

## Lambing and calving management



## Topics covered....

- Stages of gestation
  - Nutrition of the ewe
  - Preparation
  - Stages of lambing
  - Neonate care
  - When things go wrong
- Stages of gestation
  - Nutrition of the cow
  - Preparation
  - Stages of calving
  - Neonate care
  - When things go wrong

## Ewe gestation = 145 days

- Seasonal breeding (fall)
- Lambing (February to late March)
- Health and nutrition should be monitored throughout gestation.
- Maintain BCS at 2.5 to 3

## Ewe gestation = 145 days

- First trimester (breeding to d 30)
  - Pregnancy Recognition
  - Most susceptible to stress
- 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester (d 30- d 90)
  - Manage nutrition and health
- 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester (d 90 – 145)
  - Fastest fetal growth
  - Increase nutrition
  - Vaccinate for clostridials

## SHEEP NUTRITION AND MANAGEMENT

### Goals:

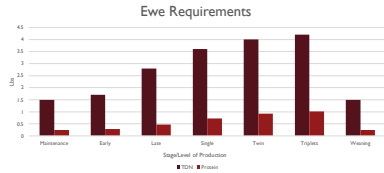
- **95% Conception rate**
- **175% Lambing rate** (Dependent on breed and resources)
- **Less than 10% mortality**
- **Longevity of breeding flock**

## SHEEP NUTRITION AND MANAGEMENT



- Divide the Management into the various stages of production
- Energy and Protein vary with productions stage and the number of lambs born

## THE EWES



## EXTRA NUTRITION IS NEEDED.

- To support fetal growth.
- To support mammary tissue development.
- To prevent pregnancy toxemia (ketosis).
- To ensure the birth of strong, healthy lambs of proper birth weight.



## SHEEP MANAGEMENT CALENDAR

### Last 30 Days Prior to Lambing

- Feed one to two pounds of grain per day
- Give Enterotoxemia Injection to new ewes
- Shear ewes

## DO NOT UNDERFEED EWES EVEN THE FAT ONES!

- Inadequate nutrition can result in:
  - Pregnancy toxemia (ketosis)
  - Small and weak lambs
  - Higher lamb mortality



## DO NOT UNDERFEED EWES

- Inadequate nutrition can result in:
  - Reduced quality and quantity of colostrum.
  - Poor milk production.
  - Reduced wool production (in offspring) due to fewer secondary follicles.




## DO NOT OVERFEED EWES

- Because ...
  - Fat ewes are more prone to pregnancy toxemia
  - Fat ewes experience more lambing difficulties (dystocia).
  - Fat ewes are more likely to prolapse.
  - Large fetuses can cause dystocia.
  - Oversized lambs have a higher mortality.
  - Fat is expensive to put on.



### "Jugs" – Lambing pens




- Why??
  - Reduce predation and loss to weather and improve lambing crop.
- 1 jug to every 7-10 ewes
  - Somewhat dependent on breeding intensity.
- 5' x 5' ideal size
- Unless having complications, should only need to remain for no more than 24 hrs

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### Preparation Check List –For Lambing


- Must haves...
  - Injectable Vit A,D,E + Selenium
  - Needles/syringes
    - Small gauge (18-20)
  - Iodine spray
  - Castration supplies
  - Docking supplies
  - Ear tag supplies
  - Record Book
- Should haves...
  - Towels
  - Gloves
  - Lubricant
  - Heat lamps/hair dryer
  - Lamb pullers



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### Preparation Check List – Post lambing care

- Should haves...
  - Colostrum feeding tube
  - Colostrum (fresh/frozen>powdered)
  - Lamb bottle nipples
  - Electrolytes
  - Scours
    - Corid – water
    - Sulfa based antibiotics (bolus)
  - Powdered LAMB milk replacer
  - Antibiotics (LA 200)
  - Probiotics
- For the ewe
  - Propylene glycol – IV or drench
  - Calcium gluconate - IV
  - Prolapse spoon
  - Iodine
  - Antibiotics (LA or Nuflor)



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### Stages of Lambing

- Week prior, vulva loosens
- As lambs drop into position, ewes "hollow out"
- 24 to 48 hours prior ewes "bag up"
- Move to jug

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### Stage 1 (1-8 hrs)


- Nervous, paces
- Water sac is expelled



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### Stage 2 (1-2 hrs; 15 to 30/lamb)

- Water sac ruptures
- Ewe starts to strain/push
- Feet should start to appear
- NOTICE feet position



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## Stage 2

- Head should appear
- If present, and ewe is calm(ish) can remove membranes around the lambs nose if hasn't ruptured already



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## Stage 2

- After shoulders pass, ewe will likely stand and lamb will drop.
- This serves two purposes
  - Complete the birth
  - "Shock" the lamb to breathe



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## Stage 3

- If present, make sure airways are clear and its breathing on its own.
- Leave the ewe alone to bond with the lamb
  - Monitor for twins/triplets
- If multiples check for feet position on each.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> lamb are weaker than first.



