



Hunter Nutrition

The Program That Performs

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

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HOW TO GET FALL LAMBS NATURALLY

by Jeff Hunter

We have been fall lambing for many years and really like lambing that time of year. We have about 300 Dorset Ewes, some lambing once a year in the fall, others are on an accelerated lambing schedule.

Our breeding management procedure is simple and cost effective. We expose all of our Fall and Winter Lambing Ewes in April to lamb the next fall. The ewes are flushed with a small amount of feed for 4 to 6 weeks prior to turning in the ram. Ewes will be in good condition, but not fat. The ewes are sheared in late March or early April before the rams go in. The rams are also sheared.

Our program of synchronization with teasers has yielded as good of results as using cidr's/sponges.

A Teaser ram is a vasectomized male who cannot produce off-spring, but produces the necessary pheromones to induce estrus in a ewe. The 'ram effect' works best when the ewes have been kept well away from the rams for about eight weeks. When the teaser ram is introduced ewes come into heat in two groups, some right after the (teaser) ram is introduced- others six days later. This initial heat is a 'silent heat', the ewes first true heat will be 17 and 23 days later. Therefore most ewes will breed on days 1-3 and days 6-8 after the ram goes in. The 'ram effect' created by the teaser ram



allows most of your ewes to be mated in a few days, making a short compact, efficient lambing.

Teaser rams go in March 25th, they remain with the ewes for 16 days. On day 16 (April 9th) the teasers are removed and replaced with intact rams. The April 9th ram introduction produces lambs born on September 1st. About 60-67% of the ewes exposed lamb during the first cycle(17 days), and we are over 90% done lambing by the end of two cycles.

Synchronizing the estrus with teaser rams seems to work better in the spring than other times of the year for us. So our best results are with the April 9th breeding for September 1st lambing. Sheep are seasonal breeders and breed best during short day length. So, you have better results by breeding to lamb 'earlier' in the fall vs. trying to breed for a later fall lambing. It is much easier to get September born lambs, than October or November born lambs.

HOW TO GET FALL LAMBS USING REPRODUCTIVE AIDS

by LeAnn Hall



SEE THE SCENARIO BELOW:

Cost to CIDR 100 ewes: \$8.50/CIDR = \$850

60/100 ewes lamb at 150% lambing percentage = 90 lambs

90 lambs sold for \$140/cwt* at 120 lbs = \$15,120 profit

*(National live slaughter lamb price, March 2023)

\$15,120 - \$850 CIDR cost = \$14,270 profit plus costs for additional feed during gestation, labor, etc

Feeding MGA for 14 days can replace CIDR insertion and is valuable for large farms or minimizing labor. However, MGA is not as effective as CIDRS, with a response rate of 20-60% for out of season breeding.

For either scenario, having healthy, well-conditioned ewes fed a flushing ration with no chronic disease components immensely improves the odds of success. Housing rams a sufficient distance from ewes to prevent pheromone transfer (that musky, ramy smell) until breeding will also improve breeding and pregnancy rates. Implementing teasers will further enhance ewes' return to cyclicity without extending the breeding season.

Fall breeding can make a significant impact on the profitability and return on investment of sheep operations. Use these reproductive aids to improve your probability of success.

Fall lambing can offer producers an additional chance to get lambs on the ground, leveraging additional lucrative marketing opportunities such as Easter sales, maximizing facility usage, and increasing profits.

Success depends on several factors, including geography, breed of ewes, and genetic makeup of the flock. Black-faced breeds such as Hampshire and Suffolk are more resistant to out of season breeding. The farther north the flock's location, the more difficult out of season breeding becomes. Flocks traditionally programmed to lamb only in the spring will likely require some time and genetic selection to achieve high levels of fertility and conception rates in the fall.

Despite those complications, there are programs that can improve out of season breeding and help get fall lambs on the ground. CIDRS, (controlled internal drug release), are small vaginal inserts containing progesterone used to aid in out of season estrus, or heat, induction. Left in place for 5 days, they can create a progesterone-priming effect, inducing the resumption of the estrous cycle after seasonal anestrus, or lack of cycling due to the winter/spring season. Insertion for 12-14 days will provide the progesterone-priming effect in addition to estrus synchronization, allowing for controlled lambing windows and staggered groupings for breeding. Even in northern locations with black-faced breeds, the 12-14 day protocol typically results in 60-80% response rate. The addition of PG600 injections given upon CIDR removal can improve the response rate to 80-100%, though availability of PG600 is inconsistent. Per 100 ewes, adding fall lambing can increase gross profits by more than \$14,000.

