

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Division

THOMAS P. COOPER, Dean and Director

CIRCULAR NO. 346

LAMBING TIME



Lexington, Ky.

January, 1940

Published in connection with the agricultural extension work carried on by cooperation of the College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and distributed in furtherance of the work provided for in the Act of Congress of May 8, 1914.

CONTENTS

	Page
Feed and care of pregnant ewes	3
Rations	4
Salt and water	7
Exercise	7
Preparation for lambing	9
Lambing quarters	9
Clean the quarters	10
Lambing pens	10
The medicine chest and kit	11
Danger from dogs, horses and hogs	12
Lambing	12
Assisting the ewe	13
Attention to young lambs	15
Chilled lambs	17
Attention to ewes	18
Udder trouble	19
Orphan lambs	20
Hand-feeding lambs	21
Ailments of lambs	22
Pinning	22
Constipation	23
Diarrhea	23
Navel ill	23
Eye trouble	23
Sore mouth	24
Feed after lambing	24
Cull unproductive ewes	27
Docking and castrating lambs	27
Summary	29

Page
3
4
7
7
9
9
10
10
11
12
12
13
15
17
18
19
20
21
22
22
23
23
23
24
24
27
27
29

Circular No. 346

LAMBING TIME

By **RICHARD C. MILLER**

The number of lambs saved by Kentucky sheepmen, in proportion to the number of ewes in their flocks, is among the highest of the sheep-raising states. Nevertheless, thousands more could be saved if farmers generally gave greater consideration to the feed and care of the pregnant ewes, made adequate preparation for lambing, and gave closer attention to details during this critical period.

FEEDING AND CARE OF PREGNANT EWES

No amount of care and attention during the lambing season will result in a high percentage of strong, active lambs unless the ewes have been properly nourished and are in good condition for lambing. If the farmer does well his job of feeding and caring for the ewes during the pre-nursing period, granting that he had good ewes to begin with, little trouble should be experienced during lambing. If he has depended on cheap, inferior roughage, such as corn stover, non-legume hay and fodder, to supply the nutritional requirements of the pregnant ewes, disappointing results with losses of both ewes and lambs may be expected. Such roughages may be profitably used in connection with legume hay but never as the sole roughage ration.

Under Kentucky conditions, ewes that are healthy and free from parasites usually start the winter in good flesh but frequently are allowed to get in a thin and weakened condition by lambing time. It is important that pregnant ewes do not lose flesh but steadily increase in weight from breeding until lambing time. A ewe that is in good condition at breeding time should gain enough during the pre-nursing period to equal the weight of her lamb or lambs, the extra growth of wool and the membranes and fluids lost at lambing; which is about 15 to 25 pounds. Thin ewes should gain this amount in addition to the weight required to put them in normal condition. Farmers often think their ewes are thriving when they

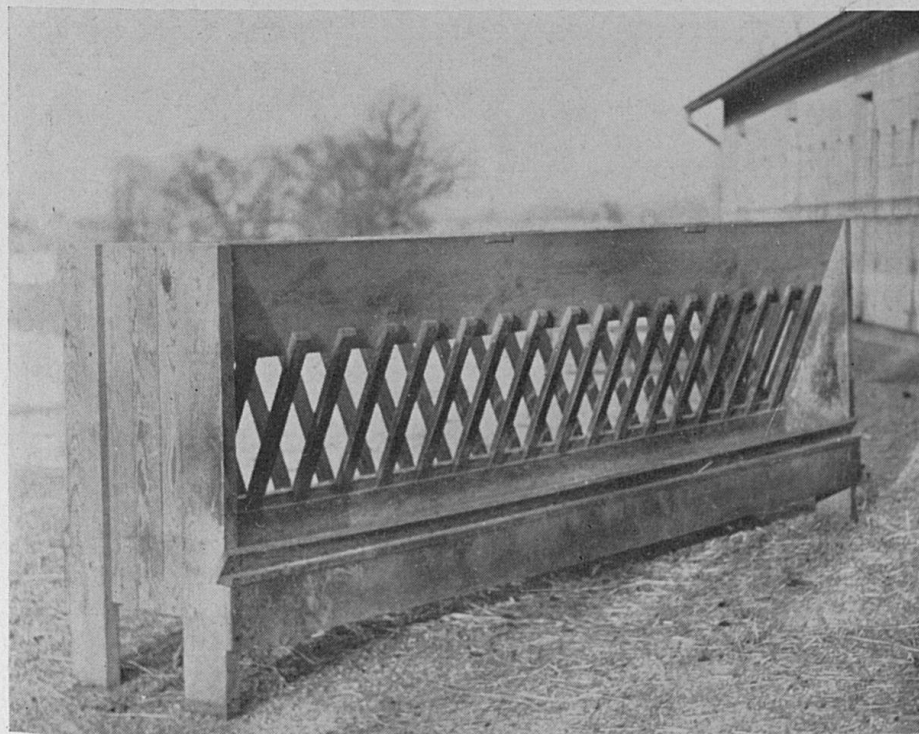
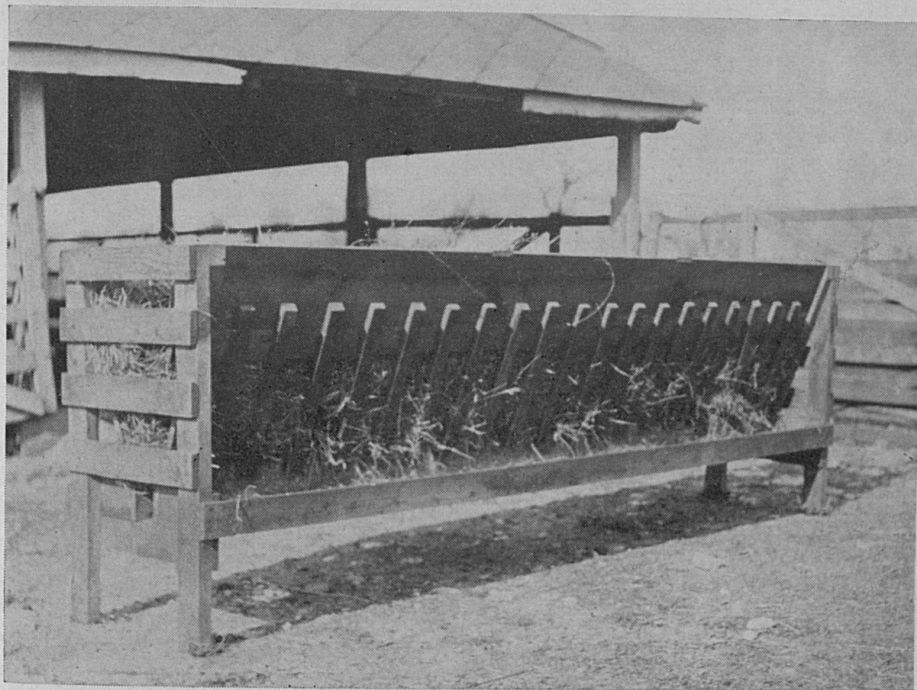
may be actually losing weight. Since the fleece obscures the actual condition of the ewe, it is well to feel the back with the hand to determine degree of flesh and not depend too much on sight.

