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Late Pregnancy & Lactation Feeding



By Beth Howells, NWF Technical Advisor

In the final two months of pregnancy the key objectives are to have fit ewes with good mothering ability, high foetal survival rates, and good udder development with plentiful supply of colostrum and milk. The key actions during this time include planning the grazing and feeding ewes for late pregnancy into lactation whilst closely monitoring the Body Condition Score (BCS) of the flock.

Once ewes are grouped according to litter size, planning the diet is important to ensure requirements are met. Analysing forage to determine its nutritional quality is a good place to start. Knowing the analysis allows the correct supplementary feed products to be provided, at the most efficient rate to meet the ewes' requirements, and therefore avoid over or under feeding. A mineral analysis is also recommended, not only does it provide information about background trace elements, it can also highlight any antagonists. Antagonists compete for certain trace element absorption sites, and if not balanced correctly may lead to deficiencies.



Key Points to Remember:

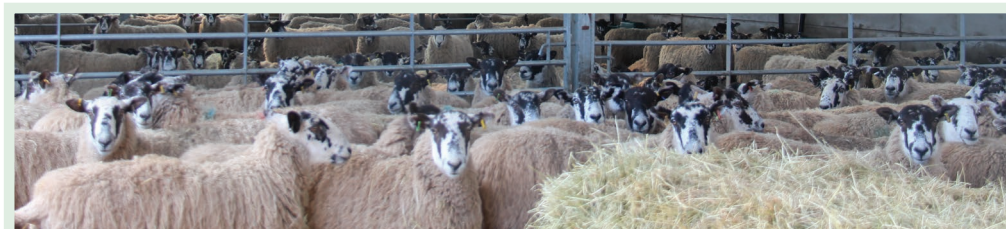
- Forage and water should always be available to ewes, including grazing ewes, to maintain a stable rumen.
- When feeding concentrates, it is important to feed at a consistent time of day as the ewes will adjust their forage intake according to when they anticipate feeding. Never feed more than 0.5kg of concentrate per feed and ensure all ewes can eat at the same time.
- In late pregnancy, a 70kg ewe carrying twins require up to 18.5MJ ME/day and 112-130g/day of metabolisable protein (AHDB, Feeding the Ewe). These requirements increase while their intake capacity and appetite decrease, which highlights the importance of quality raw materials in the diet.
- Importantly, think about colostrum quantity and quality which is promoted by ewe health. There is research to support feeding protected soya (NWF Ultra Soya) to promote colostrum quality, and AHDB have suggested that the amount of energy (providing maize, wheat), especially glucogenic, available at the end of pregnancy plays a major role in colostrum synthesis.

Taking blood samples to monitor levels of beta hydroxybutyrate (BOHB) is recognised as a sensitive tool to determine the energy status of the ewe and can play a key role around making informed management decisions at this critical time.

If there are mineral deficiencies, an effective and easy option is to provide mineral buckets within the field or housing. The NWF Ewe Breeder is a tried and tested product containing fish oil to support egg development and lamb vigour, as well as a beta glucan which helps activate the ewe's immune system and improve colostrum quality.

Post Lambing

After lambing, milk yield increases rapidly peaking at 3-4 weeks into lactation, at this time the ewe's energy requirements double to meet this production demand. If this is not met, the ewe will start "milking off her back" due to being in a negative energy balance. If this happens for a prolonged period, it can lead to ketosis, hypocalcaemia, lower milk yield and therefore increased lamb mortality.



Don't forget your ewes and lambs once you've turned them out:

- Monitor BCS and grass availability; ensure there is enough grass in addition to supplementary feeding. If there isn't, consider increasing supplementary feeding and pasture rotation.
- Monitor lamb growth, the lambs eight-week weight should be a key performance indicator of ewe performance.
- Stay focussed on the weaning strategy including post weaning nutrition for ewes and lambs.

For full feeding advice please contact your local NWF sales specialist.

Are Ewe Ready?

Maximising lamb survival is critical for sheep farmers with lambing just around the corner. Industry standards suggest that almost 50% of lambing losses occur within the first 48 hours after birth. Ewe health and nutrition is key to promoting enough quantity and quality colostrum, meaning supplementing with NWF Mineral Buckets pre & post lambing can be important for lamb survival.






