

**RESOLUTION #15—2023**  
**Regular Annual Session**

Submitted by  
Board of Directors

**NEW POLICY ON SHEEP AND GOAT DISBUDDING AND DEHORNING**

**RESOLVED** that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) House of Delegates adopt a new policy on Sheep and Goat Disbudding and Dehorning as noted below.

**Sheep and Goat Disbudding and Dehorning**

Disbudding of goats and sheep reduces the risk of injury to the animal, other animals, and people. Goats and sheep should be disbudded between 3-9 days of age. After 21 days of age, the developing horn tissue will have attached to the skull, is more difficult to remove, and dehorning is necessary. Dehorning of goats and sheep over 21 days of age must be performed by a licensed veterinarian and should only be performed where the health and welfare of the animal or human is impacted. Because disbudding and dehorning cause pain and distress, the AVMA recommends the use of procedures and practices that reduce or eliminate these effects, including the use of approved or Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act (AMDUCA)-permissible clinically effective medications.

The AVMA encourages research leading to new or improved techniques and approved pharmaceuticals that reduce or eliminate pain and distress associated with disbudding and dehorning.

**Statement about the Resolution**

The American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (AASRP), in conjunction with the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), drafted the policy on Sheep and Goat Disbudding and Dehorning. The current AVMA policy on Bovine Disbudding and Dehorning was also considered in the creation of this new policy. The AASRP guidelines on Goat Kid Disbudding (<http://www.aasrp.org/about/guidelines/debudding2020.pdf>) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) publication on Disbudding on U.S. Goat Operations ([https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/nahms/goats/downloads/goat19/goat2019-infobrief-disbudding.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/goats/downloads/goat19/goat2019-infobrief-disbudding.pdf)) were used as references in the creation of this policy.

**Financial Impact: None**

	<b>Board of Directors</b>	<b>House Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Reference Committee #3</b>	<b>House of Delegates</b>
<b>Recommend Approval</b>	X	X		
<b>Recommend Disapproval</b>				
<b>Recommend Referral to...</b>			...the BOD for further clarification by the Animal Welfare Committee	...the BOD for further clarification by the Animal Welfare Committee
<b>No Recommendation</b>				
<b>Recommend Postpone Indefinitely</b>				
(use this space for additional narrative, if needed)				