As soon as pastures begin to fail, the ewes should be fed some hay, all, or the major portion of which, should be composed of alfalfa or other legume. Two pounds of hay a day per ewe will be satisfactory as long as the ewes are getting a fair amount of grazing. Grain is generally added to the ration about three weeks or a month before lambing. It is seldom necessary to feed more than $\frac{1}{2}$ pound a day per ewe until after lambing, when the ration is usually increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ or 1 pound, depending on the amount of grazing available and the condition of the ewes. Ewes with twin lambs, or thin ewes, may require more grain.



Ewes in condition like these at breeding time should gain 15 to 25 pounds each during the pre-nursing period.

Rations. There is no one best ration for all conditions any more than there is one best breed of sheep or one best type of breeding ewe. The ration to use depends on the feeds available and their comparative market and feeding values. The object is to use the feed that meets all the requirements at the least cost. Where plenty of good legume hay is available, wide latitude may be allowed in the kind of concentrates used. Also the hay may be increased and the concentrates decreased or vice versa as conditions determine. Corn alone, when used in connection with a liberal amount of good



Combination hay and grain racks.

legume hay, makes a satisfactory ration for breeding ewes. Among the rations that give good results where ewes are being grazed on dry grass during the winter or are being fed about two pounds of silage or bright corn stover, are the following:

- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (6 parts corn, 3 parts oats, 2 parts bran, 1 part linseed oil meal)
- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (3 parts oats, 2 parts corn, 1 part linseed oil meal)
- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (6 parts corn, 2 parts bran, 1 part linseed oil meal)
- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (4 parts corn, 1 part linseed oil meal)
- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (2 parts oats, 1 part corn)
- 2 pounds legume hay
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of mixture (corn, oats and bran, equal parts)



A feeding scene at lambing time on a large sheep farm. Note that the racks are so constructed that sheep cannot get their feet into them and befoul the feed.

In most years, Kentucky farmers can have small-grain pasture, such as rye, wheat or barley, for part or all of the feeding period and in the Bluegrass sections some farmers keep stock off of part of

their bluegrass pastures in the late summer and early fall and get succulent bluegrass during the winter. Farmers so situated do not need to use as much hay and grain as shown in the preceding rations and may increase the percentage of corn and cut down, or omit entirely, the high protein concentrate. Barley, which is grown extensively in Kentucky, may be substituted for corn; and cottonseed meal or soybean oil meal for linseed oil meal.

While legume hay should form the basis of the roughage ration for breeding ewes, both before and after lambing, a less efficient ration can, when necessary, be made by using non-leguminous roughages and adding enough protein concentrate to the grain mixture to balance the ration. When the non-leguminous roughage is used a calcium supplement will be needed. See Kentucky Extension Circular 326, Minerals for Livestock.

Salt and Water. Salt is necessary for all kinds of farm animals and the pregnant ewe is no exception. Instead of salting the flock once a week or when it happens to be convenient, as is often the practice, salt should be available at all times so that the sheep can have it at will. Coarse barrel salt is preferable to block salt for breeding ewes. Iodized salt should not be used since this is not an iodine-deficient State.

The ewe should have access to good drinking water at all times. The average sized ewe when on dry feed during cold weather may drink as much as a gallon a day before lambing and considerably more while nursing her lamb.

Exercise. Adequate exercise, while of prime importance to the pregnant ewe, seldom receives the consideration it deserves. Exercise builds muscle and aids circulation, digestion and elimination. It results in better general health, stronger lambs and easier lambing.

Ewes generally get all the exercise they need while grazing but when no grazing is available or when the ground is covered with snow, it is important that provision be made for daily exercise. Many farmers solve the exercise problem during such periods by hauling the roughage some distance from the barn or shed where the ewes are accustomed to being fed, thus compelling them to get the needed exercise while walking to and from the feed. If enough

exercise cannot be had in a more convenient way it may pay to take the flock on a daily drive, for several weeks preceding lambing. The ewes should never be hurried but allowed to walk leisurely.



A good way of providing exercise when the ground is covered with snow.

Improper feeding during the pre-nursing period and lack of sufficient exercise are believed to be largely responsible for the heavy losses of breeding ewes from the so-called pregnancy disease. Ex-



Ewes heavy in pregnancy should walk leisurely.

perience has taught that farmers who give close attention to the exercise and nutritional requirements of their pregnant ewes have the best results at lambing time.

PREPARATION FOR LAMBING

The sheep-raiser should plan his work so as to have extra time for the flock during the lambing season. If he is unable to give the flock his personal attention during lambing or has more sheep than he can properly care for, he should provide experienced help for this period. Saving a few additional lambs will more than compensate for the expense of an extra man. Suitable lambing quarters should be provided, individual lambing pens made ready, and the shepherd's medicine chest and kit supplied or replenished. If these and other matters are not attended to before lambing begins, heavy losses may result. Lambing time is the sheep owner's harvest season and he must be properly prepared for it if he is to save the crop.



