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Improving lamb survival



By Paul Mardell, NWF Technical Development Manager

Lambing time is the busiest and most stressful time of the year, but can also be the most rewarding. The financial success of the enterprise depends on it. Nationally about 15% of lambs born are lost, which represents a significant welfare problem and a large financial loss for the industry. Losses come from abortion and stillbirths, exposure and starvation, infectious diseases, congenital defects and predators.

Many lambs may survive with better planning, good preparation, well-organised lambing routines and facilities, more staff and better communication. This is all very well but can prove difficult when time, labour and money to reinvest is limited. However, what is very noticeable is that farmers who follow a well-thought-out lambing routine, which is communicated to all involved have lower lamb losses. Assuming ewes are vaccinated, well fed, in good body condition, and have met basic housing/grazing requirements, there are still several things that can be done to help improve survival rates.

Labour and Staff Training

Aim for 250 ewes per person over the main lambing period, more labour may be required for synchronised flocks. For larger flocks, this will enable a night lamber to be available during the busiest period. Ensure staff are competent in general sheep stockmanship, proficient in lambing techniques and fully briefed on routines.

Assistance at Lambing

Most ewes will lamb without difficulty. Careful, regular and quiet observation is important to detect problems. Leave ewes alone for no more than an hour between observations, however, this depends on size of the flock and if housed. Once a ewe has lambed it is important to ensure that the lamb is in fact its own, particularly when lambing indoors as mismothering can happen with other ewes close to lambing pinching lambs. After a ewe has lambed it is common practice to place it in an individual pen to "mother up".

Housing and Environment

Lambing pens should be dry, well-bedded on a well-drained site with easy access to the main flock of lambing ewes. Lambing pens should be 2m x 1m minimum, clean, disinfected and provided with new bedding between each occupation. Adding hydrated lime under the bedding can help reduce infections. Water and forage should be provided ad-lib, whilst continuing to feed concentrate twice a day.

Colostrum Management

Colostrum is vital for newborn lambs providing immunity to disease, a concentrated source of energy, hormones, and laxative along with vitamins and minerals. The lamb must receive colostrum within first six hours of life, with a minimum intake of 50ml/kg of body weight of colostrum, with a minimum of 210ml/kg within the first 24 hours. For example a 4kg lamb will need 200ml on the first feed with a total intake of 800ml in 24 hours. Allowing the lamb to suck from the udder is an important part of the maternal bonding process. If colostrum quality is poor; less than 22% on the brix scale then lambs should be given extra colostrum. Colostrum from other ewes in the same flock is ideal. Set up a colostrum bank with ewes that have plenty of high-quality colostrum. This can be frozen in quantities of 50ml and thawed when required.

Time Spent in Lambing Pen

Ewes form a selective bond with their lambs within two hours of birth which is based entirely on smell. This rapidly develops to include other senses. First time lambers tend not to have this ability immediately and this may take up to six hours after lambing.

It is vital to set up a routine for newborn lambs which is communicated to everyone involved in the lambing process, checks should include:

- Has the lamb sucked and had plenty of colostrum?
- Navel treated? Is the navel dry and healed?
- Have mother and lamb bonded?
- Is it marked with a common family mark?
- Tagged?
- If required, castrated/tail docked and lamb fully recovered?

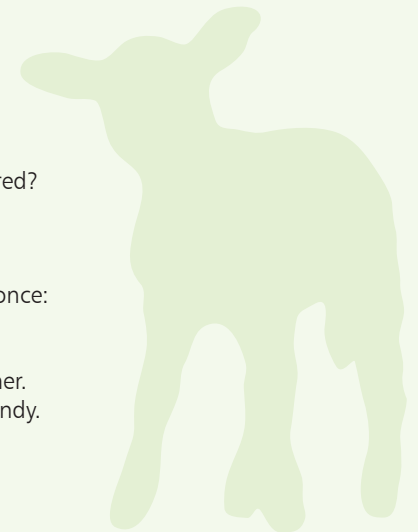
Turning Out

Lambs should only be turned out with the ewes to fields once:

- Lambs are dry.
- They are suckling well and are well-bonded to each other.
- If out to grass, the weather is not too cold, wet and windy.
- Ewes have adequate milk and are healthy.

Once Outside

- Ensure close supervision, particularly in the first few days.
- Ensure shelter is available from wind, straw bales are ideal if there are no hedges or walls.
- Ensure you continue to feed compound to maintain milk supply and ewe condition.



Growing and Finishing Fundamentals

By Katie Smith, NWF Technical Formulator



When considering the growing and finishing stages having clear growth rate targets allows you to plan a feeding program to maximise performance against costs.

