

Overview

Abomasal bloat can cause up to 30% of reared lambs to die before weaning. Typically, within 30 minutes of feeding warm milk, the lamb may become bloated.

Causes & symptoms

Essentially, undesirable bacteria in the stomach feed on lactose in the milk and produce gas. When the stomach receives a large hit of milk/lactose the bacteria feed quickly, and a gas bloat occurs.

This condition is not seen in naturally reared lambs/kids who drink small amounts, continuously throughout the day.

Abdominal swelling can occur quickly and in severe cases leads to death. Of course, lamb/kid bloat is not always a straightforward abomasal bloat.

Other causes include intussusceptions, constipation, gut twists, rumen bloat, nerve issues, and bacterial infections. If your little one starts bloating, especially if it happens suddenly, this is an emergency and it should see a vet immediately for a thorough work up.

Management/ Prevention/ Treatment

- **Feeding 10-15% of their body weight (adjust as they grow) divided into small feeds throughout the day.**

Weight	Total volume in a day	Frequency	Volume per feed
3kg	450ml	8x day	55ml

- When held upside down, the teat should drip milk, but not flow. Likewise, cracked or damaged teats can lead to a quick flow, which can lead to Ruminant Bloat*
- Offer “creep feed”, which is highly digestible grain, from 5 days old, to help the stomach adjust to grown up food, to prevent against Ruminant Atony**



LAMBS & KIDS: A GUIDE TO Abomasal Bloat

FEEDING YOGHURTISED MILK AT EVERY FEED IS THE ONLY PROVEN METHOD OF PREVENTION.

NOTE: Simply adding probiotic yoghurt to the milk at the time of feeding does NOT prevent bloat, and may increase the risk, as some of the bacteria in probiotic yoghurt are, in fact, gas-producing in themselves.

Yoghurtised Milk Recipe

- Add 1kg of Anlamb to 3 Litres of warm water, in a large (9 Litre) bucket. Mix well with a stick blender or eggbeater
- Add 200mL of plain, unsweetened acidophilus yoghurt (from the supermarket).
- Top up with water to the 5L mark. Mix together, place a lid over the top, and sit in the hot water cupboard for 12- 24hrs. Otherwise a polystyrene box with hot water bottle does the trick. Note, if your lamb is recovering from bloat, keep it on electrolytes until the first batch is ready at 12 hours.



- At this stage the milk should look and smell like yoghurt. Remove 200mL to set aside in the fridge. This will be your starter for the next batch (otherwise you'll have to buy more yoghurt).
- Mix well. The yoghurtised milk is now ready to feed at normal quantities. It will last for 5 days, but should be kept in the fridge during this time to prevent growing unwanted bacteria.
- You may dilute the mixture a little to make it easier to drink (or make the teat hole a little larger), but be sure to feed the original volume as that of the standard milk replacer.
- Remember to start your next batch 24 hrs before it is needed.

* Ruminant Bloat is when milk spills over from the baby stomach (the abomasum) into the grown-up stomach (the rumen).

*Updated Dec 25