Ewes in good condition for lambing.

Lambing quarters. Lambing quarters where ewes and new-born lambs will be sheltered from cold and inclement weather should be provided, well bedded with fresh clean straw. While there should be plenty of ventilation, it is important to guard against drafts and small openings thru which young lambs may wander and be lost and frozen. The quarters should be roomy, as overcrowding the ewes at this time is almost sure to be followed by serious consequences. All gates and doors about the farm thru which ewes heavy in lamb are likely to squeeze, should be made wide or kept closed. Attention should also be given to holes in barns and fences.

Clean the quarters. The quarters should be thoroly cleaned and disinfected, and the floor limed. Some farmers make the mistake of using the disinfectant only on the floor, but it is just as necessary on the walls and posts for at least 3 feet from the ground. A good coal-tar sheep dip is satisfactory.



Panels for making lambing pens.

Lambing pens. Individual lambing pens are practically indispensable except for a small flock. The pens make individual attention possible for each ewe and her offspring, and fortunately are inexpensive and easily constructed. The increased percentage of lambs and ewes saved the first year should more than pay for the cost of the pens, and if stored in a dry place at the close of the lambing season they will last many years.

Portable pens are to be recommended as they are less expensive and more satisfactory in every way than the stationary kind. Two panels or hurdles four feet long and three feet wide, hinged in the middle, may be set across a corner to form a pen four feet square which is the usual size. Pens four by six or five by five can be recommended where there is plenty of room and the ewes are large. It is essential that the pens be kept dry, clean and bedded with straw. The number of pens needed depends on the size of the flock and the age of the ewes. Probably about one pen to every five ewes would be enough, except in flocks containing a high percentage of

ewes that are lambing for the first time. Since a ewe generally will not need to be penned more than one or two days and only a small percentage of the flock will be lambing at one time, each pen can be used a number of times. It may be necessary in the case of yearling ewes and ewes with weak lambs to keep them in pens longer than two days. On the other hand, old ewes with single lambs do not necessarily have to be put into individual pens. They can often be placed in groups of five or more, if they have plenty of room.

The medicine chest and kit. The shepherd's medicine chest should contain a liberal supply of drugs, the disinfectants, and other things which may be needed during the lambing season. Tincture of iodine is needed for use on navels of young lambs to prevent infection; carbolic oil (1 ounce carbolic acid to 1 quart olive oil) for use on hands and arms of the shepherd before entering a ewe. Vaseline or lard and a good disinfectant may be used instead. Epsom salts is often useful for ewes when lambs have to be taken, to open the bowels and thus prevent unnecessary straining; castor oil



Lambing pens made of panels like those shown in previous picture.

or mineral oil should be on hand for use in case of constipation or diarrhea in lambs; and a 10-percent solution of argyrol is useful for treating sore eyes of lambs. Some good disinfectant, such as lysol, creolin, creosote or coal tar dip, is indispensable. The kit should contain a pair of hand shears for tagging the ewes; a ball of

strong twine to tie around the legs of lambs in case of difficult lambing; a four-ounce syringe for drenching and washing out ewes; nursing bottles and nipples; and a sharp pocket knife.

Danger from dogs, horses and hogs. Care should be taken that pregnant ewes are not chased by dogs. Farmers who use dogs to work their flocks should use them as little as possible at this time and the ewes should be kept quiet and not handled more than is necessary. A young dog or a dog being trained as a sheep dog, should never be allowed near the flock at lambing time. An old dog, properly trained and in the hands of a shepherd who knows how to handle him, should do no harm, provided he has previously worked with the flock. A strange dog, however, regardless of how well he has been trained, should never be used with pregnant ewes. The ewes, at this time, should also be kept away from other animals, particularly horses and hogs, as horses are liable to injure them with their feet and hogs will readily devour young lambs.

LAMBING

As the lambing season approaches the flock should be housed or penned at night but ewes should not be put into individual lambing pens before lambing. Sometimes a ewe that is forced to lamb in close quarters will, in giving birth to two lambs, mash the first one born by falling on it while giving birth to the second. The danger is not so great where there is room for the lamb to get out of the way. If records are kept of the time of breeding, the matter of ascertaining which ewes are about to lamb is easy. See Kentucky Extension Circular 301, "The Breeding Season for the Farm Flock of Sheep." However, an experienced sheepman will have little difficulty in determining the ewes that are on the eve of lambing. A ewe heavy in lamb appears uneasy. She has a voluminous abdomen and her udder is distended with milk. Within a few hours of lambing there is a depression in the flanks, the muscles at the base of the tail relax and in some cases the vagina shows a watery discharge.

During the busy part of the season the shepherd should be with the flock constantly during the day and should visit it a number of times at night, closely observing each individual ewe and rendering help wherever it is needed. Where the ewes have received proper

attention in the way of feed and exercise to prepare them for lambing, little difficulty is to be expected and the ewes will generally "yeen" their lambs without assistance. While there will occasionally be an abnormal case where a ewe will need assistance in the delivery of her lamb, assistance should not be attempted until it is actually needed. The shepherd should keep a watchful eye on the ewe and if after prolonged labor she fails to make the birth it will be time to render aid.



If the ewes are numbered before mating and a record of breeding is kept, it is easy to tell when lambing will start.

Assisting the ewe. In assisting a ewe the attendant should first determine if the lamb is in the right position for delivery; that is, with the head and forelegs forward and the head above and resting on the legs. This can be done by gently placing the ewe on her side and gradually introducing the hand into the vagina.

