

Every lifestyle block with stock should have stockyards or pens.

Stockyards are used to get animals on and off transport, to carry out any routine procedures requiring animal handling such as drenching and also to allow restraint of an animal in the event that a vet visit is required.

Correct and well-designed facilities make any job much easier and safer when it comes to handling your stock.

Good yards will provide:

- An area where animals waiting to be examined can be held close at hand (holding pen)
- A good race in which animals can be restricted so that treatments can be administered. For cattle- a race with a head bale is essential
- Good flow of animals through the facility
- Safety to handlers
- Efficiency of handling
- No sharp objects, loose materials, or tripping hazards.

Sheep and Goat Yards/Pens

Specific sheep pens can also be designed around the same basic idea but will obviously be somewhat smaller.

The height of a sheep pen should be between 850 and 1,000 mm. Crush races in which most sheep work gets done should be 900mm wide. Drafting races should ideally be 600mm wide at the top and 300mm wide at the bottom.

Goats because of their inquisitive nature require very little in the way of specific yarding facilities, however a catching pen is a must. A small pen that can accommodate a foot bath is also useful where foot infections are a problem.



Photo credit of Whites Stock Yards, Clevedon

A GUIDE TO Stock yards

An A-frame or lean-to type shelter is required by goats though. These should be situated to open away from the prevailing wind and ideally have a self-contained floor.

Cattle Yards

Cattle are extremely heavy, strong animals, so a holding race and head bale are essential in any set of cattle yards. These provide a means to further confine animals for more intensive treatments e.g. calving, capsuling, surgery, de-horning.

It is important not to skimp on materials as adult cows can weigh 600kg or more. Lightweight materials may break without excess pressure on them and this can be dangerous.

These types of pens will also do for sheep. An additional rail can be added at sheep eye height to facilitate movement through the yards.

Safe yards are a must for cattle and a head bale is **STRONGLY** recommended.

