

Hunter Nutrition

The Program That Performs

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HOW TO GET FALL LAMBS NATURALLY

by: Jeff Hunter



We have been fall lambing for many years and really like lambing that time of year. We have about 250 Dorset Ewes, some lambing once a year in the fall, others are on an accelerated lambing schedule.

Our breeding management procedure is simple and cost effective. We expose all of our Fall and Winter Lambing Ewes in April for fall lambs. The ewes are flushed with a small amount of feed for 4 to 6 weeks prior to turning in the ram. Ewes will be in good condition, but not fat. The ewes are sheared in late March or early April before the rams go in. The rams are also sheared.

Our program of synchronization with teasers has yielded as good of results as using cidr's/sponges.

A Teaser ram is a vasectomized male who cannot produce off-spring, but produces the necessary pheromones to induce estrus in a ewe. The 'ram effect' works best when the ewes have been kept well away from the rams for about eight weeks. When the teaser ram is introduced ewes come into heat in two groups, some right after the (teaser) ram is introduced- others six days later. This initial heat is a 'silent heat', the ewes first true heat will be 17 and 23 days later. Therefore most ewes will breed on days 1-3 and days 6-8 after the intact ram goes in. The 'ram effect' created by the teaser ram allows most of your ewes to be mated in a few days, making a short compact, efficient lambing.

Teaser rams go in March 25th, they remain with the ewes for 16 days. On day 16 (April 9th) the teasers are removed and replaced with intact rams. The April 9th ram introduction produces lambs born on September 1st. About 60-67% of the ewes exposed lamb during the first cycle (17 days), and we are over 90% done lambing by the end of two cycles.

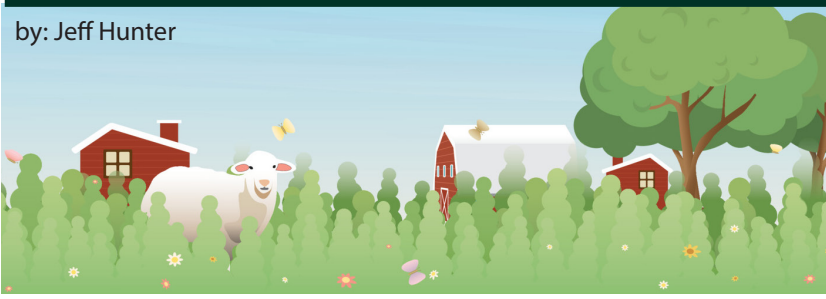
Synchronizing the estrus with teaser rams seems to work better in the spring than at other times of the year for us. So our best results are with the April 9th breeding for September 1st lambing. Sheep are seasonal breeders and bred best during short day length. So, you have better results by breeding to lamb 'earlier' in the fall vs. trying to breed for a later fall lambing. It is much easier to get September born lambs, than October or November born lambs.

Make sure the ewes are kept on the same amount of feed until 30 days post conception. This will give you the best chance for twins and a high number of ewes who maintain their pregnancy.



TROUBLE SHOOTING: SPRING HEALTH ISSUES

by: Jeff Hunter



Spring is always a time of re-novel and the hope of a good growing season. However the new season does create animal health and nutrition concerns. Concerns with performance (gain), grass tetany, fly season, and bloat should be addressed with preventative measures. Don't be fooled by the lush spring grass growth on your pastures. The early spring forage is mostly water and thus low in nutritional value. Animal performance suffers due to the inability to eat enough of the wet forage to meet dry matter, mineral, and energy needs. Providing free choice hay for at least two of days prior to turn out can prevent bloat. Continue feeding hay as a source of dry matter to maintain performance. Feeding a small amount of grain as a source of energy is also very helpful as a supplement to spring pasture. The fast growing, high moisture pasture and its diluted nutritional value can cause grass tetany. This magnesium deficiency causes neurological problems; 'grass staggers', convulsions, and possibly death. Magnesium is needed for many physiological functions. Magnesium is a component of bone, important to nervous system function, and needed for enzyme function. Providing magnesium through the feed and/ or with free choice mineral is very important. Animals need to be on adequate magnesium for a few weeks prior to spring grazing. We manufacture a High Magnesium 2:1 Beef Mineral for cow herds to address tetany in cattle. For Sheep and Goats which are less susceptible to tetany; use our standard feeds and free choice mineral as they contain magnesium levels which prevent tetany.

Spring is also the time to begin your fly control program. You should use at least two of the three control methods. Control flies with oral larvicides, residual premise spray, and/or fly 'catchers'. When using an oral larvicide such as Rabon or Altosid, an early start is critical to success. Oral larvicides go 'through' the animal into its manure, when fly eggs hatch in this manure, the larvae are killed by the larvicide. Start animals on the oral larvicide four weeks prior to fly season. We provide a 2:1 Beef Mineral with Altosid along with a Sheep Mineral with Rabon that will supply your animals with these oral larvicides. A good nutrition program is just as important during maintenance as it is when livestock are in a productive state. Don't let the turn out to pasture be a time of neglect and nutritional deficit. The spring move to maintenance should be a time of rebuilding and nutritional fulfillment – allowing stock to be ready to reach their full potential.

BREEDING MANAGEMENT FOR FALL LAMMING

by : LeAnn Hall

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PREPARATION TO IMPROVE REPRODUCTIVE

SUCCESS. Major target areas include nutrition, health status, management tasks, estrous cycle manipulation, and ram evaluation.