NWF Protein Energy	NWF Ewe Breeder	For the spring: NWF High Mag
A specifically formulated & developed high quality protein and energy feed tub suitable for grazing cattle and sheep.	A specifically formulated high quality protein and energy lick developed for ewes all year round.	A specifically formulated mineral and vitamin lick designed to reduce the risk of grass staggers in your livestock.

NWF Mineral Buckets available in 20kg and 80kg tubs from your local NWF Sales Specialist or buy at www.agriexpress.co.uk with free UK delivery.

TechMix for Sheep

Product which can help aid recovery of downer ewes, twin lamb disease and milk fevers:



Product	When do use	Application
YMCP® 	With downer ewes suffering with milk fever (hypocalcemia).	Drench 125g of YMCP with 150-200ml water. Repeat if necessary.
RYCaps® 	Any downer ewes, those off feed, had a difficult lambing or have infection.	One capsule can be opened and added to water to be drenched or mixed with feed.
BlueLite® Replenish™ 	Any downer ewes, especially those who have suffered with twin lamb disease.	35ml drenched 3-4 times per day but can be effective at 2-3 times per day. Works really well, especially with the acetate and propionate proving energy, as well as the glucose.

Perfecting Grazing Pressure

By Roger Bacon, Barenbrug Regional Manager



UK Grass Seed Experts

BARENBRUG



Having invested in your grass it is important to get the grazing pressure right to ensure that available forage matches sheep requirements as closely as possible.

Throughout the growing season it is important to carefully manage grazing pressure to ensure both grass quality and high forage utilisation – getting animals to eat as much as possible of what is grown. Naturally there will need to be some adjustments throughout the grass-growing season, depending on weather and other external factors but, get your grazing pressure and your residuals right, and your fields will be fit to regrow leafy, high quality, nutritious grass again and again.

Leafy grass can be well over 20% CP and have an ME of 11.5MJ/kg DM. The relationship between the D value of a grass to ME is 0.16. To have 11.5MJ/kg DM available, a grass plant must be 71.8% digestible. Managing grazing heights closely means that a sward is more likely to maintain its leafy growth and not become too mature and put out a seed head, which will reduce overall digestibility and affect the level of energy and protein available to the grazing sheep. Managing grass to the advised heights, particularly for ryegrass, will maintain the levels of live fresh leaf up to the three-leaf stage and minimise both seed heads and the gathering of older, dead unpalatable material at the base of the sward.

Correcting high grazing pressure

If grazing pressure becomes too high – e.g., if there are too many animals grazing the same area of grass for too long – the result will be short pasture stubble, sheep are forced to consume poorer quality forage, leading to lowered performance. Periods of excessively high grazing pressure will result in decreased grass production, slow regrowth and a plant becoming depleted of carbohydrate reserves. The persistency of the sward and its ability to grow away in spring will also be considerably reduced.

The most effective solution is to remove some sheep or buffer feed with silage or concentrate.

Correcting low grazing pressure

With low grazing pressure, animal gain per head per day will typically be higher but production levels per acre will be poor. Low grazing pressure is likely to result in wasted forage. Where there is a need to increase grazing pressure, this can be achieved by intensifying the stocking rate or, a paddock/field can be taken out of the grazing rotation to be silaged. If neither is possible or its been left too long, topping with a rotary mower or topper to remove tall, rank vegetation and encourage new growth can also be helpful. Removing this type of vegetation will also help maintain sheep foot health.

A calendar with a woolly twist!



First in the field

By Hannah Fitzsimmonds,
Associate Vet
at LLM Farm Vets



Heading into a new year is a great time to get your planning in for the months ahead. Weather is just one thing to factor in and looking back at November and December, it felt very inconsistent – warm one minute, snow the next. However, all these inconsistencies mean it is even more important to keep on top of your flock's health.

Each flock, whether it's a small number of breeding ewes to a sizeable number of stores, have their own specific demands and risk factors to consider when planning for the year. Red Tractor requirements have recently changed, and now include that a flock health plan must be reviewed and signed annually. This should be an opportunity to get your vet fully involved to create an individualised plan for your needs and can help you tackle areas that are prominent in the industry including, reducing antibiotic use, reducing reliance on anthelmintics and minimising lameness.

