Kidding/Lambing Workshop
Betsy Hodge 2010

Let's start at the very beginning:

* Know your birth dates by controlling your ram or buck.
  Ram or Buck pen (with company?)
  Gestation – basically 5 months
  Age of puberty – don’t kid too young

* Choose an appropriate ram or buck
  Size, type

Doe or Ewe in good shape:

* Good Nutritional Status
  • Not too thin, not too fat
  • Good hair coat

* Minerals appropriate for animal
  • Selenium
  • Calcium
  • Water available
Feed Considerations

• Is there enough feed
  • There should be enough feed so they can practice selective eating.

• Is the quality good enough
  • Limited forage intake at the end
  • Need more nutrition towards the end of gest.

• Is there enough bunk space
  • Can really limit intake

Doe or Ewe in good shape:

• Healthy
  • Vaccinated?
    • CD/T
  • Parasite control – internal and external
    • Be careful which dewormers you use
  • Teeth and feet OK

What do you need to get ready?

• Where
• What to have on hand
• Watch them or leave them alone?
• How long to wait
• Crutching? Trimming? Cleaning?
• Who can help you
Where?

- Clean, dry area
- Warm? maybe
- Could be outside on grass
- Bedded area around a big round bale
- Not too small

What to have on hand?

- Record sheets
- ID – paint, tags
- Small bucket, lubricant (soap, or vet lube)
- Lamb/kid Tuber
- Warming Box
- Bottle and Pritchard teat
- Milk Replacer? Colostrum?

Record sheet notes:

- Lamb/Kid ID number or name
- Ewe/Doe mother
- Date or birth
- Single/Twin/Trip/Quad
- Birth weight
- Lambing/kidding score
- Notes and description (color, vitality)
- Buck
Warming Box

- Cardboard Box – tall
- Hole for hair dryer in side or top
- Hair dryer – on low
  - Don’t leave unattended
  - Don’t put up on something

How do we know when she is getting ready?

- They like to keep you guessing!
- Udder fullness
- In front of hips drops
- Loose vulva
- Discharge
- Pawing, making baby sounds

Getting Closer...

- Lay down
  - May get up and look around and lay down
- Push
  - Head goes up, usually turned back slightly
30-30-30-30 Rule

• 30 minutes of straining or 30 minutes of water bag showing – check her

• If normal – wait 30 more minutes before doing anything

• If 30 minutes between kids/lambs

Full Term Ewe with Lamb in Normal Presentation

The beginning: the bag
Lamb being born

Lamb Born!

Heading for lunch...
Dystocia

• Don’t panic
• Wash your hands, wrists, arms
• Remove watch, rings, etc
• Use lube of some kind
• Look for clues
  • Can you see a nose
  • Can you see a foot or two
  • Which type of foot is it? Front or back

Dystocia continued

• Simply too big
• Nose is out – maybe feet – forehead won’t fit through.
• Sometimes lamb is swollen and dry
  • Keep working on it
  • Get the feet in the right position
  • Lots of lube
  • Pull "down", wiggle back and forth
• May have to pull harder than you think

Dystocia Continued

• Press fingers together to make a cone
• Work you hand back and forth gently into the opening
• Close your eyes to help concentrate
• What do you feel?
• Take your time and think
• Can be hard work
Backwards

Look at the direction the feet are pointing

Important to get this lamb out quickly so it won’t drown

Pull on the back legs – clear face

Breech

You will feel the tail

Can be delivered as is or….

Loop finger in hind leg and gently extend out the back – repeat - and then pull gently

Elbow Lock

Alternate pulling on each front foot

May have to push the head back a little and pull on one leg at a time to get them free.
One Leg Back

May be delivered this way or

Slide fingers in under lamb and catch the “knee” and draw out the leg

Both Legs Back

Must get front legs out (at least one)

Slide hand under lamb and hook front leg with finger – guide out.

Repeat

Pull or let things progress

Head Back

The toughest one!
Lamb may be weak or dead

Reach over the top and work your way down the neck. Pull head into position and cup your hand over it and try to slide it forward.

May need a cable noose
Twins – front and back

Not as bad as it seems once you figure out what is going on.

