

Sacrificial Animals and their Management Before Eid-ul-Adha

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ABSTRACT

The literal meaning of Qurbani is sacrifice. It is a tradition that is performed annually by Muslims across the globe during the Holy month of Dhul Hijjah. This tradition is a commemoration of the Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) when he decided to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (A.S) in order to comply with the orders from Allah Almighty. Every year, affluent or Sahib-e-Nisab Muslims carry out the practice of animal sacrifice on days 10th, 11th, and 12th of the month of Dhul Hijjah to show willingness for sacrificing every beloved thing for the sake of Allah Almighty

Keywords: Sacrifice, Animals, Eid-ul-Adha.

What is Sacrifice (Qurbani) on eve of Eid-ul-Adha?

The literal meaning of Qurbani is sacrifice. It is a tradition that is performed annually by Muslims across the globe during the Holy month of Dhul Hijjah. This tradition is a commemoration of the Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) when he decided to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (A.S) in order to comply with the orders from Allah Almighty. Every year, affluent or Sahib-e-Nisab Muslims carry out the practice of animal sacrifice on days 10th, 11th, and 12th of the month of Dhul Hijjah to show willingness for sacrificing every beloved thing for the sake of Allah Almighty [1].

Types of animals for Sacrifice:

The animals that can be sacrificed on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha are said to be "Sacrificial Animals". These may include,

- Sheep
- Goat
- Cow
- Buffalo
- Camel [2]

In Islam, there is no preference between male and female sacrificial animals. However, it is usually seen that people prefer to purchase male animals for sacrifice due to their better body condition and relatively more carcass weight percentage.

Age of Sacrificial Animals:

While selecting animals for the purpose of sacrifice, the age of the animal is one of the most important factors that should be considered carefully. Minimum age requirements for sacrificial animals are mentioned below:

Sheep and Goat: At least one-year-old at the time of sacrifice [3]

Cow or Buffalo: At least two years old at the time of sacrifice [4]

Camels: At least five years old at the time of sacrifice [4]

Any animal older than the above age limits is eligible for sacrifice, mentioning that it fulfills all the other requirements that an ideal sacrificial animal should meet. The information about the age of the sacrificial animal provided by the seller may not be always reliable and needs to be cross-checked most of the time. One of the best and most reliable methods to confirm the age of the animal is dentition.

Sheep and Goat: Sheep and goats which are one year old will have a pair of permanent teeth [5]

Cow or Buffalo: Cow or buffalo which are two years old will show two permanent teeth

Camel: Camel at five years of age will have permanent teeth in place of the cheek milk teeth, one replaced on each side of the lower jaw, while two replaced on each side of the upper jaw.

Health and body conditions:

The sacrificial animal should ideally be healthy, active, and free of any disease. Careful inspection should be carried out while selecting an animal for sacrifice. Below is the list of conditions that an animal should fulfill in order to be eligible for sacrificial purposes

- The animal must be active and healthy and ideally free of any disease.
- The sacrificial animal must not be blind or one-eyed.
- The horns, ear, and tail of the animal should be intact.
- The animal can stand on all its four legs and is able to move around freely.
- The animal must be free of lameness.

- The animal should depict physical symmetry.

- The animal should be non-pregnant in case of purchasing the female sacrificial animal.

While selecting sacrificial animals, one must know what a healthy animal looks like and should observe the signs associated with a normal and healthy animal. Some of the most important signs of a healthy animal are given below;

- Absence of wound, abscess, or any other lesion from the body of the sacrificial animal.
- Clean and shiny body/hair coat
- Bright eyes with the absence of any kind of parasitic worms or ocular discharge
- Reactive, alert, and showing all reflexes properly.
- Clean and wet nose with the absence of any purulent discharge.
- Ear and hooves must be clean and without the presence of any lesion.
- The perianal area should be clean and without fecal staining.

Unfortunately, antemortem examination and physical examination alone are not necessary for declaring an animal as disease-free. Animals showing good results during the physical examination don't guarantee the animal to be 100% healthy as many diseases of animals cannot be detected physically or infect the animal without showing any clinical signs. So, to ensure sacrifice meat is healthy meat, a post-mortem inspection should also be carried out in which the quality of meat and offal should be assessed [6].

