



PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

7 Crescent St. Penguin Tas 7316

[03] 64371331

penguinvet@gmail.com

Advice on Caring for SHEEP and ORPHAN LAMBS. P.1 of 3

For Orphans:

Every lamb needs to drink sheep colostrum ASAP after birth,
& definitely within 48 hours.

SHEEP colostrum is essential to protect the lamb from disease. [they get NO protection across the placenta like human babies do]

After 48 hours the colostrum will be nutritious but they can no longer draw immune-protection from it.

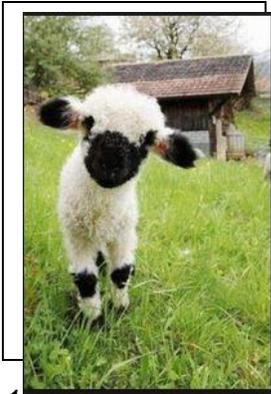
Colostrum-deprived lambs may suffer Navel infections, Joint-ill, Pneumonia, Septicaemia. Goat colostrum or "Artificial" colostrum powders may also aid digestion & off-set scouring, but cannot give lambs immune- protection.



Each ewe can make colostrum ["first milk"] only once. After lamb has had its first drink, she will make 'normal' milk

If you have a ewe that loses her lambs, collect her colostrum into a sterilized glass bottle; frozen, it remains potent 12 months. Sit her up as if for shearing, use warm soapy water to massage and ease her udder and encourage milk let down. If it seems she has no milk, an injection of Oxytocin [prescription, S4] can initiate let-down

Keep the lamb warm. dry, clean and safe. From Day 1 allow daily access to pasture, for exercise, and to nibble grass. They do not need help toileting, and will not self-soil if healthy. They do not house-train, so need easy-wash or disposable bedding.



DIET.

1. Sheep Colostrum [see above] as soon as possible, definitely within 48 hours of birth .

First feed: Offer warm pre-boiled water, preferably strengthened with glucose & electrolytes (e.g. *Vytrate*)

Second feed: (2 hours later) 2 parts as for first feed + 1 part milk*

Third feed: (5-6 hours later) 1 part as for first feed + 2 parts milk*

Then: Feed 2-3 times daily, using full strength milk*

NEVER MAKE SUDDEN CHANGES IN A LAMB'S DIET. If you need to change the type of milk used, mix the new and old milks together and dilute the mix back to 2/3 strength with pre-boiled water for a few feeds.

*Suitable milks include:

1. *Formula One* or similar milk replacement available from your vet
2. Pasteurised **Homogenised** Full-Cream cow's milk from the Supermarket
not straight from a cow. ... unhomogenised cows' milk has fat globules too big for lambs to digest
not skim milk, it does not provide enough sustenance
3. **Goat's milk**, which is now available commercially.
4. **Calf milk replacer**

How much to feed? Traditionally, 250-300ml twice daily. But larger lambs may need more; and weak drinkers may need smaller feeds given more often. Do not over-feed or force feed. Aim at 15% of their bodyweight: so a 2kg lamb needs About 300ml in a 24 hour period [perhaps 4 x 75ml drinks] whereas a 4kg lamb needs twice that volume [perhaps 300ml twice].

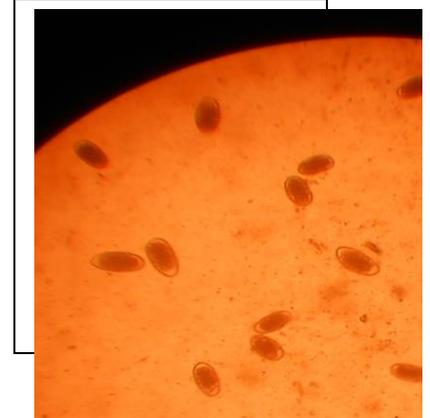
Starting Solids Lambs will start to nibble grass or lamb-pellets when a few days old. From 6-8 weeks, they can progress to once-daily milk feeds plus an evening meal of growth-pellets. From 12 weeks, they can be weaned onto good pasture, but will do best if milk and/or pellets are offered for 5-6 months.

Ongoing Sheep Diet. Being ruminants, they need roughage in their diet. Mixed pasture grasses are fine, but Spring clover can cause bloat. Supplement the grass with pasture hay over-winter and in Spring. If using “concentrates”, whether grains or pellets, introduce them slowly and with caution.

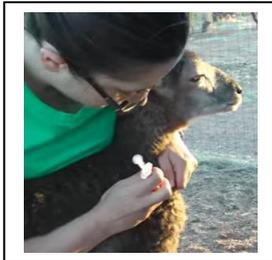
WORMS: These are a serious problem for lambs and breeding sheep, causing diarrhoea, ill-thrift, breathing problems and death. Efficient Drenching programs will remove current worms from sheep & also reduce future contamination of pasture. Other control measures such as pasture rotation & periods of fallow must be tailored to suit your property, your management systems & stocking rate. We can best offer that advice during an on-property assessment.

