

## A Guide to Rearing Your Lamb

Lambs for Agricultural Day must be born after 1 June and must be more than six weeks old on the day. It is best to obtain a lamb that is at least 3 days old after birth, this allows the lamb to have its mother's colostrum, which gives protection against diseases and is high in both vitamins and minerals. Lambs which are orphaned or rejected by their mother may not have had colostrum. A colostrum substitute is available from the vets or recipes are available on the internet. These substitutes are beneficial but do not carry the antibodies which give protection against diseases.

Healthy lambs should have a dry small navel, clear bright eyes and have lively movements. Take note of your lamb's birth date as this is required on the entry form.

Your lamb will need to have its tail docked (a rubber ring placed around the tail). This can be done from a week old, the sooner the better, before the tail gets too big.

If a ram (male) lamb is chosen he should be wethered with a rubber ring from 1 week old, otherwise he will possibly become aggressive as he reaches maturity.

### Approximate Rearing Needs

2 x 10kg bags of milk powder

2 x lamb teats\* (it always pays to have a spare as they get chewed) or a complete bottle and teat set plus spare teat

Lamb or multifeed pellets

Collar and lead (a light lead is best – not a heavy horse lead)

Drench

Vaccine

Cover (optional)

\*Lamb teats can be screwed on to a coke bottle

### Feeding

Lamb milk powders are specially formulated to meet the needs of your lamb. Mixing and feeding instructions are clearly written on the bag. Avoid sudden changes in the type (brand), quantity or temperature of milk or milk powder.

When feeding your lamb in the first 5 days, watch that its tummy doesn't get over distended. As a guide, feed 20% of body weight daily split in to five small feeds. For example a 3kg lamb needs 600mls per day fed at 120 mls per feed. Thoroughly clean bottles and teats after each feed.

When your lamb gets older supplement milk with lamb or multifeed pellets. If your lamb is tethered keep moving it regularly so that it has access to fresh grass.

### Scours – if your lamb scours –

Stop feeding it milk immediately and keep it off milk for 24 hours.

Feed it an electrolyte mix to keep it hydrated. (Electrolyte mix is available in small pack sizes from your local farm store or vet and are always good to have on hand when rearing a lamb).

Continue electrolytes with four to six feeds of 120ml by bottle or tube feeder.

Keep your lamb in a clean, dry draught free environment and keep it warm.

### Vaccination and Drenching

If the mother of your lamb was not vaccinated with a 5 in 1 one month prior to lambing or if you do not know if it was vaccinated, it should be vaccinated with a lamb vaccine or PK/Antitet from 1 week old. If the lamb has come from a vaccinated mother and has had adequate colostrum in the first day of its life it will have protection for about 3 months.

Your lamb should be vaccinated with a 5 in 1 vaccine at weaning (or 3 months) and then given a booster shot 1 month later and thereafter once a year. This vaccine prevents pulpy kidney, tetanus, black disease, malignant odema and blackleg. These diseases can kill the healthiest and largest of lambs.

Drench at about 6 weeks old and again at 10 weeks. Oral lamb drench is available from your local farming outlet or vet. This drench does not cover lice.

### Housing Requirements

A dry, draught free house or kennel is required. Lamb covers are available from your local farm outlet. Sudden changes in temperature when it is small can cause pneumonia. Your lamb will grow better if it is not using energy to keep warm.

### Poisonous Plants

Lambs have a love of garden plants, however they are not able to determine which ones are poisonous. There are potentially many poisonous plants in the home garden. Some examples are (but not limited to) – plants of the erica and rhododendron family, camellia, daphne, azalea, daffodils, snowdrops, hyacinths, hemlock, cress, red maple, oak, oleander, arums, ivy, five finger, lillies, poppies, poinsettia, titoki, foxgloves, snap dragons and rhubarb leaves.

### Daily Care

Regular feeding

Wash its face to remove any milk residue

Walk it on a lead and play with it

Practice calling your lamb before each feed.

### Points to Remember

Lambs must not be brushed or washed

Hooves should be trimmed and clean

Trim any dags to tidy up around the lamb's rear end

Make sure your lamb's face and ears are clean

### On Agricultural Day

Make sure you take your lamb's food and water requirements for the day.

Depending on the number of entries and at the discretion of the animal committee, children will be grouped in three age groups – senior 11, 12 & 13 year olds, intermediate 8, 9 & 10 year olds and junior 5, 6 & 7 year olds. These groups may be split in to extra classes if numbers allow. Lambs will be judged on leading, calling and rearing.

The leading course is the same one used at the Franklin Central Group Day. It is advisable not to start using the leading course until closer to Agricultural Day as your lamb may become bored and uncooperative.

When leading your lamb you should stand on the left shoulder of the lamb. The right hand should grip the lead palm upwards and be approximately 10cm from the collar. The left hand should grip the lead, knuckles upward.

Actions which could incur penalties are – pushing your lamb with your hand, jerking on the lead, allowing the end of the rope to trail on the ground, buffeting your lamb with your leg.

Try to lead your lamb at a reasonable pace ensuring that you walk at the same pace as your lamb without dragging or pushing it.

When calling your lamb – it needs to come directly to you. The distance the lamb is called from will be determined by the judge on the day. Ensure you call in a clear loud voice so it can hear you. You must be able to hook your lead back on your lamb's collar.

Rearing is judged on general appearance, condition, size with the lambs age taken in to consideration.

### Tips for Success

Your child should always feed the lamb whenever possible. Lambs fed by parents usually do not perform well on Agricultural Day.

Spend lots of time playing with your lamb so you build a bond and it will come when called.

Give your lamb a treat when leading and calling. You may use pellets – even a hug, pat and a few kind words are beneficial. (Remember don't use the pellets on Ag Day.)