EWE PRODUCTION RECORD

Ewe Number _____ Registration Number _____

Birth Date _____

Birth Type _____

Birth Weight _____

Weaning Weight _____

Year	Sire	Birth Date	Birth Weight	Sex	Lamb No.	Weaning Weight	Remarks

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Sheep Health and Management

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The key to any successful livestock health and management program is planning. The guidelines in this fact sheet were developed for your use with this concept in mind. All matters concerning disease prevention and diagnosis should involve your veterinarian. If health problems exist, a post-mortem examination can be conducted and tissues selected for submittal to a diagnostic laboratory as an aid in securing a diagnosis. The veterinarian can also advise you about specific vaccination programs for your area.

The following discussion is to assist you in developing your program. We recommend you consult the following OSU Extension fact sheets.

#3852- Ewes for Market Lamb Production
#3853- Managing the Ewe Feed Supply
#3854- Feeding and Managing Lambs from Birth to Market
#3855- Electric Fences to Protect Sheep from Predators
#3856- Before Going Into the Sheep Business
#3951- Considerations in Wool Marketing
#3861- A Planning Calendar for Sheep Herd Health and Management

Ram Management

1. Maintain rams in good nutritional state all year long.
2. Approximately 30 to 45 days before the breeding season, conduct the following:
   a. Shear the rams.
   b. Check for internal and external parasites and treat if necessary.
   c. Have a veterinarian evaluate the semen, palpate the testicles for epididymitis and conduct a general breeding soundness exam which should include examination of feet, legs, sheath and mouth.
   d. Increase the feed to get rams into good physical condition.
3. Mature rams may breed 30 to 50 head of ewes. Ram lambs (six to 12 months of age) may be used to breed 15 to 25 ewes.
4. If the days are hot, turn rams into the ewes only at night.
5. Use marking harnesses and record breeding dates. Change marker colors every 15 to 17 days on purebred rams and rotate commercial rams among commercial ewe groups each 15 to 17 days. A suggested marker color sequence is blue, red and green. Using a marking harness will save you labor at lambing time since lambing dates are known. This will also indicate which ewes are recycling.
6. Observe rams while mating and watch for any problems that may develop.
7. Teaser rams (vasectomized rams) may be put in with ewes two weeks before the breeding season. Introduction of a teaser ram near the end of the anestrous period can induce estrus and ovulation earlier than would normally occur without the presence of a ram. The result is a grouping of breeding dates, although, lambing rate is not increased.

Ewe Management

1. Pre-breeding

a. Check for internal parasites and deworm (preferably with a larvacidal wormer).
b. Ewes can be maintained on poorer quality feeds if the feeds are provided in adequate amounts.
c. Two weeks before turning in rams, put ewes on good pasture or feed one-half to three-quarter pound concentrate per head per day. This increased level of nutrition or "flushing" can influence the ovulation rate early in the breeding season, and it should produce an increased lambing rate. Sheep should be fed in troughs and not on the ground to prevent the spreading of diseases and parasites.
d. If you have had an abortion disease problem in your area, vaccinate ewes for sheep type vibrio (campylobacter) and enzootic abortion (chlamydia). Monovalent (vibrio) and bivalent (both diseases)vaccines are available. Consult with your veterinarian for any additional vaccine recommendations.
e. To protect ewes from possible toxoplasmosis infection, keep cats as well as other animals out of the feed grain supply. Toxoplasmosis is caused by the ingestion of a coccidia from cats. If the ewe becomes infected while pregnant, abortion may occur.
f. Producers may shear and then dip, spray, or pour-on, for external parasites. Commercial producers usually shear only in the spring. Dipping and spraying should be done after shearing to facilitate penetration of the insecticide to the skin.

2. Breeding

a. Ewes should be identified with either paint brands or ear tags.
b. Keep good records by using a marking harness on rams and record breeding dates.
c. Watch for repeat breeders! Do not wait until lambing season to find out ewes did not settle.
d. Use the breeding chart provided in the OSU calendar publication (OSU Fact Sheet #3861) to determine estimated lambing dates. They can be recorded in the "remarks" section of the flock lambing record.

3. Pre-lambing/Gestation (Average pregnancy length is 146 days.)

a. After 40 days, ewes may be checked for pregnancy if equipment and expertise are available.
b. Rams should be removed from the flock during late gestation in order to prevent injury to the ewes.
c. Feed one-half to one pound grain per day for 120 pound ewe during the last four to six weeks of pregnancy to prevent pregnancy toxemia.
d. Vaccinate ewes for Clostridium perfringens types C and D and Tetanus to protect ewes and lambs (two doses two weeks apart - second dose two weeks prior to lambing). Lambs will obtain antibodies through the milk of vaccinated ewes. Give a yearly booster two to three weeks before lambing in successive years.
e. If practical, divide ewes into two groups - those close to lambing and others. This will permit feed conservation and closer observation.