There are a few health considerations that should be part of your flock plan. The calendar on the right is based on a breeding flock lambing in April.

There are a few other Red Tractor changes to make note of; including the recommendation that at least one person on farm has undertaken a medicine training course. Most veterinary practices will run these, and current thinking on antibiotic resistance and ways you can reduce usage on your farm will be discussed.

Parasites, and the control of them, are too numerous to expand on in great detail in this article, but there is a real drive to reduce anthelmintic use as resistance is ramping up. The Sustainable Control of Parasites (SCOPS) website can be a great resource to utilise, from the Nematodirus forecast, quarantine protocols and the principles used to help streamline your wormer usage whilst improving your flock health.

With the recent changes in the sheep industry, there is no better time to revisit your flock calendar and look for opportunities to increase sheep health, your profit, and engage with your vets to make use of the flock planning opportunity to the max. If you've got to do it, make it a worthwhile activity for everyone involved.

Month	Activity	Specific Tasks	All year-round considerations
January	Ewe scanning	Diet management for different lamb numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lameness control strategy Parasite control including fluke risk on winter grazing, or Nematodirus risk to lambs Control of clostridial diseases and pneumonia (vaccination and timings) Investigation of any deaths Border maintenance, especially if working towards a high health status flock (e.g. MV accredited)
February		Maintenance of lambing pens	
March		Pre-lambing booster vaccinations	
April	Lambing time!	Record keeping Good lambing protocols including colostrum management and hygiene	
May	Pasture management	Worm Egg Counts (WECs) and reduction tests if concerned about resistance	
June		WECs	
July		WECs	
August		Mineral sampling WECs	
September	Weaning time	Ram MOTs Tup Vasectomies Abortion vaccines	
October	Pre-breeding checks	Ewe breeding strategies (sponges/CIDRs, teaser tups) Check body condition score, bag and teeth of ewes	
November	Tups in!	Record keeping Quarantine protocols if buying anything in	
December		Maintenance	



Farmer Feature:

Foulkes at Marchynys Farm, Anglesey

Farming 700-acres in Anglesey, Jack Foulkes alongside his father, John and their two full time employees run 2,700 ewes (1,400 Suffolk x Mules, 600 Scotch ewes and the rest Texel crosses), lambing at the end of January. As the land is heavy clay based, ewes are housed by the end of November to give the land a rest; ready for the new year and cycle.

The farm have invested and are currently expanding the slatted shed space where ewes are housed on slats for a period of time before they lamb down. *"We have had slats for 12 years, we're happy with the performance and they work for us. They help rest up the pasture and also keep costs in check; without having to send off animals on tack and also bedding"* Jack comments.



The farm's NWF Sales Specialist, Huw Lloyd-Roberts has been working with Jack and the team for around 12 years. *"One of the first things we do each season is analyse the silage, this enables us to determine the rate of supplementary feed that needs to be provided at each stage of pregnancy and into lactation"* Huw comments. The silage is also tested throughout the season allowing adjustments to be made as the unit works through the pit. Marchynys feeds ad-lib silage and NWF's top-quality ewe roll from 8-3 weeks prior to lambing depending on their litter size. Supplementary feed rates depend on silage analysis but typical feed rates are shown below:

- Triplets get up to 1kg/day, which is worked up over 8 weeks
- Twins get up to 0.7kg/ day over 6 weeks
- Singles get around 0.35Kg/day in the last 3 weeks of pregnancy

The ewe roll is of supreme quality, formulated to meet ewe mineral requirements in the later stages of pregnancy and lactation, the 19% protein is made up of highly digestible ingredients with high levels of bypass protein including Ultra Pro-R and Ultra Soy. Bypass starch sources provide high glucogenic levels which promote colostrum quality: critical for lamb survival and health. A few years ago, Jack took part in a project about reducing antibiotic use at lambing time.

They had improved the nutrition of the ewes which resulted in an improvement of colostrum quality and quantity. *"The vet took bloods from the lambs to assess colostrum absorption, the results speak for themselves as we are still using the diet 4 years on"* Jack comments.

