



Good Production Practices: Required Living Space for Sheep

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Purpose: To teach youth how to calculate the living space needed for their animals and to emphasize the importance of having enough space for all animals.*

Materials Needed

- One copy of attached handout per youth or pair of youth.

Steps

1. After discussing the importance of animal comfort, have youth complete the worksheet alone or in groups of two.

Remembering What Is Important

When managing and caring for our animals, we have to keep in mind what is comfortable for them. Proper housing goes hand in hand with proper feeding and treatment to raise a healthy animal.

Discuss the questions below with the youth, asking follow-up questions and stimulating discussion so they understand why proper housing is important.

- Why do some confinement methods require more space than others?
- What problems could arise if you do not give your animals enough space?

Have youth identify what a square foot is and why it is called a square foot. You could use a flooring tile or a piece of cardboard cut to 1 square foot to illustrate the size.

Supplemental activities could be added to the worksheet, including (1) have the youth “assemble” the 10 square foot pen from question 4 (10 feet by 10 feet) using yarn and a tape measure, (2) ask the youth to draw the pen from question 4 with sidewalk chalk on a concrete floor, or (3) have the youth rope off an area that is 10 feet by 10 feet to demonstrate the size of the pen. You could also have them complete this activity for each housing situation for rams and compare the differences in sizes.

**This activity has been developed to supplement the information that can be found in the National Pork Board Good Production Practice No. 10: Provide proper livestock care to improve well-being.*

Recommended Housing Space for Sheep and Lambs

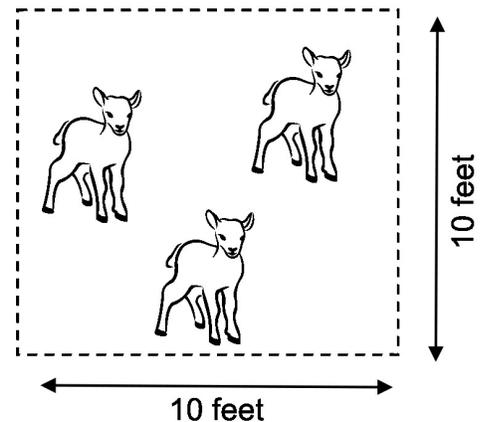
Use the table below to help you answer the following questions. Circle the letter for the correct answer for each question.

	Sheep housing: suggested square feet per animal		
	Dirt lot	Open shed	Confinement (dirt floor)
Bred ewe	20	8	12-16
Ewe with lambs	25	12	16-20
Ram	20	8	20-30
Feeder lamb	15-20	6	8-10

Source: *Sheep Housing and Equipment Handbook, 1982, Midwest Plan Service.*

Practice Questions and Calculations

- In general, which of the housing spaces can house more sheep?
 - Dirt lot
 - Open shed
 - Confinement (dirt floor)
 - Confinement (slatted floor)
- Which of the housing spaces requires the most area?
 - Dirt lot
 - Open shed
 - Confinement (dirt floor)
 - Confinement (slatted floor)
- You are given a 400-square-foot dirt lot. How many ewes with lambs can you fit in the area?
 - 6 ewes and lambs
 - 12 ewes and lambs
 - 16 ewes and lambs
 - 25 ewes and lambs
- You own a 10-foot by 10-foot open shed and would like to buy 15 bred ewes. Do you have the required amount of space (without building extra pens) to house the bred ewes you want to purchase?
 - Yes
 - No
- You have 20 feeder lambs. How much space would you need in an open shed to house them all?
 - 2.5 square feet
 - 120 square feet
 - 200 square feet
 - 240 square feet



Area = length x width

Answer Key to Questions

1. b. Open shed 2. a. Dirt lot 3. c. 16 ewes and lambs 4. d. No

Calculation:

- Area = length x width, so the area for a 10-foot by 10-foot lot = 100 square feet.
- 15 bred ewes x 8 square feet per ewe = 120 square feet.
- You only have a 100-square-foot shed, but you need 120 square feet, so you will either have to buy fewer bred ewes or build dirt lot pens.

5. b. 120 square feet

Calculation:

20 feeder lambs x 6 square feet per lamb = 120 square feet