

BE PREPARED

- Supplies to have on hand
 - Gloves and OB sleeves
 - OB lubricants
 - 7% iodine solution or Chlorhexidine solution
 - Clean Towels
 - Umbilical tape (*string*) or clamps
 - Calcium & magnesium oral supplements
 - **Discuss with your veterinarian which are most appropriate for your operation**
 - Your veterinarian's number in case of emergencies or concerns
- Know which ewes or does are due to give birth and when
 - Discuss with your veterinarian options for pregnancy diagnosis in your sheep or goats
- Vaccinate all ewes and does with CD/T vaccine 1 month prior to expected due date
- Set up lambing/kidding jugs
 - Approximately 4'x4' pen with solid walls
 - No evidence of manure or cleanings from previous deliveries
 - Bed deeply with straw
 - **Shavings and sand can be aspirated by the neonate or infect the navel, for these reasons they should be avoided as bedding material in birthing jugs**
- If you know an exact due date
 - Move ewe or doe to a clean birth jug 48 hours prior to due date or when she begins to show signs of stage 1 of labor
- If you do not know an exact birthing date
 - Keep dams that are expected to birth within the month in a pasture or area you can monitor daily
 - Move dam to a clean birth jug when she shows signs of stage 1 of labor

Note: Avoid waiting to move ewe or does to birthing jug during Stage 2 of parturition. Any stress during this stage of labor can result in birthing problems or harm to the neonate.

EWES OR DOES CARE AFTER BIRTHING

- Ensure that the dam is alert, responsive, and attentive to her offspring
- Provide her with clean warm water & fresh hay
- Strip both sides of udder to ensure both teats are patent, and colostrum appears normal
- Examine for signs of excessive bleeding, weakness when standing or inability to stand on her own, retained cleanings, lethargy, or inappetence
- Work with your veterinary team to develop protocols for any of the above conditions

WHEN TO CALL THE VET

- If stage 1 is taking longer than 6 hours or if the dam is not progressing every 20 minutes in stage 2
- If you feel the lamb or kid is malpositioned and are not sure how to correct it, or if you have attempted to correct a malpositioned lamb or kid without success for over 20 minutes
- If the lamb or kid is not attempting to stand or nurse within 3 hours of birth
- If the dam is showing any of the signs listed above or not responding to treatment
- If the dam has retained cleanings for more than 3 days
 - DO NOT attempt to pull cleanings on your own without consulting your veterinarian

OTHER MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS TO CONSIDER

All sheep and goat operations are different. Because of this, common practices are not going to look the same from farm to farm. Consult with your veterinary team to develop management protocols that best reflect the goals and health needs of your flock or herd. Additionally, our website has several resources from experts in the field regarding the following topics:

- Lamb and Kid Nutrition
 - Milk Feeding & Grain Feeding
 - Creep Feeding & Weaning
- Ewe and Doe Nutrition & Body Condition Scoring
- Ewe and Doe Vaccinations & Parasite Control
- Ewe and Doe Breeding & Replacement Selection
- Ram and Buck Selection & Management



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**WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN
YOU ARE EXPECTING...
LAMBS OR KIDS**

STAGES OF THE LAMBING OR KIDDING PROCESS

STAGE 1: PREPARATION (2-6 HOURS)

The signs of stage one preparation are:

- Restlessness
- Raising her tail
- Separating herself from the herd/flock, if she can
- Mucous discharge
- Mild straining
- Fetal membranes, or the water bag

During this time the cervix is dilating, and the neonate is rotating from its position in pregnancy to facing forward with its head at 12 o'clock resting between its front legs. Any other position or presentation is not normal.

STAGE 2: EXPULSION (30 MINUTES – 1 HOUR)

The second stage is expulsion. The walls of the uterus are contracting more frequently and with more force. **You will see feet protruding from the vulva.**

- Check on dam every 20 minutes to make sure she is progressing normally. If you are not seeing progress every 20 mins, you should perform a vaginal exam, using the clean procedure, to identify whether the neonate is in the correct position.

Remember: That if you are pulling a lamb or kid, you should always have **two feet and a head through the cervix or two feet and a tail before you pull.** Otherwise, don't pull before you reposition the lamb or kid in a normal presentation, or call your vet for help or advice.

Pro Tip: After the lamb or kid is removed, glove up and check for another. You will miss every one you don't check for!

STAGE 3: CLEANING (8-12 HOURS)

The third stage is cleaning. At this time the placenta passes after the neonate is born.

ENSURING A GOOD START TO LIFE FOR YOUR LAMBS & KIDS

ENVIRONMENT

Lambs and Kids should be born in an environment that is clean, dry, and warm.

Lambs and kids born into a wet, dirty environment will likely develop scours and pneumonia within the first week of life. Do not forget that they are infants and have no immune system when they first hit the ground. Using a kidding or lambing jug will ensure that the dams bond with their offspring, aids in regular nursing by keeping the dams and their young in close proximity, and the small enclosure will retain heat to keep the neonates warm.

ASSESS THE LAMB OR KID IMMEDIATELY AT BIRTH

Assess the neonate when it has been completely delivered. Check to make sure it is breathing, if not, stick fingers in the nostrils and rub the back of the neck. Make sure the umbilicus is not still bleeding. If it is, tie it off with string, use an umbilical clamp, or hold pressure until the bleeding stops.

KEEP THEM WARM

Lambs and kids are not able to regulate their body temperatures when they are first born and will very easily become hypothermic. To prevent hypothermia in lambs and kids you should:

- Dry them off rapidly, use clean towels to rub them until they are completely dry
- Feed colostrum as soon as possible
- Provide a deep, dry, clean bed pack of straw and a heat lamp in the corner of the birth jug
 - A source of heat should be provided for the first 3-7 days while dam and offspring are in the birth jugs. In temperatures below 40 degrees F, heat sources should be provided for lambs and kids for the first 2-3 weeks of life within the larger bed packs

COLOSTRUM

Lambs and kids should be fed **2-4 ounces of warm colostrum by 4 hours after birth.** The sooner the lamb or kid is fed the better. If the neonate is not willing to drink on its own, use an esophageal tube feeder to force feed colostrum.

The lamb or kid should receive **at least 2 ounces of warm colostrum during a second feeding around 8-12 hours after birth.** By this time, the lamb or kid should be nursing from the dam on its own. If it is not nursing on its own, feed with a bottle or esophageal tube feeder.

Remember: The antibodies in the colostrum are no longer available to the lamb or kid 24 hours after birth. Feeding colostrum to the lamb or kid after the first 24 hours of life will have no effect on immune function.

NAVEL CARE

The umbilical cord on the lamb or kid should be attended to within the first 30 mins of life.

- Cord length
 - If the cord is longer than 4", tear the extra length with gloved hands OR tie off with string then cut the extra length off below the tie
 - DO NOT CUT without tying off first
- If the cord is bleeding
 - Use string, an umbilical clamp, or your fingers to hold off until bleeding stops
 - Make sure whatever you are using is clean
- Dip the navel in 7% iodine solution or chlorohexidine solution
 - Fill a cup with solution and submerge the entire navel up to the belly for 15 seconds
 - Make sure to cover the entire cord and navel
 - Repeat every 12 hours for 2 days
- Monitor navel for signs of swelling, discharge, heat, or bleeding
 - If any of these signs occur, contact your vet for advice