NWF Sales Specialist Huw, comments that *"by feeding and looking after the ewes during this time, they are able to look after themselves for the rest of the year"*. Jack says *"although we get very little metabolic incidences (3 twin lamb disease last year out of 2,700 ewes), the ewes affected will never fully recover and ultimately cost the system"*. He also then explains that *"sheep have changed over the years, the demand from that ewe is greater and we must manage her accordingly"*.



Jack Foulkes with Huw Lloyd-Roberts

Around two days after a ewe has lambed, she is then turned out onto the rested pasture and depending on the weather and the season, will get supplementary feed. *"We do not plate measure or record grass growth as such, but we know if the sward is below 3-4cms, they need some supplementary feed. Plus, the ewe's will also tell us if they need some rolls!"* says Jack. In the field, the lambs have creep feed from 4 weeks onwards, NWF's Fast Lamb Pellets which is a high quality, energy dense starter diet. Lambs are sold off the ewe from 12-16 weeks of age depending on the season and all go to Tesco. *"We target a 42kg lamb, to average a deadweight of 19.5kg"*. By the end of July, anything which is left will be weaned, which is roughly 25% of the lamb crop.

Marchynys have a replacement rate of 20%, roughly 260 ewes each year are homebred from the Scottish Mules. The other half are sourced from Thame Sheep Fair. Jack analyses the lambing data they gather each year and only buys ewes from flocks which have performed well in the past, with a known health status.

For the future, Jack wants to continue to increase the farm's efficiency and improve their carbon footprint. By being part of the Tesco supply chain, the farm is involved with group meetings where there is increasing discussions about sustainability and carbon, something as a business and farming system the team at Marchynys will be looking at.

NWF would like to thank Jack and the team at Marchynys for the insight to their system and wish them all the best for the coming lambing season!

NWF Sheep Compound and Blend Range



NWF Agriculture ewe and lamb feeds are formulated to combine the correct levels of energy and protein with appropriate levels of minerals and vitamins to optimise your flocks health and performance.

LAMB FEEDS

Fast Lamb	Super Lamb	Prime Lamb	Lamb Pro
<i>All Mills</i>	<i>All Mills</i>	<i>Wardle Mill</i>	<i>Wardle Mill</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high quality, energy dense starter diet. Contains a balance of energy and protein sources to boost live weight gain. Enables early marketing of lambs. Available in a 4mm pellet, 17% protein. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes a good, fast finish on store lambs allowing flexibility in marketing. Can be fed ad lib with straw or restricted in conjunction with forage. Super lamb is a 6mm nut, 15% protein. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A palatable cost effective lamb diet, suitable for finishing. Suitable for housed or grazing lambs. 13% protein, available in 6mm nut. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A balanced cost-effective lamb diet, most suited to housed lambs on forage. Is also suitable to restrict feed to replacement females to encourage frame growth. 16% protein, available in a 6mm nut.

Collinson Feed Bins

NWF Agriculture can arrange the purchase of Collinson Silos. The sales team can help advise on type, size and the finish of silo required for sheep feed storage. The most popular Collinson silos are the County S1, T1 & HS5 ranges.

Collinson



EW E FEEDS

Ewe Boost Nuts or Rolls	Ewetritition Rolls	2 Good for Ewe Nuts & Rolls
<i>Wardle</i>	<i>Wardle and Wixland Mill</i>	<i>Longtown Mill</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highest quality ewe compound, formulated to meet ewe requirements and promote colostrum quality. Using high quality ingredients this diet provides a balanced source of rumen energy and protein promoting rumen stability and health. 19% protein, high glucogenic levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high energy density feed specifically formulated to meet ewe requirements and promote colostrum quality. Ewetritition is formulated with high quality ingredients providing a balanced source of rumen energy and protein promoting rumen stability and health. This is a 19% protein diet with high glucogenic levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high energy ewe feed. Balanced protein and energy sources to ensure a steady, even flow of nutrients to the ewe throughout a 24-hour feeding cycle. This is an 19% protein diet. Includes NWF's protected proteins Ultra Soy and Ultra Pro-R, Protected fat, Soya and Maize.

