Feeding the Ewe Flock

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Goals for the Ewe Flock

- Maximize conception rate
- Minimize embryo and fetal mortality
- Birth of viable lambs capable of rapid growth
- Heavy milk production
- Minimize feeding costs
Maintenance (weaning to flushing)

Goal - To achieve a minimum BCS of 3, 3 weeks prior to breeding

- Feeding level depends upon body condition at weaning
- 70 kg ewe in good condition
  - 1.0 - 1.5 kg of average quality forage (10% protein, 55% TDN)
Flushed (3 weeks before breeding)

Goal - To achieve a BCS of 3.5 at breeding

• Increase energy intake (60% TDN)
  – good quality forage
  – grain supplementation of poorer forages

• Consider -
  – Current condition score
  – Breed
  – Time of Breeding
Early Pregnancy (first month)

Goal - To maintain or slightly increase body weight

- Nutritional management is critical in minimizing embryo loss
  - avoid under and over feeding
- Maintain flushing rations for 3 - 4 weeks after breeding
Mid Pregnancy (up to 100 days)

**Goal** - To increase body weight slightly
- Placenta is fully developed
- Underfeeding
  - underdeveloped placenta
  - small lambs
- Overfeeding
  - reduces feed intake in late pregnancy and increases incidence of pregnancy toxemia
  - wasteful
Mid Pregnancy (up to 100 days)

- Maintenance nutrient levels
  - 55% TDN
  - 10% protein
- 4 lbs of average quality alfalfa-grass hay
Late Pregnancy (last 6 weeks)

Goal - To maintain BCS or limit drop to less than 0.5 points (body weight gain of 180 - 225 g/day)

• 70% of fetal growth
• Underfeeding ewes
  – fetal growth
  – pregnancy toxemia
  – milk production
    • onset and overall quantity
Late Pregnancy (last 6 weeks)

- Feeding levels of 65% TDN, 12% protein
- Good quality hay (60% TDN) plus 0.5 kg barley
- Average quality hay (55% TDN) plus 1.5 lbs barley
## Rations for Pregnant Ewes (175 lbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; 15 weeks</th>
<th>Last 4 weeks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1 mineral</td>
<td>10 grams</td>
<td>10 grams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co- salt</td>
<td>10 grams</td>
<td>10 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A pm.</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
<td>5 grams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lbs DM</td>
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<tr>
<td>%TDN</td>
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<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%CP</td>
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</table>
Lactation

• Highest nutrient requirements
• Body weight loss can provide 25-30% of energy needed after lambing
  – ewes with BCS<2.5 in very poor position to meet milk potential
  – protein must be provided in the diet
• Age of ewe, number of lambs affects milk production
• Separate feeding for ewes with multiples
Lactation

- Feeding levels of 65% TDN, 15% protein
- Good quality hay (60% TDN) plus 1 lb barley and 0.5 lb canola meal
- Excellent quality alfalfa hay or cereal greenfeed
# Rations for Lactating Ewes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singles</th>
<th>Twins</th>
<th>Triplets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can. meal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:1 min.</td>
<td>10 g</td>
<td>14 g</td>
<td>14 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-salt</td>
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<td>14 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vit. A pm</td>
<td>6 g</td>
<td>10 g</td>
<td>10 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lbs DM</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>%CP</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creep Feeding

• Encourages early consumption of solid food
  – provides supplemental nutrients for rapid gain
  – promotes early weaning
Creep Rations

- Begin with soybean meal at 2 weeks of age.
- Introduce a 2:1 mix of whole barley and 32% protein pellets when SBM intake is 60g/head/day.
- At 30-35 lbs, feed a 3:1 mix of barley and pellets.
- Lambs eating > 0.5 lb of creep can be safely weaned.