



GUIDE TO SAFELY WEANING YOUR Lamb & Kids

Bloat

This is the time of year when we see a lot of bloated cases, around weaning, as people are feeding fewer feeds, of larger volumes. Don't forget, "bloat" is a description, not a disease, and there are many different causes of "bloat".

One cause we often think of is gas bloat, caused by a bacterial infection that eats lactose and produces gas. But another cause is simply sudden diet change and large volumes, distending the stomach so far that it stops contracting (you can think of this more like indigestion). Any bloat should always be considered an emergency as any form of bloat can kill. Don't let your little one become another statistic!

Safety Tips for Weaning

1. Naturally reared on farms, lambs wean at about 4 months old.

2. Lambs and kids 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).

Due to the risk of bloat in bottle-fed lambs/kids, early-age weaning should always be the goal.

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 (especially in goats, who are at high risk of water toxicity).

6. Make sure your little one is up to date with a **5-in-1 vaccine**, (a broad-spectrum vaccine covering sordellii and all four strains of perfringens) 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.

For bloat related issues, Refer to our **Abomasal Bloat in Lambs and Kids**.

Remember

Keep in perspective what is natural for a kid or 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 weaning, keep volumes small.

ALWAYS AVOID LARGE VOLUME FEEDS!



*Updated Aug 25