Champion Nuts	Classic Nuts	Premium Nuts or Prime Rolls	Good 4 Ewe Nuts or Rolls
<i>Wardle and Wixland Mill</i>	<i>Wardle and Wixland Mill</i>	<i>Wardle and Wixland Mill</i>	<i>Longtown Mill</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high energy density feed specifically formulated to meet ewe requirements and promote colostrum quality. Raw materials including protected fat and high-quality by-pass protein to ensure optimal quality. 19% protein, high glucogenic levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tried and tested high energy ewe feed. Balanced energy and protein sources ensure a steady, even flow of nutrients to the ewe throughout a 24-hour feeding cycle. This is an 18% protein diet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced in energy and protein. 18% Protein. Cost effective designed to promote milk yield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good quality ewe diet. Balanced in energy and protein. 19% protein. Cost effective designed to promote milk yield.

SHEEP BLENDS

In addition to compound feed, we can formulate specific blends for your flock. Blends can offer the flexibility of straights yet have the requirement of only one storage bin. NWF bespoke formulations mean our sales specialists can provide a tailor-made feed plan using the Nutriopt rationing system, unique to flock and system.



Prioritising quality nutrition in early life will optimise lamb performance

By Georgina Thomas, Young Animal Feed Manager GB at Trouw Nutrition

Following colostrum feeding the choice of a lamb milk replacer for artificially reared lambs is an important consideration. A digestible, carefully formulated milk replacer can help lambs to achieve their full growth potential and to develop into strong, robust lambs which continue to perform. However, not all lamb milk replacers are the same; these are the key things to look for:

Protein quality is a key consideration. The source of the protein significantly affects digestibility, and therefore performance, particularly in the young lamb. Protein coming from dairy sources, such as whey derivatives or skimmed milk, is more digestible compared to vegetable protein sources, such as wheat protein, soya bean or pea proteins. Select a lamb milk replacer containing a high inclusion of protein from dairy sources, in turn, the high availability of nutrients optimises growth rates and can help to support health. Highly digestible protein sources also reduce the risk of the occurrence of fermentation of undigested nutrients which can cause problems in the digestive tract.

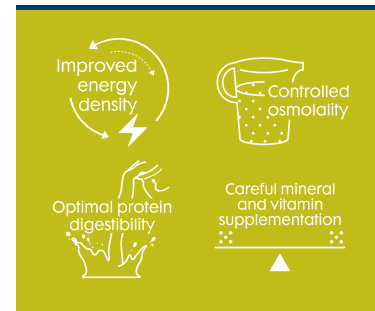
Fat is a key component for young lambs, it provides the majority of the total dietary energy. The source and physical structure are important considerations in order to optimise the availability of the energy to the young lamb. For this reason, opt for digestible fat sources, such as coconut and sustainably sourced palm oil that have been homogenised and spray dried to support solubility and stability.

Osmolality measures the concentration of minerals and sugars in a solution. Lamb milk replacers with a high level of osmolality can damage gut integrity, increase the risk of abomasal bloat and potentially exacerbate diarrhoea severity. Choosing a product that has been carefully formulated with a lower osmolality in mind will help to reduce the risk of diarrhoea. It is also important to be mindful of mixing rates and milk replacer concentrations – mixing too high a concentration can directly increase the osmolality. Check feeding instructions and regularly check scoop or jug filled weights to ensure concentrations are as expected. Regular calibration of automated machines is also important for this reason.

Careful mineral and vitamin supplementation in young lambs is essential to support development, health and performance. Carefully selected sources help to optimise bioavailability whilst supporting the gastrointestinal environment.

Milkivit Energized Lamb Milk has been carefully designed to help lambs achieve their full growth potential. The formulation has been specifically developed with four key benefits in mind:

- Improved energy density
- Optimal protein digestibility
- Controlled osmolality
- Careful mineral & vitamin supplementation



Energized Lamb Milk:

Helping lambs to achieve their full growth potential.



Milkivit

Follow **NWF** on Facebook and Twitter to see how you can win **1 X FREE bag** of Milkivit ELM plus some Milkivit goodies.