Ewe nutrition plays a major role in reproductive success. Evaluate ewes' nutritional status using the body condition scoring (BCS) system with an ideal target of 3-3.5/5 for ewes and 3.5-4/5 for rams at the time of breeding (see Resources for more information regarding BCS). Note that it takes approximately 1 month to change the BCS of an animal by a whole number. Thinner ewes can benefit from the flushing effect, increasing provided nutrition rapidly for 2-3 weeks prior to breeding. Care should be taken to adjust ration slowly enough to prevent acidosis or overeating disease. Feeding a high plane of nutrition throughout the breeding season can increase pregnancy rates, ovulation, and lambs born. Work with your Hunter Nutrition representative to formulate a feeding plan that ensures adequate energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals as needs can vary widely based on breed, style of sheep, climate, and forages offered. Providing access to fresh, clean water at all times is paramount. Dirty, stagnant water can reduce feed intake and overall health, significantly impacting reproductive success.

Thirty to sixty days prior to breeding is an ideal time to evaluate flock health status and complete necessary tasks including vaccinations, deworming, and treatment of lameness. Clostridial vaccines (CDT) are imperative, aiding in the prevention of both tetanus and overeating or acidosis.



SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF TASKS

MARCH 15

- Evaluate BCS of ewes and rams -> adjust nutrition as indicated
- Give chlamydia vaccine to ewe lambs and ram lambs
- Begin inclusion of Clarify in feed or Rabon in mineral for fly control
- Treat foot issues

APRIL 15

- Evaluate BCS of ewes and rams -> adjust nutrition as indicated
- Give chlamydia, clostridium (CDT), pneumonia vaccines to all ewes and rams
- Deworm if heavy parasite load
- Clean out barns/scrape lots
- Treat foot issues

MAY 3

- Insert CIDRS
- Give campylobacter vaccine
- Deworm all ewes and rams
- Treat foot issues

MAY 15

- Remove CIDRS
- Give 3-4cc PG600
- Retreat foot issues
- Turn out rams with marking harness

JUNE 15

- Remove rams

JULY 15

- Pregnancy check
- Booster campylobacter vaccine

Resources:

- Nutrition Throughout Pregnancy for Sheep Flocks- Penn State Extension
- Breeding Programs of Sheep - Management and Nutrition - MSD Veterinary Manual
- Bing Videos - BCS in sheep by Purdue Extension

Mannheimia hemolytica is a major cause of pneumonia and can be addressed with a vaccination program. Initial vaccination for both diseases entail 2 doses given 4 weeks apart with a subsequent annual booster thereafter. Ideally begin the clostridial (CDT) and pneumonia (*Mannheimia hemolytica*) vaccine protocols as lambs; chlamydia vaccines, (to be discussed shortly), can also be given as lambs after 5 months of age. Chlamydia and campylobacter (or Vibriosis) are common disease agents resulting in abortion. Like the clostridial and pneumonia vaccines, chlamydia vaccinations should be given in 2 doses, 4 weeks apart, with the second dose coming no less than 30 days prior to breeding and an annual booster given 30 days prior to breeding in subsequent years. Campylobacter vaccinations should be given immediately prior to breeding with a second dose 60-90 days later in all ewes. In addition to vaccinations, parasite load should be considered and deworming protocols implemented, especially as pasture usage gets underway. Identifying and treating or culling any footrot issues will increase reproductive success as well.

Spring is often the time elected for additional management tasks, including shearing, foot trimming, and manure removal. Removing the fleece makes evaluation of BCS much easier, and foot trimming can help identify footrot or other issues.

Manure removal decreases heat stored in the manure pack as well as decreases fly pressure. Adding a feed-through insecticide like Clarify or offering mineral with Rabon included also decreases fly pressure, keeping animals more comfortable. Energy spent combating flies and other insects can increase body temperature and stress, creating a significant underrated effect on animal health and reproductive success.

For many breeds, estrous cycle manipulation is valuable in inducing and improving pregnancy rates in out of season breeding. Lutalyse injections, CIDRS with or without PG600 injections, melanogestrol acetate (MGA), and light manipulation /melatonin introduction all have recorded success in improving the induction of heat cycles and pregnancy rates. Last but not least, rams should undergo a thorough Breeding Soundness Exam, with scrotal measurements, penile evaluation, foot assessment, and BCS of utmost importance.

Right column is a summary schedule of tasks used to prepare for fall breeding with a target lambing start date of October 8 and 2 cycles of breeding. *Note: 2-dose clostridium (CDT) and pneumonia vaccines are assumed given as lambs.* Adjust as necessary to fit your farm's needs:

HUNTER NUTRITION INC.

200 N. South Street
P.O. Box 412
Brookston, IN 47923

Phone: (765) 563-1003
Fax: (765) 563-1005
www.hunternutrition.com

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	<u>HN 18% Kid Starter R</u>	<u>Other Brand</u>
Crude Protein %	18.00	18.00
Monensin (Rumensin) g/t	20	20
Fat %	6.00	6.00
Fiber %	7.00	7.00
Calcium %	0.8 – 1.2	0.6-1.1
Phosphorous %	0.35	0.40
Selenium ppm	0.30	0.30
Vitamin A IU/lb	11,000	4,000
Vitamin D IU/lb	3,000	—
Vitamin E IU/lb	50	—
Added Ammonium Chloride	Yes	Yes
Added Yeast Culture	Yes	Yes
Added Prebiotics	Yes	?
Added Probiotics	Yes	No
Steam Rolled Grains	Yes	Yes
Roasted Soybeans	Yes	Yes

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