



Identify Preventable Losses at Lambing

Good Record Keeping

Good record keeping highlights where losses are occurring and helps to implement plans to minimise losses. Have a straightforward plan in place to meet the needs of each lamb and make sure all staff are aware of protocols.

Ewe Nutrition

Ewes should be body condition scored at least 6 weeks before lambing and action taken to ensure ewes are in appropriate condition; with lowland sheep between BCS 3-3.5 and upland sheep BCS 2.5. There is a clear link between the ewe's energy and protein intake over the last 3 weeks of pregnancy and colostrum production.

Assisted Lambing

It is inevitable that a percentage of ewes will need assisted. Recording reasons for the ewe needing assistance can help with future plans. Strict hygiene measures should be followed and lambs following difficult births given priority care.

Colostrum

The ability to absorb the antibody proteins offered in colostrum reduces after 6 hours. It is imperative lambs receive the right quantity of good quality colostrum quickly. A new-born lamb requires 50ml/kg of colostrum within the first 4 hours of life.

Hygiene

- Lambs should have their naval dipped immediately after birth and then again 6 hours later.
- Castration and tagging equipment should be dipped in surgical spirit between lambs again to help cut down infection.
- Individual pens should be cleaned between use. If this is not possible lime can be used between occupants with the pen re-bedded with ample straw.

Antibiotics

Blanket use of antibiotics is bad practice. The use of systemic injectable antibiotics should be limited to clinical cases such as for lambs with active joint or naval ill or sheep who have suffered from a bad lambing or mastitis.