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## Stage 3

- Milk let down
- Expulsion of placenta (approx. 30 min)



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## When to provide assistance

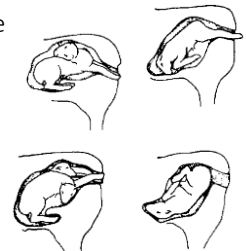
- ✓ If an animal is in stage 1 of labor for longer than 8 hours.
- ✓ If in stage 2, any of the following occurs:
  - ✓ The mother has been straining for 30 minutes with no progress.
  - ✓ The water sac is observed for longer than 1 hour and the animal is not trying to push.
  - ✓ The animal is showing signs of severe distress or fatigue, including bleeding from the rectum of the mother or a swollen tongue of the lamb or kid.
- ✓ It can visually be determined that the lamb/kid is coming in an abnormal way. (For example, you see 3 or more feet, the tail, etc.)
- ✓ If the fetal membranes have not passed within 12 hours after delivery.



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## How to provide assistance

- Glove up (if possible)
- Apply lubricant
- Reach in to access the issue
- If in correct position
  - Size?
  - Shoulder lock
  - Hip lock
- Incorrect position
  - Fix while still in the ewe





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### Observance is important

- Can the ewe stand?
- Signs of uterine prolapse?
- Did ewe expel most/all placental tissue?
- Acceptance?
  - Ewe lambs may struggle at first
- Dried?
- Nursed? (30-60 min)

• If no to any of these, intervention care is needed.

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### Neonate Care




All new lambs:

- Make sure nursed
- Spray naval with iodine
- ¼-1/2 mL of Vitamin/Se shot
- Record weight, # births
- Comments: Ewe health, acceptance, etc


### Neonate Care –Weak, difficult birth, ewe is sick or dies

- Tube with colostrum within 24 hrs
- Transition to LAMB milk replacer
- Slight dose of probiotic (2 mL)
- Feed approx. 100 mL every 2 – 3 hrs for the first 14 days
- Gradually increase amount and decrease frequency after that.
- Rule of thumb... 200 mL/2 lbs of BW






### Ewe care


- **Pregnancy toxemia**
  - Inadequate energy intake during late gestation.
  - Treat with propylene glycol or IV glucose (or c-section).
- **Milk fever**
  - Low blood calcium caused by not enough or too much calcium in diet.
  - Treat with IV or sub-Q calcium solution.



Similar symptoms




### QUESTIONS?



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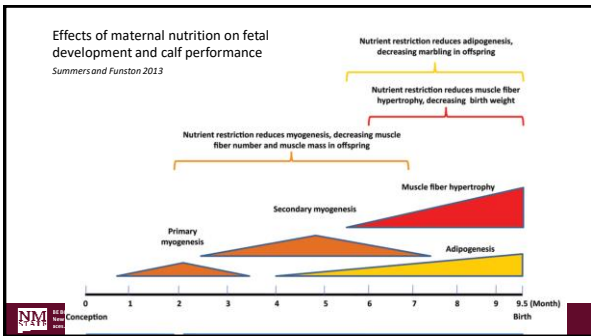
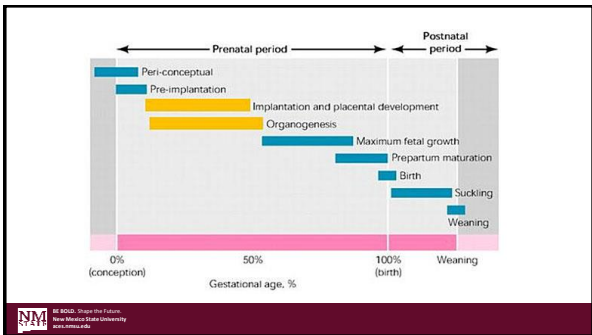
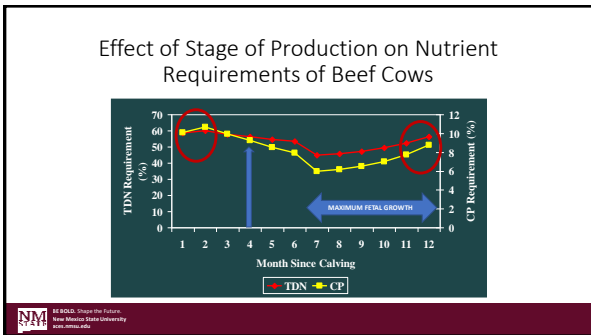
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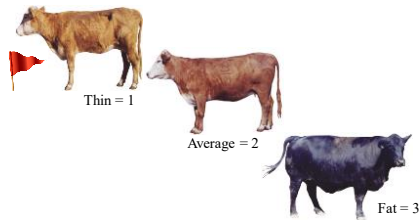