The importance of sanitary precautions on the part of the shepherd when assisting a ewe cannot be overestimated. Before entering the ewe, the shepherd should see to it that his finger nails are trimmed close, leaving no sharp edges, and thoroly cleansed; the hands and arms washed with soap and water and smeared with carbolic oil or disinfected and smeared with oil, vaseline or lard. The lard

must be free from salt. If there is any wound or cut on the hand or arm, rubber gloves should be used for protection. Gloves should be kept clean and washed in a disinfectant after each time of using.

When it is seen that the ewe will be unable to make the delivery without assistance and that the lamb is in position for normal



A lambing scene in a Kentucky flock of a thousand ewes.

presentation, the shepherd can assist her by inserting his hand into the vagina as previously described and gently pulling in a downward direction on the lamb's legs as the ewe strains. The pulling of the lamb at other times disorganizes the muscular contractions of the ewe and rapidly uses up her strength. If the lamb is so large that the life of the ewe is endangered, it may be necessary to sever the shoulders with a sharp knife and remove the lamb in parts. This operation is recommended only as a last resort and the shepherd must be careful not to cut or injure the ewe. Freak lambs should be removed in the same manner and the ewe spared as much pain as possible.

There are many wrong presentations. The head and one front leg may be forward with the other leg back, the legs forward and head back or the lamb may be on its back, or crosswise in the uterus.

In such cases, the lamb must be pushed back with the hand and straightened to normal position before delivery can be made. Sometimes, in the case of twins, one lamb will be crowded on top of the other making it necessary to push back one to give the ewe a chance to give birth to the other after which the second lamb will follow in due course of time.

When lambs are presented with the hind feet forward, the birth can be completed in this manner without changing the position of the lamb in the uterus. Often when the lamb is coming backward and the hand is entered, the lamb's hocks will be found to be forward and the lamb will have to be pushed back far enough to get the hind feet. When deliveries are made with the hind legs forward, some of the lamb's ribs are usually broken but they will soon knit together.

ATTENTION TO YOUNG LAMBS

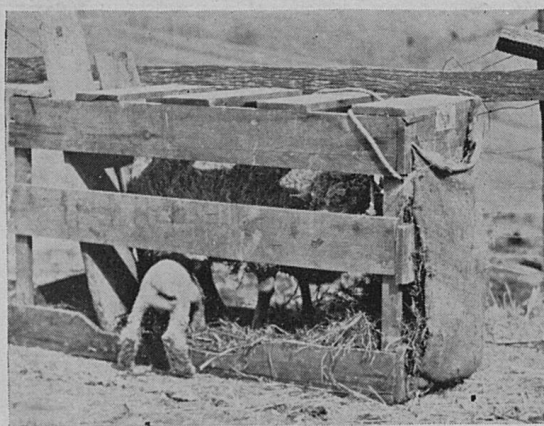
The important thing following the birth of a lamb is to see that its mother claims it and that it sucks. When she owns the lamb and it gets a fill of warm milk the period of anxiety is over. A ewe will seldom disown her lamb when she has been well fed and has plenty



Snow and moderate cold will do no harm to young lambs during dry weather after they are a few days old

of milk, but undernourished ewes often disown them. When a ewe is slow to claim her lamb, some of the ewe's milk rubbed on the lamb's rump and nose and on her own nose will often prove effective. Should she persist in disowning her lamb, a good plan is

to hold her while it sucks and, if after helping the lamb to a few meals in this way, she continues to resist, more drastic measures should be resorted to. The ewe may be placed in a sheep crate where she cannot resist and one or two of the boards on the side near the bottom removed to give room for the lamb to nurse. Another plan is to tie the ewe up short with a halter so that she cannot lie down and place



The ewe reluctant to own her lamb may be kept in a crate until she claims it.

a board along each side of her in such a way as to prevent her from moving about. Tying a dog in an adjacent pen is sometimes used. Fear of the dog seems to cause the ewe to mother and protect her offspring. Many shepherds who have used this method pronounce it very effective.

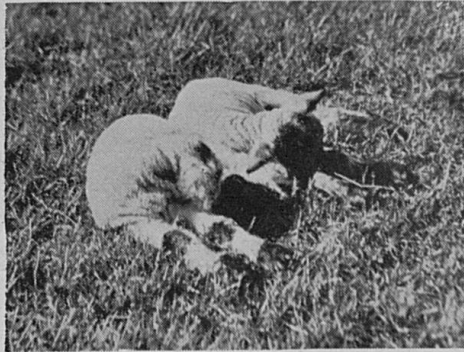
Sometimes a ewe after giving birth to twin lambs will own the last born and not the first. This is more especially so in cases of difficult lambing. If after holding the ewe a few times while both lambs nurse she continues to reject the disowned lamb, both lambs should be removed, placed in a barrel and allowed with her only during nursing periods when both lambs are brought out at the same time. By keeping the lambs in close quarters in this way where they are in body contact with each other they will smell the same to the ewe, even tho one of the lambs may have been licked dry.

A lamb that appears lifeless at birth often can be revived by such respiration methods as slapping the lamb's body over the ribs with the hands, by blowing into its mouth and by rapidly moving the front legs backward and forward in an alternating movement and picking the lamb up by the hind legs and whirling it in a large circle head outward. If the lamb is weak the attendant should help it to get some milk from its dam immediately. This can best be done by putting the teat into the lamb's mouth and squeezing milk

into it until the lamb gets a taste and begins to help itself. Strength will come rapidly when the lamb once gets a fill of warm milk from its mother. Lambs are often born with a film of mucus over the mouth and nostrils. This film should be removed immediately as it may prevent breathing and cause the lamb to smother to death.

Chilled lambs. Lambs dropped in the open during cold weather may become chilled. One of the most effective and easiest ways to revive a lamb that is not too badly chilled, without predisposing it to pneumonia, is to rub it briskly with a cloth and wrap up, head and all, by rolling it over and over in two or three gunny sacks.