**EAZI-BREED™
CIDR®**
(progesterone)



CIDR's contain natural hormone progesterone 0.3 gram per insert. CIDR's are used to induce estrus in ewes (sheep) during seasonal anestrus. Dosage and Administration: Insert one CIDR per ewe for 5-14 days. At the time of CIDR removal inject each ewe with 5 ml PG 600. Estrus will then occur in 1-3 days after removal. Use CIDR's with the Insert Applicator. CIDR's can be used to induce estrus and group lambing dates closer together.



PG 600 contains PMSG and hCG gonadotrophins which have been proven to promote the development of a fertile estrus cycle. Administer 5 ml(cc) Sub Q.

by Jeff Hunter

It is important to get calves started on creep early.

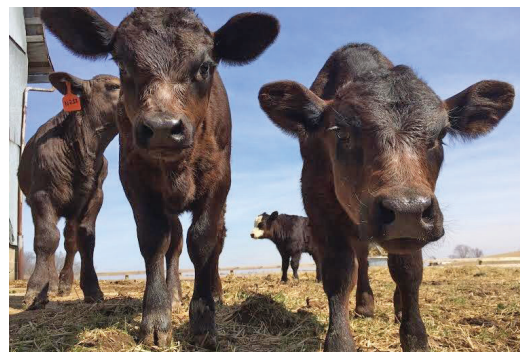
Exposure to creep feed has many benefits; rumen development, heavier weaning weights, and increased profits. A good calf creep is palatable, well-fortified, and has the correct energy and fiber balance.

Young calves will not eat very much creep at first. However early consumption of even a small amount of feed is important. This early consumption aids in rumen development and sets calves up to consume more feed and gain more weight later on in the creep feeding period. A good way to get calves started on feed, is to place the creep close to the areas where cows and calves congregate. Proper location of the creep feeder is important to the success of the creep program. If you place the feeder in an unfamiliar location, the calves may not find it. You will also get an earlier start if the first feed is a very palatable texturized grain mix. Our product 'Beef Calf Creep w/Bovatec (Texturized)' works very well as the first feed to attract calves to the creep. After the calves are well started on feed you should switch to 14% Calf Creep Pellet.

Pelleted Calf Creep Feeds should be a 5/32" pellet and free of fines. Avoid calf creep feeds which are a blend of several kinds of pellets. These products can separate and often have fines which can cause bloat and off feed times. When 'the blended pellet' product separates you also see a decline in calf performance due to the ingredient separation. You will want a single size pellet which has all of the ingredients in that pellet and is a free of fines.

Creep feeding calves reduces calf weaning stress and produces 30-60 lbs. more weight at weaning. Additionally calf creep feeding helps cows maintain condition. Cows that are in better shape at weaning will breed back sooner.

We have several reasonably priced high quality calf creep feeds available. The pelleted feeds are available in bags, bulk bags, and in bulk. Call for details.



'Creep Feeding Calves reduces calf weaning stress, produces 30-60 lbs. more weight at weaning, and helps cows maintain condition.'

14% CALF CREEP PELLET

- Highly Palatable – Calves Start On Feed Quickly.
- Very Well Fortified Formula, Maximize Calves Potential.
- Good Feed Conversion, Best Cost/Pound Gained.
- Optimum Levels Of Vitamins, Selenium, and Trace Minerals!

Available with Bovatec, or Rumensin. Bagged or Bulk. Standard Formula or Custom Mix.

#400012

GRASS TETANY

by Katie Marchino



As spring approaches, there are a few concerns to watch out for in your herd.

With spring comes sunshine and usually, a lot of rain. This can be an issue for ruminants due to the need for forages - typically cool season grasses in our region. Cool season grasses and cereal grains are typically known for having low levels of essential minerals, such as magnesium and calcium, which are two highly essential nutrients in bodily functions to ruminants. Without proper levels of calcium and magnesium, ruminants are highly susceptible to two diseases; grass tetany and hypocalcemia.

