



GUIDE TO REARING YOUR Lamb

Selection of the Lamb

Lambs are usually found via local contacts. Check at the school office for anyone that may have notified the school of availability of lambs. The lamb should be chosen no earlier than three days after birth, (but preferably five days after birth) as this allows the lamb to have its mother's colostrum in the first twelve hours of life, giving it protection against diseases and is a concentrated source of fat and protein to give them a good kickstart in life.

On occasion lambs have been rejected by their mother, orphaned or are one of triplets, in which case one is removed from the mother as she is not able to adequately feed three of them. In these cases, the lamb may not have received colostrum.

The healthy lamb should have a dry small navel, lively movements, and clear bright eyes.

Your lamb will need 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. Your lamb can receive pain relief from the vet at this time.

If a ram (male) is chosen, he should be wethered with a rubber ring from one week old, otherwise he will possibly become aggressive as he reaches maturity. Ensure both testicles are down before releasing the ring or book a vet technician in to do this procedure.



Basic Rearing Needs

- Two x 10kg bags of milk powder
- Two x lamb teats (it pays to have a spare in case they get chewed) or a complete bottle and teat + spare teat
- Lamb or multi-feed pellets
- Collar and lead
- Drench
- Vaccine
- Cover (optional)

Most of these are available at your local Franklin Vets clinic.

Feeding

Lamb milk powders are specially formulated to meet the needs of your lamb. Lamb teats that can screw onto a coke or water bottle or complete lamb feeding bottles are available from Franklin Vets.

Mixing instructions are clearly written on the bag. Given that weight of newborns can vary, as a guide, *feed 15% of body weight daily split into five small feeds*. For example, a 3kg lamb needs 450mls per day fed at 90ml per feed.

Avoid sudden changes in the type (brand), quantity or temperature of milk or milk powder.

For best results milk feed your lamb until Ag day. When feeding your lamb in the first five days, watch that its tummy doesn't get over distended.

Thoroughly clean bottles and teats after each feed.

Supplement the milk with a lamb or multi-feed pellet and if your lamb is tethered keep moving it regularly so that it has access to fresh grass. Solid food should be offered from one week old, such as ad lib hay, grass, and an offering of pellets.

Scours – prevention and treatment

Did you know that over 80% of diarrhoea cases in bottle fed lambs and kids are due to inappropriate feeding? Young animals can go downhill very quickly, so if you're little one seems "off" or has lost its appetite, then it needs to see a vet. However, if they are bright, alert and happy, with a good appetite but loose stools, here are some simple things you can check for first, to rule out dietary scours.

These include correct temperature, speed of flow, mixing and hygiene. For more information read our **Normal feeding guidelines & preventing dietary scours** flyer located on our website.

Vaccination and Drenching

From vaccinated ewe:

- Ewe - vaccinated with annual booster 2-4 weeks before lambing
- Lamb - vaccinated with 2 doses of 5-in-1, 4-6 weeks apart starting from 6 weeks old

From unvaccinated ewe, or vaccination status unknown:

- Lamb-Lamb vaccine when born then 2 doses of 5-in-1, 4-6 weeks apart starting at 2 weeks old.

Drench at weaning and then strategically for the first year of life. See

www.franklinvets.co.nz/lifestyle_farms/disease-management/sheep for recommended schedules



Housing Requirements

A dry, draught free house or kennel is required. Lamb covers are available from your local farm outlet.

Sudden changes in temperature when it is small can cause pneumonia and it will grow better if it is not using energy to keep warm.

Daily Care Requirements

- Regular feeding (ideally 5 feeds a day).
- Wash its face to remove any milk residue.
- Walk it on a lead and spend time playing with it.
- Practice calling your lamb before each feed.

Points to Remember

- Lambs should **NOT** be brushed – this is an instant disqualification.
- Hooves should be trimmed and clean.
- Trim any dags to tidy up around the lamb's rear end.
- Make sure your pet's face and ears are clean.

Judging

Each school has slightly different judging criteria, but generally ribbons are presented in three age groups – Junior, Intermediate and Senior and an overall winner in the following categories:

- **Rearing** – general appearance and condition and size (with the lambs age taken into consideration).
- **Calling** – the lamb needs to come directly to you when called from a minimum distance of 4-5 metres (this distance will vary depending on the judge) and the child must be able to hook its lead back on.
- **Leading** – the lamb needs to walk through the course without dragging or pushing. The lead should be held in the right hand 20-35cm from the lamb

and the slack of the rope held in the left hand.

- **Best Pet** – bond between the lamb and the child. Observed throughout the day.

Tips for Success

1. The child should always feed the lamb, mum or dad can assist younger children if needed. It is important to ensure the milk is mixed correctly.
2. Give your lamb a treat when leading and calling. Use the pellets or they often like raisins. Even a hug, pat and a few kind words are beneficial.
3. Spend lots of time with your lamb so you build a bond and it will come when called.
4. Set a course up at home and walk your lamb daily. Make sure you include a small fence post or piece of wood so the lamb gets used to stepping over it. They mustn't touch the wood. Walk your lamb around your property, the more practice the better.
5. Don't forget to take its food and water requirements with you on Ag day.

Safety Tips for Weaning

1. Naturally reared on farms, lambs wean at about 4 months old.
2. Lambs **CAN safely wean** from as young as **6-8 weeks**, given they are grazing consistently, have had access to meal to develop their grown-up stomach, and will drink water from a container (often a flat container works better than a bucket as they don't like walls around their face).
3. Drop down the number of feeds **without** increasing the volume of the feed! Important! I.e. go from 3 feeds of 300mL, to 2 feeds of 300mL (NOT 2 feeds of 450mL)
4. **DO NOT** water down the milk, this is a recipe for gut upsets, and not at all a natural way to go.
5. **DO NOT** feed water from a bottle with a teat, as water toxicity is possible

6. Make sure your little one is up to date with a 5-in-1 vaccine, and is ideally on a yoghurtised or whey-based milk.
7. Ideally a probiotic of a SAFE bacteria should be added to the milk at the time of feeding, in the weeks leading up to weaning. For example BioSupport. Remember, adding acidophilus yogurt at the time of feeding is **NOT** a safe bacteria.

Refer to our **Abomasal Bloat in Lambs and Kids complete with yoghurtised milk recipe.**

Remember:

Keep in perspective what is natural for a lamb. Naturally, a lamb will still be drinking smaller amounts, on average, 14 times a day from the ewe, at 6-7 weeks old. When

ALWAYS AVOID LARGE VOLUME FEEDS



If you have any concerns about your lamb's health, please don't hesitate to contact your local Franklin Vets Clinic. We are happy to give advice over the phone on whether the animal requires treatment.

*Download our Guide to **safely weaning your lamb.**

*Updated Aug 25