

HYGIENE PROTOCOLS AT LAMBING TIME



INTRODUCTION

Maintaining good hygiene in the lambing shed can lower the risk of illness and improve ewe and lamb survival. Although bacteria are present everywhere, farms can reduce the spread by undertaking protocols in lambing sheds. Bacteria can be found on hands, boots and equipment as well as in faeces and in sometimes in livestock feed. Bacterial infections can cause cases of watery mouth, mastitis, scour, navel and joint illnesses, and womb infections.



PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

Pre-lambing pens should be cleaned out and limed/disinfected. Water troughs should also be cleaned out regularly. At housing, footbath the ewes and separate any lame ewes. Lame ewes should be treated promptly to avoid the spread of infection and penned away from the main lambing flock. Do not over stock pens to ensure that all ewes can access trough space at the same time during feeding periods. Maintaining clean and dry bedding reduces the risk of infection. After every ewe and lamb has left a lambing pen, this should be cleaned, disinfected and new bedding provided. Disposable gloves should always be used when assisting a ewe to lamb and when handling ill lambs. Removing any sick ewes or lambs into separate pens away from the main lambing pens means that they can be easily treated and monitored. It can also help stop the spread of infection. All placentas and dead lambs should be disposed of immediately alongside any infected bedding.

CONTACT

Josh Brock, Agri-Business Consultant, ADAS

E: josh.brock@adas.co.uk

ADAS is a trading name of RSK ADAS Ltd, part of RSK Group Ltd. Head office: Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road, Helsby WA6 0AR, UK

Providing staff with warm water, soap and towels near to a lambing shed is vitally important as reduce spread of disease and illness. Pregnant women **MUST NOT** assist with lambing, handle sheep or touch dirty clothing as this poses a risk to the unborn child's life. All farms should provide disinfectant stations on entrances of sheds to ensure that diseases are not passed between livestock types and humans.

Together with the mouth, the navel offers bacteria a convenient point of entry. Iodine treatment for navels lowers this danger and aids in the navel's drying out. Dipping them twice a few hours apart is considered best practise. Castration and tailing of lambs in the first week of life is discouraged to avoid stress and wounds where joint ill bacteria can enter the bloodstream.



If a lamb is required to be tubed, ensure that all feeding equipment, such as stomach tubes are thoroughly sterilised in between uses. Using a baby bottle sterilising solution is highly recommended by vets.

SUMMARY

- Pens should **always** be disinfected
- **Treat lame ewes promptly** to avoid the spread of infection
- Use **disposable gloves** when assisting ewes/handling lambs
- Remove any sick ewes/lambs into separate pens
- Remove **placentas and dead lambs immediately**
- Provide staff with **warm water, soap and towels**
- Pregnant women **MUST NOT** assist with lambing

IMPORTANCE OF COLOSTRUM AT LAMBING



COLOSTRUM

Colostrum is vital to newborn lambs as it contains antibodies (also known as immunoglobulins or IgG) to provide immunity, and it is also rich in essential nutrients to provide energy for growth. Insufficient ewe nutrition diminishes the amount of colostrum and milk generated, postpones the commencement of lactation, and thickens the colostrum, making it more challenging for the lamb to remove from the teat. Ensuring that ewes meet the correct body condition prior to lambing and correct nutrition is provided at least 7 weeks leading up to lambing helps both the ewe and lamb.

Body Condition Score Targets (AHDB, 2017)



	Hill	Upland	Lowland
Topping	2.5	3.0	3.5
Mid-Pregnancy	2.0	2.5	3.0
Late-Pregnancy	2.0	2.5	3.0
Lambing	2.0	2.2	3.0
8 Weeks Post	2.0	2.0-2.5	2.5-3.0
Weaning	2.0	2.0	2.5

The target intake of colostrum for new born lambs is 5% of bodyweight every 6 hours for the first 24 hours giving a total of 20% of bodyweight in the first 24 hours. A strong and healthy lamb which receives colostrum within 15 minutes of birth has a 90-95% of survival after 90 days. After six hours of life, a lamb's ability to absorb antibodies into the bloodstream starts to decrease.

CONTACT

Josh Brock, Agri-Business Consultant, ADAS

E: josh.brock@adas.co.uk

ADAS is a trading name of RSK ADAS Ltd, part of RSK Group Ltd. Head office: Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road, Helsby WA6 0AR, UK

COLOSTRUM IS GOLD

The 3 Q's of Feeding Colostrum:

1. Quantity
2. Quality
3. Quickly

Ewes colostrum can be refrigerated for up to 6 weeks or frozen for up to 6 months. Care should be taken when thawing the colostrum to make sure the temperature does not exceed above 40 degree Celsius. Above this temperature, antibodies are destroyed. Colostrum should be ideally thawed by placing a small container into warm water. Colostrum quality can be tested using a refractometer and should be 26.5% IgG for lambs.



WHY IS COLOSTRUM IMPORTANT FOR LAMBS?

- It provides passive immunity through the antibodies it contains
- It acts as a laxative and helps to clean out the digestive tract
- It provides the early nutrients required for a healthy life
- Ensures lambs get the best possible start