



## **A Guide to Rearing Your Lamb**

Lambs for Agricultural Day must be born after 1 July 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 will be asked in the rearing section at ag day.

It is recommend but not essential for your lamb 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 it is recommended that he is 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 teats can be screwed on to a coke bottle

Lamb or multifeed pellets

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

Drench

Vaccine

Cover (optional)

### **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 watch that its tummy doesn't get over distended.

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.

If your lamb gets 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.

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. It will need two vaccinations 4-6 weeks apart.

If the lamb has come from a vaccinated mother and has had adequate colostrum in the first day of its life it will may have protection for about 3 months.

Your lamb should then 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.

Drenching is recommended by about 6 weeks old and again at 10 weeks.

This drench does not cover lice.

### **Housing Requirements**

A dry, draught free house or kennel is required.

Lamb covers can help keep lambs warm and clean.

Sudden changes in temperature when a lamb 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 can be brushed but not 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.

Lambs will be judged on leading, calling and rearing.

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 and child's knowledge of rearing its lamb. The Judge may want to know when your lamb was born, what breed it is and how often you feed it. For older children it would be an advantage if they know about the 5 in 1 vaccine given. All children should be able to explain about docking and what this means. They should be able to talk about their lambs with confidence, knowledge and to describe the strategies that they have used while rearing it. The Judges will look at the general appearance of the lamb and look for lice.

## **Normal organisation based on entry numbers:**

**We will often run three age level pens, with ribbons awarded and presented for each pen as they are judged. A reserve and champion lamb will be chosen.**

**For overall reserve, champion and cups for leading, calling and rearing; a final invitation ring will follow the age level judging. First in leading, calling, and or the reserve and champion from each pen will go in the final competition. Each animal will lead one time only and do the calling while in the ring. Judges will withhold the final placings for awarding at the end of Ag and Flower day. Animals will be returned to the pen or by vehicles.**

## **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.)