Colostrum

- To give newborn lambs the best start in life, colostrum quantity, quality and timing are key.
- Newborn lambs should receive a minimum of 50ml/kg of body weight of colostrum within the first six hours of life, with a minimum of 210ml/kg within the first 24 hours. For lambs reared outdoors, increase colostrum allowance by 15%-20%.
- In the first six weeks, lamb growth is at its quickest. Supporting this growth with a high-quality milk replacer is key for long-term efficiency.

Creep Feeding

From 4-6 weeks of age, introducing creep feed can be done to increase the suckling lamb's nutrient intake, supporting targets and stocking densities.

When introducing creep

- A fresh supply of clean water should always be available.
- Do so carefully to avoid gorging and acidosis.
- Poaching and disease should be considered when thinking about the location of creep feeders.
- It can take up to three weeks for the rumen to fully adapt to new feed.

Growing and Finishing

Pellets are recommended for younger lambs as intakes tend to be higher in comparison to larger nuts. From eight weeks of age, lambs should be at least 18-21kg liveweight, with creep fed systems aiming for the higher end. Monitoring growth rates is key, you should be aiming for a daily liveweight gain (DLWG) of 250g-300g, something that can be achieved from grass if quality and quantity suit. If not, consider weaning lambs and moving to a better quality pasture.

Lamb Health Hints

Urinary Calculi

Urinary calculi only occurs in males; it is when salts that are normally excreted in urine precipitate and form stones. The formation of stones is a result of high phosphorus and magnesium salts in the urine. The stones then lodge in the kidney, ureters, bladder, or urethra, blocking the flow of urine. Prolonged blockage may result in the rupture of the bladder, releasing urine into the surrounding tissues.

CCN (Cerebrocortical Necrosis)

Common in lambs which are 4-8 months old, the effect is usually seen two weeks after moving to a new pasture or any dietary changes. In the early stages, lambs go blind, wander aimlessly and often isolate themselves. If left untreated, sheep will die within 3-5 days.

Bloat

When ruminants eat forage, the breakdown of these forms a foam which increases the viscosity of the rumen fluid; preventing small bubbles of gas from getting released. Do not put freshly weaned animals on high clover content pastures and allow animals to adapt.

Acidosis

Acidosis is often caused by sudden changes in the diet, such as the introduction of concentrates. To reduce the risk of this, ensure lambs are introduced to new feeds gradually allowing the rumen to adapt.

For further information on maximising your flocks' performance, please speak to your local NWF sales specialist.



Finishing lambs on ad-lib concentrates to maximise increases in lamb prices

By Paul Mardell,
NWF Technical
Development Manager

The sheep and lamb trade remains strong, showing no signs of slowing down as we move in 2025. Many farmers are increasingly focused on finishing lambs, driven by the steady and rising pence per kilo. At the time of writing, lamb prices are 59p/kg higher than at this time last year. This makes feeding to finish an attractive strategy; however, careful calculations are essential to ensure the additional cost of feed is offset by improved daily liveweight gain (DLWG), or increased returns per kilo.

With effective management, lamb growth rates can reach 300–350g head/day on finishing systems. Regular handling and weighing of lambs is crucial to monitor both weight and fat cover effectively. When transitioning to a high-concentrate diet, it is important to introduce feed gradually over 10–14 days, increasing the amount of concentrate offered incrementally until lambs are fully on an ad-lib feeding system. Feeders should never be left empty to prevent overeating, which can occur when feed becomes suddenly available after a lapse.

When transitioning to ad-lib concentrates, care must be taken to avoid rapid dietary changes, as this can result in unnecessary losses. Lambs also require a source of structural fibre, which can be provided through grazing or, if housed, access to straw or hay. On a finishing diet, concentrate intakes typically range from 1kg to 3kg per head per day, supporting daily liveweight gains (DLWG) of 150–350g per head. Most lambs on this system will reach finishing weight within 4–6 weeks. Feed conversion rates (FCR) usually fall between 6:1 and 10:1. For example, a lamb with an FCR of 8:1 would require approximately 40kg of concentrate to achieve a 5kg weight gain. Careful monitoring and management of diets and intakes are key to optimising performance and profitability.

Other important factors if housing lambs to finish

Any treatments or vaccinations should also be carried out before any changes in feeding or housing are made, as stress can have an impact on immune response.

- Housing should be airy and draught free at sheep level.
- Do not house wet lambs.
- Clean water must always be available.
- Access to rock salt to encourage water intake.
- Ensure adequate lying space.
- Ensure adequate trough space.

Pen and Trough Size Requirements

Ensuring lambs have sufficient space to show natural signs of behaviour along with adequate lying area is essential. This, coupled with plenty of clean bedding, will keep lambs clean and dry. Trough space allowance and maximising dry matter intakes of feed should be a priority. Your system and feed type should dictate your feed trough space per lamb.

