

# REARING LAMBS ARTIFICIALLY (ORPHANS)- MANAGEMENT TIPS

Within 2 to 4 hours after birth, decide which lambs among those from multiple births you should remove. Look for the weaker, or smaller ones to choose for artificial rearing. It is important to make the decision early. Relatively weak lambs remaining with ewes can experience more stress than those reared artificially. Consider the following tips:

- ◆ It is essential that newborn lambs receive colostrums milk. Cow's colostrums will work if ewe's milk is not available. Do not dilute with water or warm too quickly if colostrums is frozen.
- ◆ Lambs should be removed from sight and hearing distance of ewes.
- ◆ Provide a warm, dry, draft-free area to start lambs.
- ◆ Use a good milk replacer that is 30% fat and at least 24% protein. Each lamb will require from 15 to 20 pounds of replacer to weaning.
- ◆ Lambs may require some assistance the first day or two to teach them to nurse on whatever feeding device is used.
- ◆ Start on nurser quickly, young lambs start easier.
- ◆ Self feed cold milk replacer after lambs are started. Milk replacers should be mixed with warm water for best results and then cooled down. Lambs feed cold milk well with less problems from scours and other digestive disturbances. Cold milk keeps better too.
- ◆ There is a Formaldehyde solution commercially available that retards bacterial growth in milk (1cc/gallon milk).
- ◆ Hang a light over the milk replacer feeding device and dry ration feeder.
- ◆ Avoid placing young lambs with older lambs, as they may be pushed aside and may not be able to obtain the milk replacer. Remember that lambs nursing ewes drink 25 to 40 times per 24 hours. Best results have been obtained when lambs are fed in groups of 3 to 4 initially. After lambs are successfully trained, they can be handled in groups of 25.
- ◆ Inject lambs in the first few days with Iron Dextran, Vitamin A-D-E, and Selenium-Vitamin E. At 15 days of age, vaccinate for overeating (*Colostridium perfringens* type C & D).
- ◆ Provide lambs with a high-quality creep feed as soon as possible. Provide ample fresh water in front of lambs at all times. Do not feed hay or oats the first three weeks after weaning, as it encourages bloat. Caution! Do not feed leafy alfalfa until two weeks after weaning, as it encourages bloat.
- ◆ Wean lambs abruptly at 21-30 days of age. When to wean depends upon whether lambs are eating creep feed and drinking water. Newly weaned lambs will go backwards for several days. Don't be alarmed, they will make compensating gains later on.