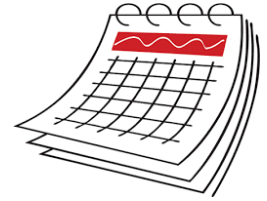


## **Flocknews April 2022**

Leading on from last edition we will continue to embark on organising your husbandry calendar to help make the year run more smoothly. As many of you will be commencing autumn lambing soon, this edition will take on that theme.



### *1. Consider taking more intervention at lambing time*

This is an interesting topic and may make some nervous. It is well known that entering a lambing paddock to help a ewe in lambing distress can cause potential mismothering. However, some producers have had great success getting the ewes used to cars and people prior to the start of lambing. One example is entering the paddock morning and night every day for 4 weeks prior to the onset of lambing. Then, when a ewe does need assistance with lambing, medical treatment etc, the remaining mob will not be stressed with your presence.

Another point on more involvement at lambing time is setting up 'maternity wards.' Some producers have been doing this and really seeing the benefits. They can be used in many ways, but one example is any ewe that has required assistance at lambing is removed from the lambing paddock and placed in a sheltered pen with good quality feed and water with their lamb. They are kept there for 12-48 hours (depending on state of ewe) and this enables them time to mother up and receive medication/monitoring if any is required. Once this is achieved, they can then be returned to their paddock. This does involve extra labour, but the increased lamb/ewe survival rate is worth considering.

### *2. Orphan Lambs*

We all aim for no orphan lambs on farm but sometimes there are a few needing help. Consider your farm protocol for colostrum ingestion and milk feeding regime. It is good to have a plan in place as often orphan lambs arrive when it is a very busy time on farm so having the right equipment is key. To help with this, we have some oesophageal feeder packs available. The pack provides you with one reusable oesophageal feeder, one large catheter tip syringe and some basic information on feeding guidelines. Oesophageal feeders are an important tool to use if your lamb is cold, dehydrated, no suckle reflex and requires that first colostrum or subsequent milk feeds in its first few days of life.

Last year we had many orphan lambs present to the clinic due to abomasal bloat. This is caused by overfeeding, using the wrong type of milk replacer and providing milk replacer of varying temperatures. This situation can easily be avoided by following a few basic guidelines. If you are wanting to have some extra knowledge and skills in raising orphan lambs, make sure to book a consult with the team to find out the tips and tricks involved.

### 3. Lamb marking

If you have an average lambing period (5-8 weeks), lamb marking is recommended to be done when the youngest lamb is 2-4 weeks of age. Make sure you have everything you need before embarking on this busy day! A helpful checklist may include: ear tags, elastrator rings, vaccinations and mulesing equipment if required. Make sure to have enough vaccination and the minimum recommendation is to use Glanvac 6-in-1. Many producers that are retaining stock are now giving the Johnes vaccine, Gudair. Lamb marking is the best time to administer, as lambs are well restrained in cradles (caution: this vaccine is very dangerous if self injected, so optimal restraint is crucial) and their exposure to the bacteria is low. There are a few other vaccines that some farms may need, as extra protection against diseases such as scabie mouth and septic arthritis. Make sure to always read the instruction booklet provided by your vaccination companies as information is always changing.

### 4. Weaning

Depending on your enterprise, weaning ages can vary. However, as a general rule, weaning 'early' (provided that lambs are eating high a protein diet) can be extremely beneficial. Early weaning can occur when lambs weigh approximately 20kg and are aged 12-14 weeks. Healthy lambs raised on good quality pasture will have a developed rumen by 8-10 weeks of age and no longer require milk, provided they have a high protein diet. Ewes have a lower immune system around lambing time and can heavily contaminate pastures with worm eggs. Having lambs with the ewes for a prolonged time puts them at risk of becoming highly infected as well. By weaning lambs 'early' and placing ewes and lambs on separate good quality paddocks, ewes will have reduced pressures from the lambs and usually can overcome their worm burden. Lambs can then focus on growing without competing with their mothers for food.

It is a good time to give the lambs their booster vaccinations at weaning time (making sure it is 4-6 weeks after the first one), give the lambs an effective drench and move them onto a good quality, low worm risk paddock (that you have prepared earlier).

#### **Oesophageal feeder pack**

**Cost: \$12.00**

**Make sure to call the clinic and order one if you are interested!**



**Please call the clinic to update our system with your email account for future newsletter editions (03) 5484 2255. Do not hesitate to get in touch with Rochy Vets today!**