For space allowances, please see table below.

Size	Small 23-30kg	Medium 30-35kg	Large 35-40kg
Lying Area			
Straw bedded	0.6-0.7m ²	0.7-0.8m ²	0.8-0.9m ²
Trough Space			
Supplements	300mm	350mm	400mm
Ad-Lib Forage	100mm	100mm	100mm

Health challenges when housed

- Coccidiosis oocyst numbers can build up around feeders, moving regularly will help to reduce this.
- Check worm egg counts.
- Ensure a compound is fed containing suitable lamb mineral to help prevent urinary calculi.
- Lameness can be a problem, to reduce lameness, move feeders regularly and lime areas around the feeders

Reduce sudden changes in environment and feeding as this can lead increased health challenges.

NWF Agriculture manufacture a comprehensive range of ewe and lamb feeds, suitable for ad-lib feeding; carefully formulated to suit different systems, age of lambs, size of lambs and time to finish. For further information, please speak to your local NWF sales specialist.

Vaccinations in Sheep

By Adam Reees, Farm Vet at Manor Farm Vets.



Image courtesy and copyright of Chris Elkington.

As a vet, I spend a lot of time talking about vaccines. Often the conversation is along the lines of "Why can't I get X vaccine?". It is an extremely frustrating situation for all of us. Come autumn time I end up post-morteming a lot of sheep, and if it is not gut worms, more often than not it's clostridial diseases (pulpy kidney, struck etc) or pasteurella, both of which are covered by vaccination. As we gear up to lambing season, are we going to see an increase in Enzootic abortion since there was a supply issue with the main two vaccines pre-tupping? These things are certainly meant to worry/test us... now that's off my chest, let's mention some diseases that I hope many of you have considered and discussed with your vet.

Bluetongue

Bluetongue has devastated the sheep and goat industry in parts of Northern Europe, with mortality of 2-30% and infection rates typically 100%! We were comparatively lucky in the UK this year as the infected midges did not blow over from Europe until much later in the year than expected. Thankfully three vaccines have recently become available against the most common strain circulating in Europe. As only a single dose of the vaccine is needed in the initial course it is fairly inexpensive. We anticipate that we are likely to see another wave of Bluetongue when midge season starts again and the weather warms up again next spring. Your vets will be keeping a close eye on the situation, but it is worth discussing in advance, and strongly considering vaccinating.

Clostridial diseases and Pasteurella – the "sudden death" diseases.

There have been supply issues with the main vaccinations for the last couple of years. I am pleased to say the vast majority of breeding ewes in the UK are vaccinated. This passes on crucial protection to the lambs via colostrum and has made diseases such as lamb dysentery rare. However, the immunity from colostrum wanes after a few weeks. Unfortunately, many people still don't follow this up with vaccinations in the lambs. Clostridial diseases are common, and result in multiple mortalities, often of the best growing lambs when they are nearly ready, making losses all the more costly. Lambs can be vaccinated from three weeks old, with a booster four weeks later.

Abortion vaccines

There is nothing more devastating than pulling out dead lambs at lambing time. Most sheep farmers have experienced significant abortion issues at some point. It is for this reason that nearly half of all breeding ewes are now vaccinated against Enzootic abortion and nearly a third against Toxoplasma. A big benefit of abortion vaccines is that a single injection pre-breeding provides protection for at least 2-3 years. From a commercial point of view, this is usually enough to keep abortion rates low. For those who normally vaccinate but couldn't get hold of the vaccine this year, I wouldn't expect a big jump in abortions due to the fact there should have been minimal transmission in these flocks last year. Blanket treatment with antibiotics is far less effective than vaccination and is never justified!

Lameness

Vaccination against footrot has been a real game changer for farmers. It also reduces levels of scald. Lameness is arguably the biggest welfare issue in the sheep industry and I am a big fan of the Lameness 5-point plan of which vaccination is a part, which significantly reduces lameness and improves production in flocks.

Vaccinations are a brilliant tool to help limit disease. However, they are part of the solution, not the whole solution. Colostrum management, nutrition, parasite control, hygiene etc are essential for keeping disease levels down.

For further information and support on vaccinations, please speak to your vet.

www.manorfarmvets.com



NWF Sheep Feed Range



NWF Ewe Feeds

The NWF range of ewe compounds are formulated to optimise production, milk yield and sheep health.

Raw materials are carefully selected to include a range of starch sources to allow a balanced and safe digestion, along with digestible fibre to promote rumen health. A range of protein sources have been used including **Ultra Pro-R** and **Ultra Soy** from the NWF protected feed range.