When the hand that holds the lamb while being rolled in the sacks is removed it will leave an opening thru which the lamb can breathe. Try to get some milk into the lamb before wrapping it up. Put the ewe on her side and squeeze some milk from a teat into the lamb's throat while holding its mouth open. If too far



A sun bath is healthful and enjoyable.

gone to take any milk, the lamb should be left in the sacks until it begins to kick or move about and should then be taken out and helped to nurse and placed back in the sacks and left to dry. When it is sufficiently revived it will usually come out of the sacks of its own accord. The shepherd should then help it to nurse.

Another plan frequently recommended and one that is especially commendable where the lamb is too badly chilled to be revived by the above method is to immerse it, all but the head, in water as hot as the hand will bear until it becomes active. Then rub it dry with a cloth, get some milk in it and wrap in sacks, blanket or a sheep pelt. Leave sufficient opening at end next to head so that the lamb can breathe. The practice of taking the lamb to a warm room and placing near a stove or fire to "thaw out" is not advisable as there is danger of the lamb contracting pneumonia when again returned to the lambing quarters.

If the chilled lamb is one of a set of twins, both lambs should be taken from the ewe and returned together. Since the ewe recognizes her offspring by smell, the lamb that has been revived should be rubbed over the body of its twin before the lambs are returned to their mother.

ATTENTION TO EWES

After the birth of the lamb, the ewe as well as the lamb must have close attention, especially for the first day or two. The shepherd should see that the ewe casts her afterbirth, that her bowels are normal, that the lamb sucks both sides of the udder and that the milk does not cake. Caking is not likely to occur until a week or ten days after lambing. The afterbirth is usually expelled with the lamb or soon afterwards. If not expelled within 12 hours, it should be removed. The afterbirth should be burned or buried and not left in the lambing pen. The ewe should have plenty of fresh water at all times. She should be given a drink immediately after lambing. Her feed for a few days should be limited to a handful of oats and bran and some good legume hay or, if she is a heavy milker, the grain may be entirely discontinued for 2 or 3 days. Too heavy feeding at this time is likely to result in milk fever. After the first few days, as the lambs take more milk, the ration should be gradually increased by feeding plenty of alfalfa or other good legume hay, some succulent feed, such as corn silage or roots, and a good grain mixture. Some green forage at this time, such as winter rye or wheat, to supplement the hay and grain, would be ideal. Green forage keeps the bowels active and is conducive to a heavy flow of milk. After a day or two, if all is well and the weather favorable, the ewe and new-born lamb or lambs may be allowed to leave the lambing pen for the field or paddock but should be returned to shelter in bad weather. Ewes with twins should be kept separate from those with single lambs as they need more feed.

If a lamb does not take all its mother's milk at first, the ewe should be milked for the first few days or held while other lambs that need the milk nurse her out. When a ewe has lost her lamb and there is no other lamb for her to take, she should be milked dry about the third day and again in a week or ten days and a third milking may be advisable for heavy-milking ewes.

Udder Trouble. The shepherd should be constantly on the lookout for udder trouble in ewes that have lambed, so that the attention necessary to correct trouble can be given immediately.



Pastures of small grains or other cover crops cut feed costs. Top. Sheep and lambs on wheat pasture in January. Middle. A February scene of sheep and lambs on rye pasture. Bottom. Lambs and ewes on barley pasture in February.

Caked udder may result from one or a combination of causes, such as failure to milk out the udder until the lamb is taking all the milk, chills resulting from drafts, forcing the ewe to lie on wet or

cold ground, injury to the udder, too heavy feeding of concentrates, or abrupt increase of the ration.

In treating caked udder, bathe the udder two or three times daily for twenty minutes, with water as hot as the hand can bear. Follow this with a gentle massage in a downward direction, then rub the udder with goose grease, lanolin or other suitable ointment. A saturated solution of Epsom salts as used in reducing inflammation in humans has given good results in treating caked udders in ewes. Remove all milk that can be obtained from the udder at least four times daily and keep the ewe in dry quarters until the trouble has been corrected. The milk should be drawn into an old can or pail, removed from the lambing quarters and destroyed, as there is always the possibility that the trouble may be infectious. The cause of the trouble, if it can be determined, should, of course, be removed. Much udder trouble could be prevented by close attention at lambing time and proper feeding, housing and bedding.

An infectious type of udder trouble called blue bag or black garget has been observed in several flocks in this State. This usually affects only one side of the bag, which becomes greatly enlarged and inflamed. At first it may be confused with the non-infectious type, but as the trouble progresses the affected side becomes cool and numb, takes on a dark blue color and is further characterized by foul-smelling excretions. Since this disease is highly infectious, the affected animals should be removed and the lambing quarters thoroly cleaned and disinfected. When the disease is in only one side, this affected half may slough off and the other side remain sound. While medicinal treatments are not satisfactory, it is well to call in a veterinarian when this condition is suspected.

ORPHAN LAMBS

The shepherd should strive to have every ewe that can give milk, raise a lamb. The ewe that loses her lamb should be given an orphan or one from a ewe that has more than she can nurse properly.

When a ewe's lamb is born dead or dies within a few hours after birth, it is usually an easy matter to give her another lamb. The lamb to be adopted should be as young as possible and should

be rubbed in the after-birth or over the dead lamb and its legs tied so the ewe can lick it dry while it is lying down. After the cord is removed from the legs in about an hour the ewe will usually let it nurse without resistance. Another plan relied on by many shepherds is to skin the dead lamb and fasten its pelt on the lamb to be



Orphan lambs may be given to children to raise.

adopted. Methods previously discussed in connection with getting reluctant ewes to claim their lambs also are useful in getting ewes to adopt lambs of other ewes.

