

# Beginner's Basic Guide to Raising Sheep

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## VACCINATIONS

### Clostridial Diseases

- Number one concern of lambs up to one year of age.
- C. Perfringens Type C and D
  - Enterotoxemia Type C  
(first few weeks of age)  
bloody scours
  - Enterotoxemia Type D (“Overeating”)  
(over one month of age)  
Hot rations especially high in corn  
sudden death, best lambs, heavy creep
  - prevent with vaccination program & all feed introduction or changes done gradually
- C. Tetani
  - introduced through wounds, docking, or banding
  - treatment unrewarding
  - prevent with vaccination program and good hygiene
- Covexin 8 and CDT
  - Vaccinate pregnant ewes 30 days prior to lambing
    - passive immunity through the colostrum
    - protects lambs for 6-8 weeks
  - Vaccinate lambs at 6 weeks old, then 30 days later
    - earlier if dam did not receive early dose

### Abortions

- Vibrio (Campylobacter)
  - abortion storms, mid to late pregnancy
  - Vaccinate, oxytetracycline inj. or in feed
- Toxoplasma
  - no vaccine available, limit barn cats
- Vaccinate ewes 2 weeks prior to breeding
  - cheap and easy insurance, esp if you buy ewes
- Enzootic Abortions (Chlamydia)
  - not a problem in southeastern US
  - may be a concern with sheep from western US

### Vaccination Tips to Remember:

- Read and follow label directions
- Store and handle vaccines properly
- Vaccinate only healthy sheep
- Develop a plan, and stick to it!
- Don't cut corners, tends to bite your backside

**Other Vaccines** (optional by region & flock goals; depending upon local veterinary recommendations)

- Sore mouth, foot rot, CLA, Rabies, E. Coli

# PARASITES

#1 cause of economic and production losses in SE US  
warm wet conditions, heavy stocking rates add to problem  
young sheep more easily affected  
sheep graze close to manure  
High egg output, 5000 per day

## - Barberpole Worm (*Haemonchus Contortus*)

- ravenous blood sucker, major cause of loss
- life cycle less than 21 days
- bottlejaw, diarrhea, anemia, sleepy weakness, death
- Subclinical losses high (decreased growth, milk, etc.)
- Periparturient Egg Rise
  - 2 weeks prior to 8 weeks after lambing
  - insures infection of new generation
  - you must design control program around this

## - Diagnosis

- FAMACHA Score 1-5 anemia of lower eyelid
- Fecal egg counts, check 7 days after deworming
- Autopsy (loss of body fat, membrane color)

## - Treatment

- Cydectin
  - cattle pour on, purple, 5 ml /100# orally
  - sheep and goat drench
- Ivermectin (select the pure ivermectin formula: no other added cattle wormers)
  - cattle injectable 2 ml /100# orally
- Valbazen (3 ml/100#), Panacur, Safeguard
- Prohibit, Levamasole 2 ml /100# orally (after mixing)

## - Tapeworms

- most commonly seen in manure
- not a health problem in sheep
- White dewormers (Panacur, Valbazen, Synanthic)

## - Coccidia

- common protozoal parasite
- usually young sheep, adults are carriers only
- triggered by stress (weather, handling, weaning, hauling)
- watery diarrhea with blood and/or mucous
- Prevention
  - decrease stress
  - good sanitation around feeders
  - Bovatec, Rumensin, Deccox
- Treatment
  - Corid; drench or in water
  - Albon (sulfa drugs)

## NUTRITION

Nutrition is one of the keys to raising healthy livestock. Well-fed livestock are more resistant to diseases and parasites. Feed balanced rations and strive to have your ewes in a body condition score (BCS) of 3+ to 5 at the time of breeding and lambing. Feed changes should always be made gradually, especially when increasing the amount of concentrate (grain) in the ration.

- 0.5 to 1 lb. concentrate per head per day 30 days prior to lambing
- 1 lb per lamb to each ewe daily after lambing

## MINERALS

- Use a commercial loose free choice sheep mineral!
- Selenium, Magnesium and Calcium deficiencies are major concerns
  - add feed grade limestone during lambing and lactation
- No added copper (cattle or goat mineral usually won't do)
- can purchase sheep mineral with Bovatec or Deccox

## LAMBING

- As shepherds, you have more chance to influence the number of lambs sold per ewe and the overall profitability of the sheep flock during the first week, than any other time in the lamb's life. You must have a plan.
- hypothermia & starvation cause 90% of all newborn death loss
- Insure adequate colostrum intake
  - a stomach tube feeder will be your best friend!
- KEEP GOOD RECORDS



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