (used for cashmere and mohair products) takes place in most provinces, the majority of goat farms are located in eastern Canada, particularly Ontario and Québec.

Where do the survey respondents live?

Top 5 geographic regions:

- British Columbia 261 (71.90%)
- Québec 31 (8.54%)
- Ontario 30 (8.26%)
- Alberta 20 (5.51%)
- Saskatchewan 12 (3.31%)



Who took part?



We were pleased to receive input from a range of respondents with diverse perspectives, including those who directly participate in goat farming and production. Note that respondents were able to identify as belonging to more than one group.

- General public 183 (50.41%)
- Animal welfare advocate 138 (38.02%)
- Consumer 67 (18.46%)
- Goat producer – meat 42 (11.57%)
- Goat producer – milk 38 (10.47%)
- Veterinarian 19 (5.23%)
- Animal welfare enforcement 13 (3.58%)
- Researcher/academic 12 (3.31%)
- Goat producer – fibre 11 (3.03%)
- Allied industry representative 10 (2.75%)
- Goat processor – milk 10 (2.75%)
- Producer (other commodity) 8 (2.20%)
- Government 7 (1.93%)
- Transporter 7 (1.93%)
- Animal nutritionist 6 (1.65%)
- Goat processor – meat 5 (1.38%)
- Retail and food service 4 (1.10%)

What was top-of-mind for survey respondents?

Five dominant issues emerged:

Housing, in all its manifestations.

- Concerns included indoor and outdoor conditions and housing, amount of space in barn and pasture, overcrowding, compatible groupings, access to natural elements, appropriate fencing, protection from extreme weather conditions, cleanliness, bedding, and an enriched environment.



"Goats have adequate space to live a normal life not over crowded ..."

"Freedom to roam in pastures not confined to barns and cages ..."

"Goats must be provided with a shelter from the rain and snow."

"... shelter with room to run and climb ..."

Painful procedures

- Respondent concerns included pain control, elimination of potentially painful procedures such as disbudding and castration, and age at castration and disbudding.

"Pain consistently controlled to ideally eliminate pain to the animal."

"... all painful practices be eliminated ..."

"Need for local anesthetics and analgesics when disbudding ... for castration (and no elastrator bands)."

Feed and water

- Respondents mentioned access to feed and water; nutritional requirements; nutrition based on age, breed, and production stage; and ability to graze and browse.

"Goats must always have access to food and water, enough for the herd."

"Maintaining nutritional standards to highest level for all aged goats."

"Balanced nutrition of grazing & browsing ..."

Transportation

- Concerns included transport in general, limiting or avoiding transport, access to food prior to and during transport, adequate trailer space, proper trailer ventilation, and ability to lie down during transport.

"Avoid transportation as much as possible ..."

"Avoid transportation, short trips, sufficient space for all to lie down, good ventilation."

Health management

- Respondents emphasized overall health, appropriate monitoring, regular health checks, medical and veterinary care, overall herd health, and appropriate biosecurity measures on farm.

"Goats' health must be monitored and kept up with."

"Adequate & regular veterinary care."

Were any other issues identified?

While less frequently mentioned by survey-takers, several other topics emerged:



- Lameness
- Handling
- Euthanasia and slaughter
- Infectious diseases
- Mastitis
- Parasite management
- Kid nutritional management
- Traceability

- Emergency management
- Shearing

How will the survey results be used? Next steps

Your survey input is a valuable part of this collaborative journey. It assists the Code committee in understanding the issues people consider important, and determining how best to update and clarify the existing Code. The revision process is both careful and rigorous, emphasizing key welfare issues and a science-informed, consensus-based approach.

Once the Code committee produces a draft revised Code, it will be shared widely and made available to the public. Please consider taking the opportunity to comment further during the 60-day public comment period. All comments are taken into consideration within the context of improving and finalizing the Code.

Thank you

Thanks to all respondents for your knowledge and enthusiasm. Thank you for sharing your concerns, ideas, and solutions relating to goat welfare.

Your voices and engagement play an essential role as the committee moves forward to develop a revised Code that reflects current goat welfare priorities.

For more information on NFACC and the Code development process, please visit www.nfacc.ca.

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