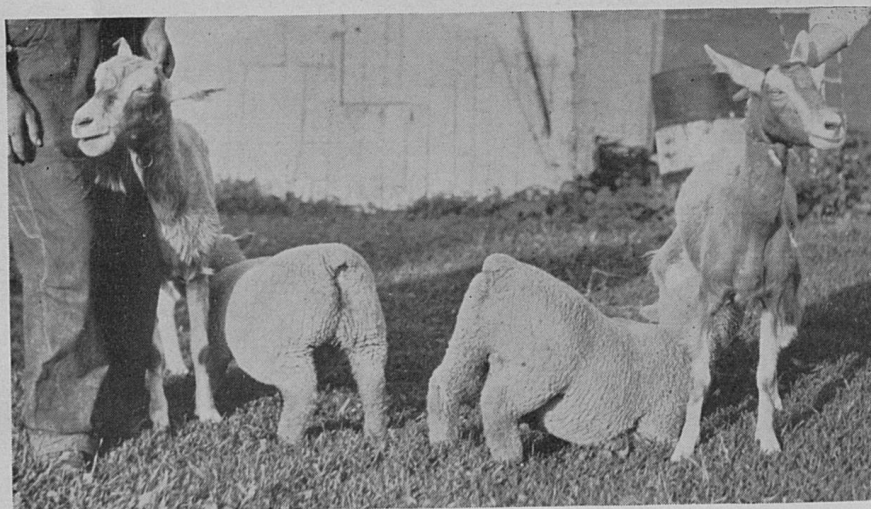
Hand-Feeding Lambs. Except in the case of valuable purebreds, raising lambs by hand often may cost more in time and money than the lambs will be worth. In fact, it requires 20 to 30 gallons of milk to properly feed a lamb until it is three months old. However, if there are

children in the family, the motherless lambs may be given to them to raise. Many a good sheep farmer got his first experience in the business by raising orphan lambs.

The lamb should be fed cow's milk from a bottle to which a small rubber nipple is attached. This bottle and nipple should be washed daily with scalding water. The milk should be fresh and of normal milk temperature as it comes from the cow and should neither be diluted nor sweetened. If the lamb begins to scour, the milk should be boiled and if the trouble does not stop in a few days, a little castor oil added to the milk may help.

At first, the lamb should be given a little milk at frequent, regular intervals. The amount should be gradually increased as the lamb grows older. Too much milk at first causes digestive trouble and often the death of the lamb. The following plan has given good results: 1 to 2 tablespoonfuls every two hours, from early morning

until late at night, for the first three days; for the next four days, 2 to 3 tablespoonfuls at three-hour intervals; for the second week, 3 to 4 ounces at four-hour intervals; the third week, 5 to 7 ounces four times daily; the fourth week, about 1 pint three times daily. Gradually increase to 2 quarts a day as the lamb gets older.



Goats are useful in raising orphan lambs.

After the orphan lambs are a few weeks old, it is sometimes practical to let them suck a goat or small-teat cow, if such animals are available. Lambs can also be made to drink milk from a dipper or basin but this plan is not as satisfactory as the bottle. By the time lambs are two weeks old, they can be taught to nibble grain and will begin to nip blades of grass, if it is available. The milk should be continued, however, until they are ten weeks or three months old.

AILMENTS OF LAMBS

Every sheep farmer or attendant should know how to treat the common ailments of young lambs. In some of these troubles immediate treatment is necessary to prevent loss. Some of the common ailments are pinning, constipation, diarrhea, navel ill, sore eyes and sore mouth.

Pinning is a condition frequently encountered in lambs a few

days old where an accumulation of fecal material around the tail closes the anus so that the lamb cannot evacuate. The obstruction should be removed or the lamb may die. If the accumulated fecal material is hard and dry, warm water should be used so as not to injure the lamb in scraping it off.

Constipation, a common occurrence among young lambs, is indicated by frequent straining. The trouble can usually be corrected by giving one or two teaspoonfuls of castor oil or milk of magnesia, the amount depending on the size of the lamb. An enema of warm water is sometimes used.

Diarrhea, or scours, may result from too much milk or from the wrong kind of milk. Spoiled feeds given the ewe may cause diarrhea in her lamb. Remove the cause where possible and give one or two teaspoonfuls of castor oil. Treatment may be repeated at daily intervals for several days if necessary.

There is an infectious diarrhea, or lamb dysentery, which sometimes affects young lambs. The affected lambs die in a few hours to three to four days. Treatment is by prevention thru sanitation. A veterinary should be called in case of dysentery.

Navel Ill, often called joint ill or joint stiffness, is a serious lambing disease that has caused many losses in this as well as other states. The trouble is so called because disease-producing bacteria enter the body of the lamb thru the navel. While treatment is unsatisfactory, preventive measures are very effective. First keep clean, disinfected, well ventilated quarters and immediately after the birth of each lamb submerge the navel cord in tincture of iodine in a bottle. Applying the tincture with a feather, as has been recommended by some persons, is not always satisfactory.

Eye Trouble is often met with in young lambs. The eyes water profusely, the lids are inflamed and the balls have a white, milky appearance. This trouble can usually be cleared up by daily treatments with a few drops of 10 percent argyrol solution administered with an eye dropper. Some shepherds wash the eyes with a 4-percent solution of boric acid.

Turned-in eye lids are often found in lambs of ewes heavily wooled over the face. Shropshires and Merinos especially. This

condition can be definitely remedied by clipping out a small, narrow oblong section of the turned-in lid with a pair of sharp shears or scissors. Or the lid may be stitched back with silk thread. Sometimes when the trouble is observed early, it may be cleared up by catching the lamb several times and working the lids outward.

Sore Mouth is not uncommon in lambs. While the trouble may occur in several forms, the type usually met with in this State responds readily to treatment. Simply remove the scabs and apply some good, mild disinfectant such as a 2-percent solution of permanganate of potash or a salve made by mixing one ounce of coal-tar sheep dip with a pint of lard. In the early stages of the trouble one application will usually suffice. Advanced cases should be treated every two or three days.



In case of sore eyes, argyrol should be applied with an eye dropper.