Maximise Ration Performance

By Abbi England, NWF Technical Manager



Reviewing rations throughout the lamb's lifecycle enables you to plan a feeding program to minimise costs whilst maximising performance. There are many different systems for growing and finishing lambs, choosing what suits your flock and farm is key!

Pre-weaning:

- Once the lamb is born, it is important that they are up sucking quickly. Getting their first feed of colostrum is critical for their immunity. New-born lambs should receive a minimum of 50ml/kg of body weight of colostrum within the first 6 hours of life. Within 24hrs of life, a new-born should have received the equivalent of 200ml/kg bodyweight in colostrum (for example, 4kg lamb, typical birthweight for upland ewes, should receive 0.2L of colostrum within 6 hours of life, and 0.8L of colostrum within the first 24 hours).
- It is also important that the environment they are born in is clean, so the first thing that they ingest is colostrum (not muck or contaminated bedding). Consider cleaning/ clipping ewe's bellies, so the lamb sucks the teat rather than the wool.
- Any assisted lambings, or lethargic animals should get extra attention, this could mean lambs are bottle fed/tubed with colostrum or even placed under a heat lamp.
- Before turnout the ewe and lamb should have been given sufficient time to form a bond, the lamb should be turned out with a full belly and the ewes udder should be checked.

Guide to growing:

- For the first 6-weeks, lamb growth is dependent on milk, highlighting the importance to look after the ewes whilst they have lambs at foot.
- From 4 weeks of age, introducing creep feed (NWF Fast Lamb Pellets) can be done to increase the suckling lamb's nutrient intake. Creep feed can help to achieve target weights and usually allows for an increase in stocking densities.
- Growing lambs eat between 2-4% of their bodyweight as dry matter, so a 30kg lamb will eat 0.6-1.2kg DM per day.
- At 8 weeks of age, lambs should be at least 18-21kg liveweight, creep fed systems will be aiming for slightly heavier weights at this age.
- Monitoring growth rates are key, with a target DLWG of 250g-300g. This can be achieved straight from grass depending on grass quality and quantity. If growth rates are dropping below 200g/day, consider weaning lambs and moving to better quality pasture.

Fundamentals to finishing:

There are several ways to finish lambs depending on the target market and farm suitability. When feeding concentrates:

- Feed a 13-15% protein nut with good starch levels.
- Ensure there is a good level of ammonium chloride; to help reduce the risk of urinary calculi. NWF Lamb compounds have a 0.5% inclusion.
- When starting to feed lambs, feed no more than 200g/day of compound and increase slowly over a few weeks to help condition the rumen microbes.
- Provide forage; lambs are ruminants and require a fibre source to ensure health and productivity.
- WATER! Fresh, clean water should always be available!
- Monitoring growth rates are key, with a target DLWG of 250g-300g.
- Target for creep feeding systems is to sell 60% of the lamb crop before 12 weeks of age (weaning).

Over 80% of the meat buyers require a R3L animal highlighting that although weight is important, the need for confirmation and handling should not be ignored.

If finishing from forage crops:

- A fibre source must be provided, and a supplementation of minerals is essential; crops such as forage rape and kale are low in iodine, copper and selenium.
- There are also some health risks associated with forage crops such as an increased risk of photosensitisation and goitre.
- Providing clean, fresh water at all times is key!





Feeding Ewe's This Winter

By Erin Wray, NWF Technical Co-Ordinator



Good nutrition is fundamental to ewe performance and effects productivity through all stages of the production cycle. A proactive approach to ewe nutrition will positively influence flock profitability whilst supporting ewe health, which in turn allows them to produce and rear strong, viable lambs.

Research has shown that both underfeeding and overfeeding of ewes, particularly in late pregnancy, can have negative effects on productivity and health. Table 1 highlights some of the consequences of incorrect nutrition. It is essential to have a thorough understanding of available feedstuffs to ensure the overall ration is balanced to meet nutrient requirements.