Cow Body Condition

- Quickest assessment of nutritional status
- BCS at Calving is critical
- Want to be at least a 5 (on a scale of 1-9) at calving
- Thin cows have higher requirements



### Body Condition Scoring is the Best Method for Monitoring Nutritional Status of the Cow



### Preparation Check List –For Calving

- Must haves...
  - Needles/syringes
    - Small gauge (18-20)
  - Iodine spray
  - Ear tag supplies
  - Record Book
- Should haves...
  - Towels
  - Gloves
  - Lubricant
  - Heat lamps/hair dryer
  - Calf chains/straps
  - Calf pullers
  - Rope/halters

### Preparation Check List – Post calving care

- Should haves...
  - Colostrum feeding tube
  - Colostrum (fresh/frozen>powdered)
  - Calf bottles/nipples
  - Electrolytes
  - Scours
    - Corid – water
    - Sulfa based antibiotics (bolus)
  - Powdered CALF milk replacer
  - Antibiotics (LA 200)
  - Probiotics
- For the cow
  - Propylene glycol – IV or drench
  - Calcium gluconate - IV
  - Prolapse needle/twine
  - Iodine
  - Uterine boluses
  - Antibiotics (LA or Nuffor)

### Stage 1 (1-8 hrs)

- Nervous, isolates
- Will hold tail away from the body.
- Water sac is expelled



### Stage 2 (1-2 hrs)

- Water sac ruptures
- Cow will start to strain/push
- Feet should start to appear
- NOTICE feet position
- Stage ends with successful calf expulsion



### Stage 3

- Leave the cow alone to bond with the calf.
- Heifers need to be monitored to make sure they accept the calf.
- Milk let down
- Expulsion of placenta (approx. 30 min)



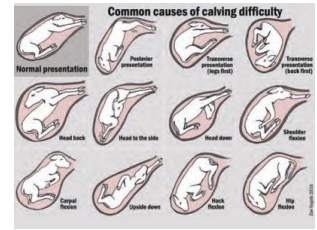
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  - ✓ It can visually be determined that the calf is coming in an abnormal way.
  - ✓ If the fetal membranes have not passed within 12 hours after delivery.



### How to provide assistance

- Glove up (if possible)
- Apply lubricant
- Reach in to access the issue
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### How to provide assistance



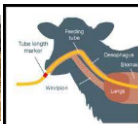
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- Acceptance?
  - Heifers may struggle at first
- Dried?
- Nursed? (30-60 min)
- If no to any of these, intervention care is needed.



### Neonate Care –Weak, difficult birth, cow is sick or dies

- Tube with colostrum within 24 hrs
- Transition to CALF milk replacer
- Slight dose of probiotic (2 mL)
- Rule of thumb... 10-12% of BW
- Start with 4 -5 feedings first couple of days.
- Gradually increase amount and decrease frequency after that.
- Feed approx. 2 to 3 liters/day



### Cow care

- **Pregnancy toxemia**
  - Inadequate energy intake during late gestation.
  - Treat with propylene glycol or IV glucose (or C-section).
- **Milk fever**
  - Low blood calcium caused by not enough or too much calcium in diet.
  - Treat with IV or sub-Q calcium solution.



Similar symptoms





## In Summary

- Lambing and calving management relatively similar.
- Nutrition plays a key role in success pre and post lambing/calving
- Being observant is key.
- Be prepared with appropriate supplies.
- Try to avoid intervening too soon. Can cause more problems than does any good.
  - Increased risk of rejection
  - Increased risk of health issues for both
  - Reduced reproduction in the next cycle.

## In Summary

- Before assisting, shadow/help, get training in how to pull lambs/calves.
- Avoid trying to assist on your own.
- If not comfortable with the process call a vet.
- Post birth care is as vital as pre and during. Again observation is key.



## The best time of the year!