FEED AFTER LAMBING

It is a good plan to make three or more divisions of the flock so that each group may be fed according to its needs; (1) ewes with single lambs, (2) ewes with twin lambs, (3) ewes yet to lamb. Ewes nursing lambs require more feed than those that have not lambed; ewes with twin lambs require more than those with single lambs, and thin ewes more than ewes in good condition. Thin ewes, unless their condition is due to their teeth, may be put into the twin-lamb group. Ewes with bad teeth should be grouped by themselves since when fed with sound-mouth ewes they cannot get their share of the feed. They should be given feed especially prepared for them.

The feed for ewes nursing lambs should be gradually increased as the lambs begin to take all the milk. Unless green feed or other

succulence is available, the ewes with single lambs should have about a pound a day of a good grain mixture such as those on page 6. Ewes with twin lambs may require as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per ewe daily. Increased amounts of hay also may be needed. The hay fed at this time should be of choice quality. Silage, if available, can be used in more liberal amounts than before lambing and will decrease the amount of hay and grain required. However, in feeding more silage, it will be necessary to increase the amount of protein in the grain mixture so as to get the proper nutritive balance. The silage should be bright and sweet. Spoiled, frozen and moldy silage should never be fed to sheep. Small-grain pasture or other good grazing, when available, lessens the amount of harvested feed required. Heavy-milking ewes naturally lose weight after lambing. The only criterion as to whether these ewes are being properly fed is the rate of gain of the lambs.

While milk is the best feed for young lambs, it should be supplemented with grain and good, leafy legume hay until plenty of grazing is available. Lamb creeps provide the most convenient and satisfactory arrangement for feeding grain to lambs while running



When the ewes are getting plenty of good grazing it may not be necessary to continue to creep feed the lambs.

with the ewes. A lamb creep is a pen or enclosure surrounding a feeding trough, with openings large enough for the lambs to enter but not so large as to admit the ewes. The creep should be built

in a corner or other convenient place in the barn, but where it will have as much sunlight as possible.

Lambs usually begin to eat grain by the time they are two weeks old. A mixture of equal parts of corn, oats and bran, or 2 parts corn, 2 parts oats, 1 part bran and 1 part linseed oil meal may be used as a starter. The proportion of corn in the ration should be gradually increased. After the lambs are six weeks old, 6 parts corn and 1 part protein concentrate such as cottonseed meal or linseed oil meal may be used or corn alone will give good results. The grain should be ground or crushed until the lambs are about six weeks old, after which whole grain should be used. Troughs should be kept clean and the lambs fed only what they will clean up.

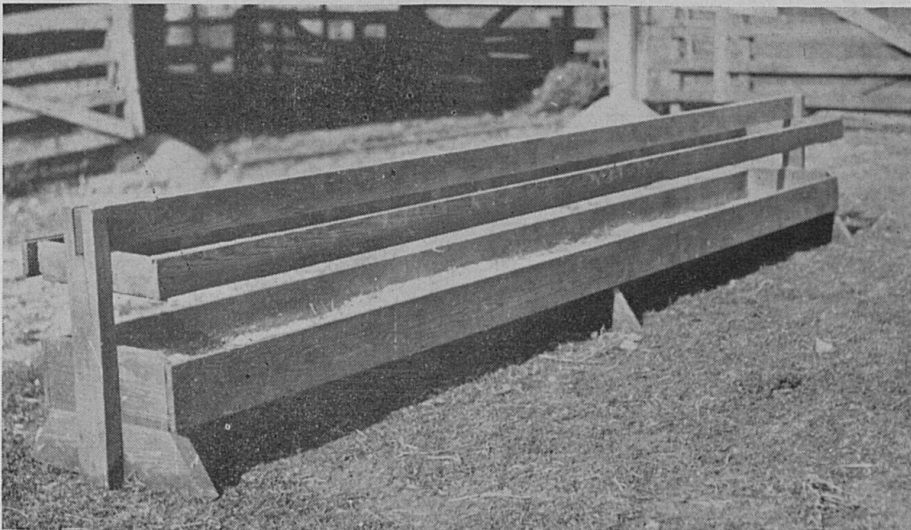


A creep feeding scene. Lambs should have access to grain and leafy legume hay from the time they will eat until plenty of grazing is available.

Lambs make their fastest gains while young, before the coming of hot weather and stomach worms. Under Kentucky conditions, it pays to push them as rapidly as possible from birth until they are ready for market. Lambs handled in this way should reach a marketable weight of 80 to 85 pounds in 100 to 120 days.

CULL UNPRODUCTIVE EWES

Non-breeding ewes should be culled as soon as it is determined they are not going to lamb. Such ewes are usually in good condition at this season of the year and should be sent to the block and no more feed and care wasted on them. Likewise, ewes with spoiled



A good type of grain trough for lambs.

udders and all others that do not raise lambs should be marked for culling, separated from the ewes nursing lambs and marketed as soon as they are in condition.

DOCKING AND CASTRATING LAMBS

All lambs should be docked and all ram lambs, except purebreds of quality that are to be kept for breeding, should be castrated. While the majority of Kentucky farmers castrate their ram lambs there has been a tendency during recent years to neglect docking, yet both practices are to be recommended and are universal in leading sheep sections thruout the world. The danger of loss, which deters some farmers, is negligible if the operations are performed properly and at the right time.

Docking improves the appearance of the lamb and prevents filth from accumulating around the tail to invite flies and maggots. Many cases of such trouble were observed in flocks last year. Also long-tail lambs often become filthy during shipment to market and

packers object to this condition. Then, too, long tails interfere with breeding the ewes. While most of the leading sheep raisers of this State now rely on Western ewes for replacement, still many ewe lambs are saved for breeding. Lambs may be docked with a knife, emasculator, pruning shears, hatchet and mallet, castrating pincers or a hot chisel. In docking lambs it is important that the cutting surface of any excepting a hot instrument, which is sterilized by the heat, be cleaned and placed in a strong disinfectant such as a 10-



Failure to dock often leads to an accumulation of filth around the tail and invites flies and maggots.

percent solution of sheep dip, before use. Each time after operating on a lamb, put the instrument back in the disinfectant before removing another tail. If late in the season when there is danger of maggots, a fly repellent should be put on the wound. Where the chisel is used, it is important not to heat it too hot and it should be pushed thru the tail fast enough to prevent a bad burn. There should be a little bleeding. This helps the wound to heal. The chisel used in this way has given good results. The tail should be removed at a joint about 1 to 1½ inches from the body. Close watch should be kept on the lambs for several hours after the operation so if any lambs bleed profusely they may be detected in time to prevent loss. Bleeding may be stopped by cording the stub of the tail with a string or rubber band. The cord should be removed in a few hours.