In general:

- Drench lambs at 6, and 12 weeks and then each 3 - 4 months but especially in Autumn, Spring, and whenever they enter new pasture. Ivomec-based drenches are especially recommended for the Spring and Autumn drenching.
- Drench breeding ewes with a pregnancy safe “ectin” drench 2-3 weeks before they lamb. Even older ewes have lowered resistance at lambing and they can contaminate pastures with worm eggs dangerous to themselves and to all young sheep.
- New-to-you sheep should be drenched ASAP after arrival on your property.
- We can assess your stock’s worm problem by faecal flotation tests ... bring in ½ cup fresh poo
- Penguin Vet can provide small quantities of effective drench solution to people with only a few sheep



Other Parasites: **Lice**, bacterial dermatitis, coccidial scours etc. may need to be specifically treated, but may also reflect some other husbandry problem such as malnutrition or inadequate hygiene.



VACCINATIONS:

“5 in 1” protects them from Pulpy Kidney, Tetanus, and 3 other Clostridial infections;

“6 in 1” adds Cheesy Gland, a skim disease often caught off shears.

Vaccinate lambs at 6 and 12 weeks, then each 12 months.

Give ewes a booster vaccination at least a month before lambing so their colostrum can provide lambs with maximum protection.

We can administer these vaccinations for you, teach you to give them yourself, on-sell single doses, or packs of 50+

SHEEP LIFESPAN: Sheep live 8-14 years.

MARKING: of horns: at 2-4 weeks
of young males: ring them within 1 - 4 weeks; if older, they may need surgical castration.

BREEDING: **Puberty** can be as early as 4-5 months, especially if Spring-born. They should not be bred until their 2nd year.
Cycles occur each 21 days, strongest in Autumn. They are in oestrus [receptive to mating] 12-24 hours.
Gestation/ Pregnancy lasts 5 months. Merinos usually have 1 lamb and British Breeds 2 or 3

PREVENTING and Treating Lamb Diarrhoea? See below

PREVENTING and Treating Lamb Diarrhoea.

- Caused by:
1. Not enough sheep colostrum within 24-48 hours of birth.
 2. (Dis)stress: e.g. chilling, altered diet, loss of mother, exposure, going through sale-yards, transport, non-acceptance by foster mother etc.
 3. A sudden change of diet.
 4. An unsuitable diet: e.g. milk fresh from a cow, which has over-large fat globules.
 5. Bad feeding methods. Perhaps the milk is too strong/too cold/too hot, the lamb is being overfed, fed with head down to drink from a bucket [then they often gulp in too much air, causing colic and discomfort.]
 6. Bad hygiene
 7. Contagious microbial enteritis, caught from other lambs e.g. Salmonella, E.coli, or Coccidiosis.
 8. For older lambs on pasture ... WORMS!

Try to identify and remove the cause, and:

A. IF THE LAMB IS STILL ALERT, ACTIVE, DRINKING WELL.

No milk for 24 hours. Instead feed a mix of glucose and electrolytes e.g. **Vytrate**; offer 300ml twice daily via a teat and warmed to about 30°C .

Add **Scourban** [prescription, S4] by mouth at 2ml per 3kg lamb-weight twice daily for 3 – 5 days

Decide on the milk substitute you are going to use (it must be suitable and **available** so you need not change it: (see previous page for advice).

On the 2nd day feed a mix of One part glucose/electrolyte + One part milk substitute.

On the 3rd day, strengthen to One part glucose/electrolyte + Two parts milk

Then resume full milk feeds. If scours return, weaken the mix and re-strengthen more slowly.

Please do contact us if scours persist or worsen despite this approach.....

ALSO isolate this lamb from healthy lambs, and maintain hygiene carefully.

B. IF LAMB IS 'FLAT': CHILLED, WEAK, WON'T SUCK, HAS COLLAPSED.

1. Warm the lamb: wrap it up, put it near a heater, on a heat pad, or amidst fresh dry hay etc. Weak lambs have no energy to keep themselves warm!
2. Use a teaspoon, syringe or similar to slowly offer Glucose and Electrolyte mix (**Vytrate**) warmed to 35°C. Make sure the lamb has time to swallow properly. Aim to give 40ml per kg lamb weight.
3. Repeat this each 2 hours until the lamb has the strength to suck
4. Then continue as for the "alert" lamb above.

*If you are unsuccessful, bring the lamb in and we can tube-feed him for you
Or, we have a "Lamb Feeder" that allows you to safely tube-feed weak lambs yourself.
If necessary, we can also rehydrate lambs with intravenous or subcutaneous fluids via a drip.*

For further advice, phone 6437 1331.

All the products mentioned above are available from us.