



PREPARING EWES FOR BREEDING SEASON

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International SheepLetter

Vol. 19 No. 5, August 1999

Breeding season is either upon us or a few weeks away. If you haven't yet, now is time to give some thought to your ewes. Make sure that the ewes are in the proper condition for breeding season. You will want to begin flushing ewes 2-3 weeks before ram turnout. This can be accomplished by moving the ewes to a fresh green pasture or feeding ewes one-half to three-fourths of a pound of grain a day. By moving the ewe to a higher plane of nutrition before breeding we can increase the number of ova that she ovulates and thereby increase the number of multiple births. Late summer is also a good time to deworm the ewes prior to breeding. Summer pastures become heavily populated with worm larvae by late summer and it is best to move ewes to a clean pasture at the time of deworming. Valbazen is an excellent choice of dewormers as long as the ram has not been turned out. Ivomec or Levasole are good options but they will not be effective against tapeworms. Now is also a good time to vaccinate the ewes for Chlamydia and Vibrio. Any ewes that are lame or unthrifty should be sorted from the pasture and treated or culled. As you are handling the ewes be on the lookout for moist wool. This is often the only indicator of fly strike. Treat ewes affected by clipping the wool around the wound and spraying the wound with screw worm spray.

Don't forget about the ram. Make sure he is in good body condition, sound on his feet and legs and passes a breeding soundness exam. The hot weather that we experienced in late July appears to have made some rams temporarily infertile. Remember the success of your sheep flock starts with breeding.