May have to push one back and get the other.

Twins coming together:

Figure out what is going on, then push the one with the head back down in and pull the other one.

Just make sure you have the right legs.

Then get the other one.

There might be a 3rd one!

More lambs?

• Don’t assume all the lambs are out

• Observe ewe

• May have to go looking for others
Disasters

• Lamb or kid has died and falls apart when you pull it...
• Lamb/Kid is malformed and can’t come out
• Ewe is sick or old and doesn’t have the strength
• Lamb/kid is malformed but comes out
• Ewe/Doe is turtled with lambs half born

Lambs/Kids that are pulled

• Sometimes they are dopey
• Sometimes their legs are stressed
• Sometimes they are full of fluid
• Sometimes they need encouragement
• They are amazingly resilient

Newborn Kids and Lambs

• Just Born
• To jug or not to jug
• Things to do for the mother
• Things to do to the lamb
Just Born

- Make sure sack is off the nose.
- Lamb should be breathing
  - May need to tickle the nose
  - Swing lamb
  - Mouth to mouth?
- Lamb/kid should be sort of looking around with a wobbly head, snorting out nose
- Mother should be licking it off.

Just Born

- Don’t move unless in danger of getting trampled by other animals
- Iodine on navel – after they stand up
- Write them down/ID them
  - Tags
  - Paint – spray or “brands”

To jug or not to jug

- How crowded is it?
- How friendly is the mother?
- Are the babies likely to get into trouble?
- Are there lots of them?
- Wait until the babies have nursed?
- Be careful to get the babies with the right mother
Things to do for the mother

• Check udder to be sure there is milk
  • Never assume!
  • Baby’s wiggling tail – good sign

• Watch for afterbirth

• If she is really tired – pull lambs/kids around to front for licking off

Things to do for the Lamb/Kid

• Watch to be sure lambs/kids nurse
  • If you missed it pick them up and look at the stomach area – not sucked in is good
  • Running around happy - good
  • Blatting and looking around – bad

• Assist if needed
  • Help stand underneath, calm mother
  • Milk a little and feed with bottle
Colostrum

- First milk is called colostrum
  - Contains antibodies to protect the young
  - Thick with lots of nutrients

- Some is better than none
  - Fake colostrum – getting better
  - Cow or goat/sheep colostrum
  - Save your own animal's
Other Assistance

• Chilled lambs

• Hungry Lambs

• Un-mothered lambs

Chilled

• Lamb/kid in warm weather!
  • Control your buck/ram

• Simple warming
  • Warming box
  • Inside your coveralls
  • Next to the woodstove
Chilled lamb/kid

• How Cold is COLD
  • See handout
  • Intramuscular injection
  • They can freeze to the ground

• Once they are warmed up
  • Feed them – bottle or tube
  • Keep an eye on them

Hungry lambs/kids

• Help them nurse
  • Is the udder too big?
  • Are they weak?
  • Too much competition

• Supplement them
  • May be able to leave them with the mother

Un-mothered Lamb/kids

• That’s not my kid it’s yours!
  • Too crowded in the kidding area?

• Don’t assume they are with the right mother

• Young mother
  • Nursing may hurt
  • Babies can scare them!
Un-mothered lambs/kids

• Sometimes they get confused when there are multiple babies
• Don’t give up, be persistent
• Stanchion, pen
• Vaginal Stimulation – imitate birth

Orphan Lamb/kids

• Like babies – eat, poop, sleep, cry
  • Feed Frequently at first, warm
• Colostrum

• Use good quality sheep or goat replacer
• Can graduate to bucket with nipples
  • OK for it to cool down during the day

Where do you put them?

• In a box or clothesbasket
  • Portable?
• Pen with feeder
  • Keep near the sheep and goats
  • Raise with their own species
• Mix with the others after weaning
Sources

- [www.ansci.cornell.edu](http://www.ansci.cornell.edu)
  - Click on animal and resources
  - Go to adult goat – look down below
- [www.sheepandgoat.com](http://www.sheepandgoat.com)
  - Sheep 201
  - Lots of good articles
- [www.sheepgoatmarketing.info](http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info)