Nutrition and Housing:

The nutrition and housing of an animal play an important role in determining the health status of an animal. That's why the provision of quality nutrition and housing facilities to the sacrificial animals is vital to keep them healthy. Good managemental practices must include proper nutrition and housing. It is important to ask the seller (animal owner) about the feeding habits of the animal. What type of feed the animal prefers to take? How much quantity of feed it usually like to take? How many times the animal is fed during a day?. Here are some of the recommendations regarding the nutrition and housing of the sacrificial animals,

- Don't overfeed the animals. Offer the recommended amount of feed as per the suggestions of the veterinarian.
- Avoid offering too much concentration to the sacrificial animals.
- Provide sacrificial animals with ample and continuous access to clean water.
- Avoid following nostrums or hypothetical remedies to treat sacrificial animals. Instead, consult a veterinarian.
- Regarding housing, the animals should be kept in a proper housing facility that provides shelter, enough space to move around, and freedom to express natural behavior.
- Keep the animals away from noisy places.
- Avoid overcrowding near the animal facility as it causes stress to the animals.
- Avoid keeping sacrificial animals on hard floors. Always try to keep the animals on the soft ground covered with soil or wheat straw.
- The housing facility for sacrificing animals should be ventilated and enlightened properly [7].

Disease conditions and Precautionary measures:

Several disease conditions in sacrificial animals are associated with poor managemental practices and exposure to the environment or diseased animals. Some diseases can also affect the meat quality of the animals by contaminating it. So, proper care of sacrificial animals should be taken in order to avoid any

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compromise in the hygiene and quality of meat. Here are some disease conditions which can occur in sacrificial animals and some precautionary measures to prevent and control these disease conditions.

1. Bloat or Tympany:

Tympany or bloat refers to a condition when there is excessive accumulation of gas in the rumen. It mostly occurs when the animals stop belching. The major sign of bloat is the ballooning of the left flank and the animal starts kicking its belly. The animal stands in a position in which its back legs are wide apart. Bloat occurs when you offer lush green fodder to the animal in excessive amounts. So, in order to prevent the sacrificial animal from bloat or tympany, avoid offering fodder like clover, lucerne, and alfalfa to your animals in excessive amounts. Also, avoid giving dry bread or chapati to the animal to prevent it from bloating [8].

2. Lameness:

It is a condition that occurs when an animal avoids movement due to pain in its legs or foot. It is an issue of animal welfare and health ultimately leading to production losses. Sacrificial animals are prone to lameness when they are kept on a hard floor which results in the formation of ulcers on hoof. Physical injuries during loading and transportation can also cause lameness in such animals. It is a painful condition for the animal due to which the animal is reluctant to move and its feeding and drinking are also disturbed. So, to avoid lameness in your animals, try to keep them on surfaces having soft soil and take great care during the transportation of these animals [9].

3. Ticks Infestation:

Ticks are among the most important ectoparasites of cattle as they are responsible for considerable blood losses in the animals. Tick infestation can cause anemia in animals which leads to emaciation and weight loss. Moreover, ticks are responsible for transmitting several pathogenic microorganisms from animals to humans and vice versa because they can act as a vector for many diseases. Nowadays, an emerging and prevalent disease "Lumpy Skin Disease" (LSD) which is causing substantial losses in the cattle population, is also transmitted possibly due to mosquitoes and ticks [10]. So, in order to prevent sacrificial animals from ticks infestation, you should apply appropriate acaricidal sprays. Moreover, carry out deworming of sacrificial animals at an appropriate time after consulting a veterinarian.

4. Anorexia or Off-feed:

This is one of the major complaints that is reported by the owners of sacrificial animals. Anorexia is a condition in which the animal stops feeding and can occur due to several reasons. In sacrificial animals, the major reason for anorexia or off-feed is an abrupt change in the feeding of the animal. Most of the time the animal owner is unaware of the feeding habit of the animal and starts offering feed to the animal randomly. Other reasons may include fear, stress, or any bacterial or viral infection. So, taking the feeding history of sacrificial animals and offering them suitable feed is necessary to avoid anorexia [11].

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