

# Lambing

## Information Sheet

### Be Prepared for Lambing



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Follow the tips below to ensure you are prepared for lambing:

- Make sure you have stocked up with equipment and medicines e.g. tubes for giving lambs colostrum, digital thermometer for hypothermic lambs, iodine for navels, antibiotics, syringes and needles for treating ewes with mastitis or lambs with joint ill, disposable gloves, lubricant and ropes/snare for lambing ewes plus treatments for twin lamb disease, prolapses and milk fever. Don't leave it until the last minute to pick up supplies from your vet. Let them know in advance so that they are prepared and can order in what you need. Other sundries could include milk replacer, elastrator ring and marker sprays.
- Check your flock health plan to remind yourself of protocols to deal with problems such as abortions, scours or joint ill.
- Have you ordered sufficient clostridial vaccine to give all the ewes and replacements their booster 4 to 6 weeks pre lambing? What about the lambs e.g. Scabivax or clostridial vaccine?
- Housing ewes and lambs for long periods can increase the risk of disease. Make sure that lame ewes are separated and treated before housing. Use plenty of clean, dry bedding to reduce the risk of further lameness and other issues such as watery mouth, joint ill and coccidiosis.
- You will also need supplies of different disinfectants for use in pens, for sterilising equipment such as stomach tubes and for cleaning hands.
- Is there frozen colostrum ready in the freezer? If not can you source some or order dried colostrum? Check that bottles/teats are still in good condition.
- Consider blood sampling 10 ewes 4 weeks pre lambing to check that the diet is supplying enough energy and protein. If not then increased problems with twin lamb disease and mastitis may occur.
- Body condition score and if space allows split ewes into group for feeding based on lambing date, condition score and number of lambs carried.
- Have a plan in place for dealing with frozen pipes and water bowls. Is the lamb warming box working correctly at the right temperature?
- Adequate lighting makes a big difference making it easier to check ewes and lambs thoroughly without too much disturbance.
- Shearing housed ewes in winter has been shown to increase lamb birthweights and can improve hygiene, makes it easier to spot prolapses and helps the lamb find the teat. It is important that it is carried out more than 8 weeks before turn out, the building is well bedded and free of draughts and shelter is provided once outdoors. There are disadvantages as shorn ewes can eat more, it might not be desirable to have heavier lambs and cold stress can cause wool slip.