

Miracle of Birth Center

Lambing Protocol

1. The ewes will not be induced but have an estimated window of days that they may lamb. They have been ultrasounded and the fetal number and estimated due date will be in a book in the office. Labor in these ewes tends to have a sudden onset and the whole birthing process progresses quickly compared to cows or sows.
 - a. If a ewe is determined to be in labor, find some MOBC staff to help move her into the lambing arena. There are portable gates available for safe movement. Notify the video personnel.
 - b. Move a nearby pregnant ewe in with the laboring ewe to keep her calm as sheep panic when they are alone. Once the lambs are delivered the buddy ewe can be moved back out of the arena.
 - c. Assistance is usually not necessary but if no progress is made within an hour after her water breaks (and ~ 30 minutes between lambs) a veterinarian and rotation veterinary student should restrain, wash and examine her vaginally. Allow the students to assist as much as you feel safe. The most common cause for assistance is with large lambs, elbow locks or caudal presentations.
 - d. If there is a normal presentation with the hooves and nose protruding and she has labored well, pull the legs one at a time to lift the elbows off the pelvis and help deliver. If a caudal presentation or breech is diagnosed, assistance to deliver the lamb should be immediate.
 - e. Do not interfere more than necessary once the lambs are born: clear mucus or tissue off the nostrils and mouth, tickle the inside of the nostrils with straw to stimulate breathing if necessary. Apply 7% iodine to umbilical cord. No need to cut umbilical cord or dry lamb with a towel. Place lamb in front of ewe to let her lick clean.
 - f. Strip the ewe's teats to clear of clots and assure milk supply. Notify staff if udder problems are noticed. Triplets and quads will be supplemented with colostrum via stomach tubes.
 - g. The lambs should be up and nursing within ~ 30 minutes. This can often be interrupted by subsequent births but the attempt by the lamb should be evident.
2. Examine the ewe for additional lambs after you think she may be done. The ultrasounds are not always correct. Passing of the placenta is a sure sign all lambs have been delivered.
 - a. Placentas are usually passed within a few hours of birth. They should be removed from the pen and disposed of in a designated bucket in the feed room that will be taken to the Diagnostic lab for disposal. Please do NOT put plastic sleeves in this bucket.
 - b. The fair goers are fascinated by placentas and a complete healthy placenta with a description of its function is a good topic for discussion.
3. Record births in lambing record book in the office.
4. Weigh lambs and record in lambing book.

5. Placentas retained over 24 hours should be cut off several inches below vulva. Penicillin (6 ml/100#) or Excenel at bovine dose can be given to prevent infection. Check teats to make sure they are normal.
6. Watch lambs for nursing – full bellies, stretching upon rising. Hungry lambs have a sad sounding baa, stand with arched back, tucked up belly.
 - a. Offer warm milk or replacer to any lamb that seems hungry – be persistent with the nipple. Otherwise lambs can be tube fed by trained student/veterinarian with 1 oz per 2#.
7. Multiple lambs (3+) should receive colostrum + replacement after birth by tube feeding.
8. For special needs lambs, milk colostrum out of ewe and add colostrum replacement as needed to give 1 oz per 2# lamb. Tube feed the lambs and then allow them to nurse naturally, watching them for signs of lack of milk. Do not give them bovine colostrum.
9. Tag lambs prior to mixing with other lambs. Ewe lambs-Right ear; Ram lambs-Left ear. Record in lambing book.
10. Daily physical exams are not necessary – only required if poor appetite, retained placenta, etc.
11. Problems that may arise:
 - a. Rejection of a lamb by the ewe: rare but the set should be removed from the exhibit temporarily or sent home.
 - b. Weak lambs: perform a good physical exam and rule out hunger (check udder of ewe to assure a milk supply is available)
 - c. Emergencies such as C-sections, hemorrhaging, prolapses and eversions need to be handled away from the public by moving the animal to the curtained pen and/or to the CVM for treatment.

Feel free to call Holly Neaton 952-240-2192 with any questions or concerns regarding the sheep.