Table 1: Effects of under nutrition and over nutrition of ewes in late pregnancy

Under-Nutrition	Over-Nutrition
Low lamb birthweight and survival rate	Over-sized lambs and dystocia
Reduced udder weight and mammary development	Prolapse
Weakened ewe/lamb bond	Weakened ewe/lamb bond
Pregnancy toxaemia	Pregnancy toxaemia
Delayed onset of lactation and lower colostrum and milk yield	Lambing difficulties causing delayed onset of lactation
Impact on the long-term performance of the ewe	Potential for a high BCS to impact on future performance
Reduced lamb growth rate	Reduced lamb vigour

Forage forms the basis of many ewe rations. Frequent analysis is key to understanding your forage so you can confidently supplement at the correct level, with the correct supplemental feed.

Silages are generally low in crude protein this year, with the majority of samples being higher in NDF and of a lower digestibility. The lower the digestibility of the forage, the lower the potential intake due to a slower breakdown of nutrients and therefore a slower passage rate through the rumen. Given this variation in nutrients, it will be important to ensure individual diets are balanced accordingly to support optimal dry matter intakes as well as nutrient balance. Diets based on forage alone can be deficient in essential minerals, therefore supplementation is required. This can come in a variety of forms from free access minerals to mineral premixes included in compound feed. The importance of balancing energy and protein requirements of ewes throughout the production cycle cannot be understated. However, to ensure optimum utilisation of the diet, minerals must also be balanced.

Understanding the complete ration mineral balance, alongside any current or past health issues of the flock, enables optimal and cost-effective supplementation of all nutrients and minerals while supporting health, welfare and performance in a sustainable manner.

Key Points

- **Frequent analysis is key to understanding your forage so you can confidently supplement at the correct level to support ewe performance and optimise flock profitability.**
- **This year's silages are low in protein; therefore, consider the best source of supplementation to support ewe performance including colostrum production and milk supply.**
- **NDF levels and digestibility must be considered to ensure optimal dry matter intakes and best source of supplementation to balance the rumen.**
- **Body condition scoring is a vital tool in nutrition planning, it is a predictor of ewe and lamb performance.**

NWF Agriculture fully supports the Net Zero initiatives and is committed to helping livestock farmers achieve their future goals. The NWF Fusion sustainability project plan features a number of pillars that span from the feed mills and transport to formulations and farm level advice, all supporting future sustainability.

British lamb is produced to some of the highest welfare and environmental standards across the globe. With the industry under

increasing pressure to prove their sustainability credentials, NWF Agriculture are committed to supporting British sheep farmers reduce their carbon footprint. As part of this, we are able to provide on farm feeding solutions which promote sheep health and performance.

Fusion 
Sustain for a better future

Future of the livestock market for store and breeding stock.

By Scott Donaldson, FIA(Scot) FLAA,
Managing Director, Harrison & Hetherington Ltd, Carlisle



The auction system is the longest standing method of livestock marketing in history going back over 200 years, it offers the only truly transparent and competitive marketplace for all classes of cattle and sheep available to UK livestock producers.

If Covid-19 and lockdowns have highlighted one thing it is how important the livestock auction market is to maintain the values of store and breeding sheep. Without the auction there is no effective competition, and not only between buyers, but vendors also, who without the mart environment would be unable to 'benchmark' their livestock against their friends and neighbours, the importance of this aspect of the auction mart should not be underestimated, it drives livestock performance, quality and efficiency.

The Autumn sales this season said it all, there was a real feeling of elation, relief that we could finally get together again and see, in the flesh, the result of many years work, and once the sale started, what it was worth and how did yours weigh up against the farm next door. Nothing can replicate the buzz and anticipation created by the live auction, especially for the all important annual autumn breeding sheep sales.

Brexit threatened disaster for the UK sheep trade, who could have forecast what really happened. As every week passed after New Year 2020 the trade for prime sheep strengthened, and the graph has continued to rise. The obstacles created by both Brexit trade regulations and Covid-19

movement restrictions and the subsequent logistics issues failed to dampen the demand for British lamb, with beef soon following. Once again the auction system played a pivotal role in setting values during this period.

This continued surge in confidence drove the values of ewes & lambs through the spring of 21 and this carried through to the autumn store and breeding sheep sales with values consistently 15-20% ahead of the previous year.

