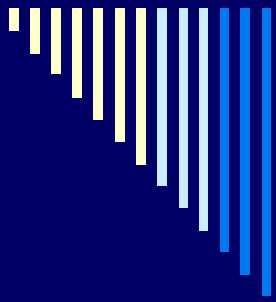

Getting Ready for Lambing and Kidding

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This presentation was originally given at the 2009 Lambing and Kidding School in Waldorf, Maryland.

What's happening during the last 4 to 6 weeks of pregnancy?

- 70 percent of fetal growth is occurring.
- The udder is developing.
- Rumen capacity is decreasing.



Extra nutrition is needed

- ❑ To support fetal growth
- ❑ To support udder development
- ❑ To prevent pregnancy toxemia (ketosis)
- ❑ To ensure the birth of strong, healthy babies of moderate birth weight.



BIRTH WEIGHT ↔ SURVIVAL



Nutrition During Late Gestation



- ❑ Energy is the nutrient most likely to be deficient.
 - ❑ Nutrient requirements vary by species, age, and size (weight) of female and her expected level of production.
 - ❑ To meet energy needs, you usually need to feed some grain.
 - ❑ If forage quality is low, you may also need to supplement protein and calcium.
-

Do not underfeed

(including the fat ones)

Inadequate nutrition can result in . . .



- ❑ Pregnancy toxemia (ketosis)
- ❑ Small and weak babies
- ❑ Higher mortality
- ❑ Reduced colostrum quality and quantity
- ❑ Poor milk yield
- ❑ Reduced wool production (in offspring) via fewer secondary follicles

Do not overfeed

(including the skinny ones)

□ Because . . .

- Fat girls are more prone to pregnancy toxemia.
- Fat ones have more dystocia problems.
- Large fetuses can have difficulty being born.



Proper feed bunk management

- ❑ Make sure all ewes or does can eat at the same time.
- ❑ Feed pregnant ewe lambs and doelings separately from mature females.
- ❑ Separate males after breeding.
- ❑ Do not feed on the ground.



Selenium (Se) and vitamin E



- ❑ Our soils are deficient in selenium.
- ❑ Low levels of Se and/or vitamin E have been associated with poor reproductive performance and retained placentas.
- ❑ Se is passed from the placenta to the fetus during late gestation
- ❑ A selenium deficiency can cause white muscle in lambs and kids.

Selenium (Se) and vitamin E

- ❑ Free choice mineral mixes usually provide adequate selenium.
- ❑ Adding a selenium-fortified mineral mix to the grain ration will ensure adequate intake of Se.
- ❑ On farms with a history of white muscle disease, Se injections are sometimes necessary.



There is a narrow range between what animals need and Se toxicity.

Calcium



This ewe required IV calcium.

- Calcium requirements virtually double during late pregnancy.
- Milk fever is caused by low blood calcium resulting from
 - Inadequate intake of calcium
 - Failure to mobilize calcium reserves.
- You also need to avoid excessive Ca intake.
 - Save alfalfa or similar hay for lactation diet.

Calcium

- ❑ Grains are low in calcium.
- ❑ Forages are higher in calcium, especially legumes.
- ❑ Supplemental Ca
 - Complete grain mixes
 - Mineral supplements
 - ❑ Dicalcium phosphate
 - ❑ Limestone
 - ❑ Bonemeal
- ❑ If a low quality forage is fed, calcium should be added to the grain ration.



Pre-lambing/kidding vaccinations

CD-T: *clostridium perfringens* type C & D and tetanus
(overeating disease)

- ❑ Vaccinate pregnant females approximately one month prior to parturition.
- ❑ Only way to protect lambs and kids from type C overeating disease and tetanus.
- ❑ Females vaccinated for the first time require two shots.



Lambs and kids will acquire passive immunity when they consume the colostrum (first milk).

Periparturient egg rise



- ❑ Ewes/does suffer a temporary loss of immunity to worms (egg counts ↑) at the time of parturition.
- ❑ Management options
 - Deworm all females prior to lambing or kidding.
 - Use the FAMACHA© system to determine the need for deworming individual females.
 - Increase the level of protein in the ration.



☛ Do not administer Valbazen® during first 30 days of pregnancy.

Feed a coccidiostat

To reduce coccidia in lambing and kidding environment

- In feed or mineral
 - Bovatec® - sheep
 - Rumensin® - goats
 - Deccox® - both
- Continue through weaning.
- As an aid to prevent abortions caused by *Toxoplasma gondii*.



☛ *Coccidiostats, especially Rumensin® are toxic to the equine family.*

Antibiotics

If there is a flock history or risk of abortions



1) Feed

- Chlortetracycline (aureomycin) fed at a level of 80 mg/head/day during the last 6 weeks of gestation

2) Injections

- Oxytetracycline (LA-200) at 2 week intervals.

Shear or crutch before lambing/kidding (about one month prior)

- ❑ Results in a cleaner, drier, healthier, environment for lambs/kids.
- ❑ Shorn ewes are less likely to lay on their lambs.
- ❑ Ewes take up less space in barn and around feeders
- ➔ Results in cleaner fleeces
- ❑ Shorn ewes will seek shelter
- ❑ Shorn ewes/does will need more feed to compensate for heat loss from shearing.
- ❑ Freshly shorn ewes/does require adequate shelter.



Crutching – removal of wool around udder and vulva area.



**Get your facilities, equipment,
and supplies ready 2 weeks
before the first babies are due.**





Happy Lambing and Kidding!



Remember: most ewes and does lamb and kid without any problems.