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Special Care and Management of Pregnant Sheep

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the people doing the business of sheep rearing, after having sex with sheep, it is expected that after 5 months they get a lamb in the sheep. In this context, it is to be noted that special attention should be given to the care of pregnant or shepherd sheep, as the formation of body part of the lamb starts during this period. Many times, even after the birth of the lamb, it has an effect on its growth. When a well-cared sheep is weaned, more milk will come out, the lamb will get more milk and it will grow faster. If the pregnant sheep is not properly cared for then the lambs that will be born will be weak, or die after kidding, or the mortality rate of the lambs will be high due to disease like abortion.

Separate the advanced pregnant ewes from the main flock, take effective care in their feeding and management. Bring lambing ewes into lambing corals 4-6 days before parturition, and provide maximum comfort. If possible, provide soft, clean bedding and individual lambing pens.

Health management also aims to prevent the main metabolic disorders of pregnant ewes (i.e., pregnancy toxaemia and hypocalcaemia), as well as to monitor flocks for development of these disorders. Health management of pregnant ewes is completed with application of husbandry practices before the start of the lambing season. Finally, in some cases, health management may include induction and synchronisation of lambings, which is a management or therapeutic procedure.

Breeding Age: Sheep usually mate between one year and one and a half years old. However, in temperate climates where sheep are fed nutritious food, meat-tainted sheep come into existence in less than a year.

Breeding Season: The breeding season in sheep usually comes twice a year: -

(a) February and March

(b) August and September months.

In dry environment, sheep are found in the river in addition to the above mentioned time. In sheep, the average time between two tabs is 17 days. And they stay in the pool for 24 to 36 hours. The egg falls from the ovary in the sheep 6 hours before the end.

For the pregnancy of female sheep one over 50 female sheep is needed to conceive by one male sheep.

Pal Shing: Sheep are given protein-enriched fodder before heat for female sheep under this method. By doing this, more ovulation takes place and number of eggs will be ovulated.

The sheep, which are in heat, it is advisable to give 300 grams of grain daily to sheep 6 weeks before the season. Apart from this, green fodder is also given. This quantity is increased to 400 grams after pregnancy and during pregnancy which is 90 days, the quantity of grains is increased to 500 grams.

The portion remains as follows: -

Chun Chana 08 Parts
Chapad 02 Parts
Khalli 01 Part
Salt 01 Percent

Guar & Maize etc. can also be used in place of Chana. By suppling, the good quality of food and nutrients for male sheep that is ram will produce good quality of semen.

Therefore, it would be appropriate to give 500 grams of grain per day before the breeding season, and in the breeding season, giving one chicken egg per day then quality of semen will be increased and will fertilized more ovum and will give good result of pregnancy.

Gestation: The average gestation period in sheep is 150 days. If sheep is suffering from any disease then parturition may takes place 142 days or maximum in 152 days.

Following important point to be noted for rearing of pregnant sheep: -

1. Pregnant sheep should not be intimidated.
2. They should not even be allowed to jump from high and they should not be run away needed.
3. Pregnant sheep should not pass through narrow roads.
4. Pregnant sheep should not be taken for grazing long distances in heat.
5. Pregnant sheep should be watered at proper time of day.
6. Pregnant sheep should be grazed near the shed at the end of the gestation period and the shepherd should keep an eye on such sheep.
7. Sheep that are bred in winter season should be kept separately in such enclosure which is surrounded by wire etc. and covered from above.
8. Sheep should be kept in a quiet environment at the time of delivery. If the sheep gets up and sits again and again, then it should be understood that its delivery period is near.
9. The sheep should be helped in removing the lamb if the kid is not born on its own for a period of two to two and a half hour. Before helping, owner should wash thoroughly with mild soap and put their hands inside by applying Vaseline etc.
10. It should be kept in mind at the time that which part of the lamb is being passed.