Grass tetany is a highly lethal disease that contributes to low levels of magnesium in the body. Magnesium is typically stored in the bones and muscle of the animal but is not always readily accessible when the body is low on it. Throughout normal body function, some is lost in the urine, feces and if the animal is in lactation, the milk. Without a healthy supply of magnesium, the body will suffer signs of tetany (hence the name) or muscle contractions. Magnesium is essential for muscle stimulation, so once the onset of this disease begins, it is crucial to treat it within a few hours without risk of death.

There are many solutions to grass tetany; however, and with a proper management plan, can most likely be avoided on your farm. Reviewing your rations can be one strategic plan to help add in magnesium during these months, as well as, feeding a high magnesium free choice mineral. Supplementing or adding a quality hay and silage are also a good option, if available.

In conclusion, grass tetany is a dangerous disease that often goes unnoticed until symptoms emerge; however, with moderate management practices, it can go undetected from your herd this spring.

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CONCEPTIO

CONCEPTIO PRODUCTS

- Flushing Ration For Ewes In AI and ET Programs.
- Contains toxic binders, probiotics, and prebiotics to improve health breeding efficiency and to reduce still-borns and abortions.
- Organic Trace Minerals.
- Increased levels of importance reproductive nutrients including: Selenium, Vitamin E, Manganese, and Zinc.
- Enhances ovulation, embryo survival, and birthing rate at a reasonable price.

While you do not have to buy a 'special' feed or mineral – You must meet the nutritional needs of breeding animals. Those nutritional needs are greater. An ewe needs 45% More Dry Matter, 40% More Protein and 56% More Energy for flushing than maintenance. Ful-filling the increased nutritional needs of 'breeding' can be done with our standard products. I like flocks to be on year around high levels of important reproduction nutrients such as selenium, vitamin E, manganese, and zinc. This is a better approach than minimally feeding stock during maintenance and then suddenly needing to improve nutrition at breeding time. This is when producers might be pushed into buying a special breeding supplement, the seller usually says 'you must buy this to be successful'. Whether you are breeding naturally or doing AI/ET work nutritional needs are higher, but those needs can be met with our available well-fortified feeds.

If you are on our feeding program, you are on feeds which meet the nutritional demands of breeding, AI, and ET. However, In recent years, I have formulated some products with even higher levels of nutrients to address some producer needs. These were made on a custom basis in previous years. We are now making these floor stock products during breeding season. We have feeds for producers who want an even higher fortified program, especially for those doing AI and Embryo Transfer. These feeds have higher selenium, vitamin E, manganese, and zinc. They also include probiotics, prebiotics, and toxin binders to improve overall health, efficiency, and reduce stillborn and abortions.

CONCEPTIO COMPLETE EWE PELLET

Conceptio Complete Ewe Pellet is fed as the sole grain before and during breeding.

#501511 50 lb. (Ship wt. 52 lbs.) \$ Call

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS	
Crude Protein (not less than)	12.00%
Crude Fat (not less than)	3.00%
Crude Fiber (not more than)	18.00%
Calcium (not more than).....	1.36% (not less than) ...0.86%
Phosphorus (not less than)	0.20%
Salt (not more than).....	0.75% (not less than)...0.25%
Selenium, min.....	0.80 ppm
Vitamin A, min	10,000 IU/lb
Vitamin D, min	3000 IU/lb
Vitamin E, min	50 IU/lb

CONCEPTIO EWE SUPPLEMENT PELLET

Conceptio Ewe Supplement Pellet is a 36% protein pellet fed at about 0.25 lbs per ewe/day and used to farm blend feeds.

#501518 50 lb. (Ship wt. 52 lbs.) \$ Call

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS	
Crude Protein (not less than).....	36.00%
Crude Fat (not less than)	1.25%
Crude Fiber (not more than)	5.00%
Calcium (not more than).....	4.50% (not less than) 3.00%
Phosphorus (not less than).....	0.40%
Salt (not less than).....	1.50% (not more than)..... 2.50%
Selenium, min.....	9.00 ppm
Vitamin A, min	40,000 IU/lb
Vitamin D3, min	12,000 IU/lb
Vitamin E, min.....	400 IU/lb