The headline prices look very impressive, we have experienced a definite step up in livestock values and thank goodness because the exponential rise in fertilizer, fuel and feed prices has already more than knocked the icing off increased livestock returns, let's hope the improvement in livestock values can be sustained.

Our industry faces a number of very real challenges over the coming years, with input costs rocketing, support payments falling away, global trade deals that appear to be weighted against us and public perception that livestock farming is the villain when it comes to climate change, UK livestock farmers have plenty to consider.

The threat from our global competitors in beef and sheep production should not be dismissed, but the current extreme trade for livestock in the Southern Hemisphere means that, for the time being at least, we will not be overwhelmed with New Zealand Lamb or Australian Beef.

The challenges for our industry are considerable but the auction markets stand side by side with our customers in our belief that livestock reared in the UK is the best, and we are confident that when those that are truly qualified to put forward the calculation that determines carbon footprint or methane emissions that then UK Livestock production will earn its place as a net zero producer and a leader in the fight to slow global warming.

www.harrisonandhetherington.co.uk



What does the Government's post-Brexit free trade agenda mean for UK food and farming?



Since the EU exit, there has been intense media scrutiny over the impacts new trade deals will have on the UK supply chain, not least those with major agri-food exporters such as Australia, New Zealand and the USA. As we enter a new world of bespoke trade agreements with agricultural powerhouses around the world, it is only right that we take a step back and assess how these trade deals may impact our domestic agricultural market. To this end, AHDB has published wide-ranging analysis to cut through the speculation and

provide an evidence-based appraisal on the opportunities and risks these new deals may present. You can find AHDB Trade and Horizon reports at ahdb.org.uk

Farming and food production is a highly emotive and often divisive issue, of huge social and cultural importance. Trade deals always cause a great deal of debate, with predictions of either untold benefits or devastating impacts, depending on the respective viewpoints. Standards are an issue

at the forefront of both consumers and farmers minds, encompassing concerns about both animal welfare and the environment. While agriculture may be the sticking point in negotiations and a high-profile topic, it isn't always a top priority given the importance to the economy of other sectors. As a result, one thing that current trade policy means, from an agricultural perspective, is that UK farmers are going to face more competition and more exposure to the global marketplace.

With several new trade deals to be struck in the coming months and years, combined with reductions in BPS payments beginning this year, taking a wait-and-see approach isn't an option for farmers and growers.

AHDB's free **Farm Business Review service**, funded by the Defra Future Farming Resilience Fund, is designed to help businesses prepare for the biggest agricultural policy shift in a generation. Aimed at beef, sheep, dairy and cereals and oilseeds producers across England, this free and impartial service providing expert advice and an online tool.

More information and support on the tools can be found here:
ahdb.org.uk/farm-business-review.

For more information on trade deals and how these are affecting farming businesses visit
ahdb.org.uk/trade-and-policy

DELIVERY UPDATE

Due to the current challenges seen within the haulage sector, we have updated our feed order lead times as follows:



	Lead time after day of order (excluding Sundays)	Minimum day delivery window
Bulk Feed	4 working days	2 days
Feed in totes	10 working days	4 days
Feed in 25kg's	10 working days	4 days
Molasses	10 working days	2 days
Minerals	15 working days	-
Milk Powder	15 working days	-
Bulk Example	Bulk orders placed on a Monday would require a minimum delivery window of Thursday/Friday.	
25kg Example	25kg bag orders placed on a Monday will require a minimum delivery window of Tuesday - Friday the following week.	

NWF Technical Services



NWF Agriculture offers a wide range of technical services for livestock farmers along with our state-of-the-art laboratory to analyse forage samples.

- Ewe Nutrition Calculator
- Forage Analysis
- Forage Mineral Analysis
- Lamb Feed Guidelines
- Soil Analysis
- Water Analysis
- Colostrum Feeding Guidelines

Contact your local NWF Sales Specialist to use the technical services or with any technical queries you may have. We also have an online form to submit questions to the NWF Technical Team.

Enquiries: **0800 756 2787** | Orders: **0800 262397**
E Mail: **nbteam@nwfagriculture.co.uk**



www.nwfagriculture.co.uk

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