4. Lambing

a. When a ewe is found in labor allow 30 minutes to one hour for normal dilation and delivery. Do not rush the lambing process. If lambing hasn't occurred by the end of this time period, examine the ewe. Wash your hands and arms and the external genitalia of the ewe thoroughly before entering the ewe. If you cannot readily get into the uterus and feel the lamb, stop and call your veterinarian. If you cannot reposition and deliver a lamb in 15 to 20 minutes, stop and call your veterinarian. Cesarian section is economical in sheep if live lambs can be delivered. Don't wait too long and handle with care.
b. Navel cords should be clipped off about two to three inches long and treated with a seven percent solution of iodine to prevent navel ill. Make sure the ewe is milking by stripping out a small amount of milk. If the lamb has not nursed by two hours of age or if it is weak, use a stomach tube and feed it 60 cc of warm colostrum. Frozen cow colostrum will work if gradually warmed to about 104 degrees fahrenheit. Do not heat in a microwave oven.
c. If it is necessary to pair up lambs with ewes or observe ewes, utilize lambing pens or "jugs" as needed. Allow 10 pens per 100 ewes as a minimum. If ewes are wild, use lambing pens only when necessary. Handle wild ewes as little as possible. Remove ewes and lambs from lambing pens as soon as they are paired up and by three to five days maximum. After removing the ewes and lambs from the lambing pens, they should be held in a restricted area for a few days to make sure that all lambs are nursing. Separate the ewes with singles from those with twins and triplets and feed accordingly.
d. Identify ewes and lambs with wool branding paint or tags. Ewes that were twins or triplets are more likely to have multiple births than are ewes who were singles. Therefore, an ear notching system can be used in marking lambs that are twins (one notch) or triplets (two notches) so they will be recognizable at weaning. This information should be recorded in the "remarks" section of the record form.
e. Observe lambs daily to insure that they are nursing and to detect diseases and other problems. Early treatment of starvation, pneumonia and scours is necessary for survival.
f. Observe ewes for vaginal discharge and udder infection (mastitis and sore teats).
g. Dock lambs at less than two weeks of age if at all possible. One hundred to 300 I.U. tetanus antitoxin may be given at this time to prevent tetanus if the toxoid has not been given to the ewes. Castration may be done at this time, also. Purebred breeders may prefer to castrate later after ram selection has been done. If castrated more than two weeks after docking, readminister antitoxin.
h. Keep lactating ewes separate from pregnant ewes. Feed lactating ewes one to two pounds of grain per day and all of the high quality forage they can eat. Ewes with twins and triplets will require additional grain.
i. It is recommended that ewes be treated for internal parasites at lambing time, preferably with a larvacidal product.
j. Maintain a lambing record similar to the example provided in this publication.
k. Lambs should be castrated prior to one month of age. Tetanus antitoxin should be given at this time unless the ewes were given a tetanus toxoid series prior to lambing.

5. Lactation or pre-weaning

a. A 16 to 18 percent crude protein creep ration should be available to the lambs.
b. Vaccinate lambs for soremouth if necessary (caution - transmissible to humans).
c. Vaccinate lambs for Clostridium perfringens type D (enterotoxemia - pulpy kidney) at about 30 days of age. A second dose two to four weeks later is recommended.
d. Remove grain from the ewe's ration two weeks prior to weaning in order to reduce milk flow.

6. Weaning

a. Most lambs should be weaned at 60 to 80 days of age. Do not change rations or move the lambs to different pens. Move the ewes, not the lambs. This helps to reduce weaning stress on the lambs.
b. Provide quality rations for the lambs to insure gain and growth at desirable rates. (See Fact Sheet #3854, Feeding and Managing Lambs from Birth to Market).
c. Ewes need to be taken off feed and water for 36 to 48 hours during weaning to reduce milk flow and stress on the udder.

7. Culling

a. Check teeth, udders, and feet of ewes. Broken and smooth mouth ewes may be separated for additional feed or culled. Cull all ewes with bad udders.

b. Watch for chronic wasting disease and cull the affected ewes.
c. Evaluate production records and cull poor producers.

Ewe Lamb Management

Most spring born lambs will breed at approximately eight months of age or when they reach about 65 percent of their mature body weight.

Management aids for ewe lambs are:

1. Ewe lambs should be maintained separate from the ewes from the time they are weaned until their first lambs are weaned. This will permit ewe lambs to be fed proper rations in order to maximize growth and production.
2. Breed to lamb at a different time than the ewe flock since ewe lambs will require more attention at lambing.
3. Vaccination program should be very similar to the ewe program.
4. Special attention should be given to the control of internal parasites because young sheep are more susceptible to stomach and intestinal worms.

General recommendations:

1. Provide clean water at all times.
2. Provide salt and mineral mix at all times.
3. Rotate pastures as necessary.
4. Monitor parasite level.
5. Observe sheep daily while they are quiet. It is easier to detect sick sheep at this time, and early detection is very important to survival or recovery from sickness.
6. Always utilize pasture for ewes if possible. High quality forage is necessary during periods of flushing and lactation.
7. Keep good records and use them in selecting replacement ewes and in making other management decisions.
8. Design a flock health program with the assistance of your veterinarian.

FLOCK LAMBING RECORD

Ewe Flock Lamb	Ram	Date	Birth		Lamb	Registration		Wt. of	
								80 Da.	120 Da.