Normally in the following situations the lamb is born outside the womb: -

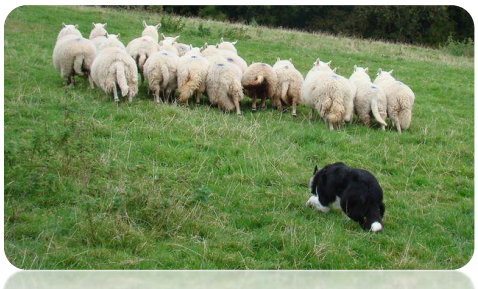
(i) Location
(ii) Post-Pregnancy Position
(iii) Transverse Pregnancy Position
(iv) Kari-Page Pregnancy Position
(v) Irregular pregnancy Position
(vi) Inverted Pregnancy Position

The above conditions are rarely found in sheep. Due to the small size of the lamb, it can be easily removed by hand.

11. A sheep should not be conceived with a ram for at least 60 days after the delivery, as this time is necessary for the uterus to regain its position.

Tips for reducing stress risks during early gestation include:

- Carry out routine husbandry tasks, such as worm dosing, in advance of, rather than during, the mating period.
- Ensure that animals are in good health and deal with any issues, such as lameness, well in advance of mating
- Avoid changes in routine during this period.
- Avoid transporting animals at this time. Therefore, if you have sent ewes away to run with someone else's ram, make sure that you arrange for them to stay until the risk period has passed. If you must move a recently mated animal (for example, if you have taken a goat to a billy standing at stud for a drive by mating), then it should be done immediately, in order to get the animal re-settled into its familiar quarters as soon as possible (ie, before embryo implantation occurs).
- Avoid nutritional changes during early gestation. If necessary, provide a low level of supplementary feeding to grazing livestock (such as blocks or licks) to buffer them against the naturally variable quality of the pasture.
- In the case of sheep, don't use a dog to round them up at this time. In fact, don't round them up at all if it can possibly be avoided.
- At this time of year, avoid grazing breeding stock in fields that have public access, such as footpaths, running through them.
- Mate animals at the time of year that is appropriate to their breed and species to avoid climatic stress. In species that may be bred from at any time (for example, pigs), provide adequate protection against excesses of heat or cold.



Tips for reducing stress risks during late gestation include:

• Avoid unnecessary handling.

• Only transport animals at this time if it is essential for the purpose of improving the conditions of birth, such as if you are moving sheep from outlying pasture to sheltered paddocks closer to home.

• Carry out routine husbandry procedures, such as vaccinations, in a sympathetic fashion.

• Introduce dietary changes gradually.

• Ensure that animals are familiar with the environment in which they will be spending the final few weeks of gestation and in which they will be giving birth. Where sheep are to be housed for lambing, for example, it is a good idea to accustom them to being indoors by housing them for a brief spell during the time that they are not pregnant.


Increase the amount of time that you devote to quiet observation of your animals.

• Avoid grazing breeding stock in fields that have public access, such as footpaths, running through them.

• Have a contingency plan in place to cope with extreme weather conditions.

Recipe for nutritional success

Appropriate nutrition during gestation is crucial if metabolic disorders are to be avoided and if the pregnancy is to have a satisfactory outcome. Pregnancy places a huge strain on the animal's body reserves, which is why supplementary feeding will probably be required. However, the developing foetuses take up space within the body and reduce appetite, presenting something of a catch 22 situation.

First and foremost, ensure that your animals are in good — fit, but not fat — condition at mating in order to get the pregnancy off to a good start. If body condition needs to be improved then it should be done well in advance of the breeding season. Any additional feed (over and above the basic maintenance requirements) given during early gestation should be purely for the avoidance of change and as an aid to conception rates.

Avoid overfeeding in early- and mid-gestation. In fact, during mid-gestation, the nutritional requirement is scarcely different from that of a non-breeding animal of similar body condition at the same time of year. Animals that enjoy a luxury feed intake during mid-gestation are often more susceptible to metabolic disorders — some of which may be fatal — later on, hence the earlier warning not to mollycoddle.

Late gestation is the critical period, with 70% of foetal growth occurring during the final few weeks, resulting in a high risk of energy deficit at this time. Therefore, supplementary feeding should be targeted to cope with this increasing demand, while making due allowance for the reduced capacity. The level of supplementary feed required varies according to the bodyweight of the animal, The quality and quantity of available forage should also be taken into account. For example, a small breed of ewe carrying a single lamb, due to give birth in a fortnight's time will need to be given.