



RAISING EWE LAMBS

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International SheepLetter

Vol. 18 No. 7

November 1998

After weaning at sixty days of age the ewe lambs should be fed until they reach 110-130 pounds. The ewe lambs need to be fed according to their frame size and not allowed to become too fat, but at the same time keeping them on a ration that allows them to mature and continue to grow. The ewe lambs cannot be kept with the ewe flock as they are growing and should be kept separate prior to the lambing season. Ewe lambs do not have the same immunity level as the mature flock, they require a booster abortion vaccination and need to be kept as a separate unit until they have weaned their lambs. Ewe lambs will not compete with mature ewes for feed at the bunk and will not gain weight properly. Ewe lambs that are forced to run with the ewe flock will lose weight in late gestation and during lactation. Consequently, their lambs weigh less at weaning and the ewe lamb will be in poor condition at weaning. If the ewe lambs become too thin we often see the following lambing affected. Some producers will have a very good lambing rate on their ewe lambs but the second time lambing ewes never seem to do as well. This is because the ewe lambs are too thin at weaning and never get back into the proper condition prior to being rebred for the next lambing season.

The ewe lambs require extra nutrition and extra immunization prior to entry into the flock. Management practices need to be suited for the feeds you have available and the size of the flock. Other factors such as breed and season of the year affect your management. We know that finnish landrace ewe lambs mature reproductively at an early age and rambouillet or targee ewe lambs mature at a much later age. Also, late summer or fall born lambs have poor lambing rates if bred for the following spring.

Producers need to keep their ewe lambs separate from the ewe flock and set up an effective management program based on feed available and existing disease level on their farm.