Lambs may be castrated at the same time they are docked. Cut off 1/3 to 1/2 of the lower end of the scrotum with a sharp knife and remove the testicles one at a time. If the lambs are large, the cords should be scraped in two with the knife rather than pulled out. Cleanliness is of first importance. Have a good disinfectant handy and leave the knife in it between operations. Thoroughly wash the hands in the disinfectant before beginning the operation and frequently thereafter. Apply disinfectant to the scrotum before the

oper
clean
lamb
If ne



All
castrat

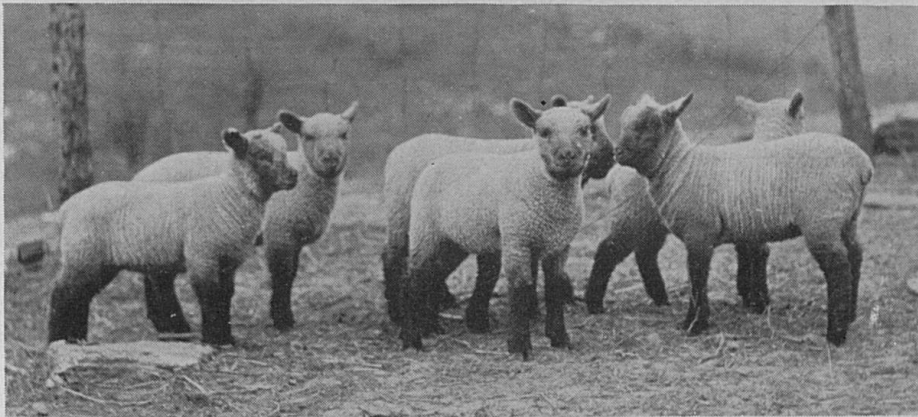
with
while
For
lamb

A
if the
gaining
failing
hay.
the a
will

P
dang
lamb

S
ing p
be su
be th
A

operation but do not put any in the wound. A bright day and a clean place should be selected for docking and castrating. Keep lambs away from barns several days after the operation, if possible. If necessary to return them to the barn see that the floor is bedded



All lambs should be docked and all ram lambs, except purebreds of quality, should be castrated by the time they are three weeks old.

with fresh, clean straw. It is important to perform these operations while the lambs are young, preferably from one to three weeks old. For a fuller discussion of the subject of docking and castrating lambs, see Kentucky Extension Circular 85.

SUMMARY

A high percentage of strong, active lambs can be expected only if the ewes are in good condition at lambing time. Keep the ewes gaining from breeding to lambing time. Begin early to supplement failing pastures with harvested feeds. Feed plenty of good legume hay. Begin the use of grain a few weeks before lambing and increase the amount after lambing. The amount of hay and grain required will be largely determined by the amount of grazing available.

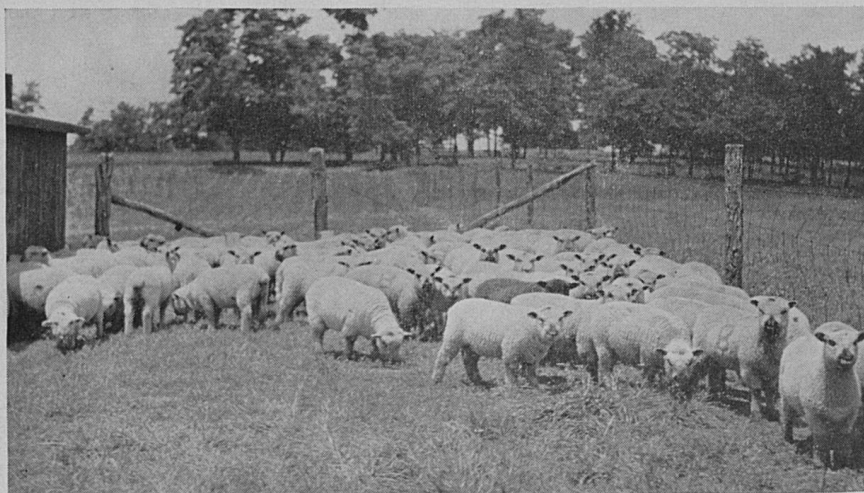
Pregnant ewes should have plenty of exercise. It reduces the danger of loss in the ewes and results in better general health, easier lambing and stronger lambs.

Suitable lambing quarters should be provided, individual lambing pens made ready and shepherd's medicine chest and kit should be supplied or replenished before lambing starts. Quarters should be thoroly cleaned and disinfected.

As the lambing season approaches, the flock should be housed

or penned at night but ewes should not be put into individual lambing pens before lambing.

The sheep raiser should plan his work so as to give the flock his individual attention during lambing. He should be on hand to render assistance to any ewe that may require help. He should see that all lambs nurse and that everything is normal before the ewes and their offsprings are allowed to leave the lambing pens for the field or paddock.



The finished product, averaging better than 80 pounds at less than four months of age and ready for market.

Every ewe capable of nursing a lamb should be made to raise one; if not her own, one of a ewe that has died or that has more than one.

Make separate groups of ewes with twin lambs, as they require more feed.

Creep feed the lambs from the time they will eat, at least until plenty of grazing is available.

Dock all lambs and castrate all ram lambs not intended for breeding, before they are three weeks old.

Push the lambs to the earliest possible market. They should weigh 80 to 85 pounds in 100 to 120 days.

All non-breeding or unproductive ewes should be culled and sent to market.