This high-quality by-pass protein ensures optimal MPB levels to promote lamb birth weights, milk production and milk quality, which promotes high DLWG, healthy and fast-growing lambs.

Our comprehensive range of ewe compounds has been designed to suit all systems and forage types.

Mill Production Location Codes

WM = Wardle Mill
WI = Wixland Mill
LT = Longtown Mill

Collinson Feed Bins

NWF Agriculture can arrange the purchase of Collinson Silos. The sales team can advise on the type, size and the finish of silo required for sheep feed storage. The County Range T1 Snacker and TriStor Snacker are both perfect silo options for sheep farms. These feature a feature a three legged design and a telescopic, adjustable chute, designed exclusively for filling snackers, bags and barrows. Capacities available from 4 – 15 tonnes.



Champion Ewe Nuts (WM, WI)

A high energy density feed specifically formulated to meet ewe requirements and promote colostrum quality.

Classic Ewe Nuts (WM, WI)

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.

Ewetrition 19 Rolls (WM, WI)

A high energy, high MPB feed formulated to meet ewe requirements.

Premium Ewe Nuts (WM, WI)

A cost effective ewe diet that is ideal for all classes of ewe.

Prime Ewe Rolls (WM, WI)

A cost effective quality ewe diet, balanced in energy and protein.

2 Good Nuts & Rolls (LT)

A top quality 19% protein feed that promotes milk yield and colostrum quality.

NWF Lamb Feeds

The extensive range of NWF lamb feeds are formulated to the highest specification using the highest-quality raw materials.

NWF high starch lamb diets are formulated from a range of high-quality raw materials to allow for a controlled degradability, promoting a good, fast finish on store lambs. Within the range are high quality, energy dense, lamb starter diets which include balanced starch, fibre and quality protein sources such as our protected **Ultra Pro-R** which promotes high levels of MPB for growing lambs.

NWF manufactures a range of protein levels depending on your farm system, lamb type and marketing goals which gives you the confidence that we can deliver a compound to suit your needs.

NWF lamb feeds include vitamins B1 and B12 which aid in the prevention of disease and promote good growth rates. Ammonium chloride is also included to help in the prevention of urinary calculi. A flavour is added to diets to increase palatability and boost intakes.

Fast Lamb Pellets (WM, WI, LT)

A high quality, energy dense starter diet.

Spring Lamb Pellets (WM)

17% protein barley based diet.

Super Lamb Nuts (WM, WI)

15% protein high starch based compound.

Prime Lamb Nuts (WM)

13% protein barley based finishing diet.

Vital Rearer All Rounder Nuts (WM)

18% protein diet that is suitable for a range of systems.

Lakeland Lamb Pellets (LT)

Carefully formulated 17% protein compound.

Delta Lamb Nuts (LT)

15% protein high starch based compound.

Superstock 16 and 18 Nuts (LT)

High inclusion levels of barley, suitable for a wide range of systems and applications.



Improving performance with bypass feeds

By Paul Mardell, NWF Technical Development Manager



A ruminant meets its metabolisable protein (MP) requirements through a combination of rumen degradable protein (ERDP) and bypass protein, also known as digestible undegradable protein (DUP).

Effective rumen degradable protein feed the microbes in the rumen. At the same time, DUP is absorbed in the small intestine, supplying the sheep directly with the protein required for lean tissue growth, including growing foetus, followed by milk production.

Supplying the correct balance of protein type ensures optimal performance of the animal. As ewes approach lambing, their rumen capacity is restricted by the growing lambs, and rumen outflow is increased. At the same time, their requirement for MP increases as the lambs grow and the ewe prepares for milk production to commence.

Metabolisable Protein requirements (g/day)

Ewe liveweight (kg)	Number of lambs	Three weeks	One week
50	1	81	88
	2	92	103
80	1	107	116
	2	122	137
	3	129	148

Advantages of high DUP sheep feeds include:

- Better conditioned ewes
- Increased milk production
- Heavier birth weights
- Improved colostrum quality and quantity
- Stronger more viable lambs
- Higher lamb DLWG

Ultra Pro R and Ultra Soy

With more sheep farmers actively focusing on producing high-quality silage for ewes and increasing pressure for greater sustainability, there is a growing opportunity to include protected soya and rapeseed as a straight feed.

Anecdotal feedback, along with research conducted by John Vipond from SAC and others, has shown that in the last month before lambing, ewes fed on an ad-lib high quality silage with either 100g of soya (per lamb) or 50g of protected soya (Ultra-Soy) fed alongside a mineral can reduce labour and feed costs. This attributed to smaller amounts of supplementary feeding and the utilisation of good quality silage to meet the ewes' energy requirements. A target of one bale per four ewes of ME 11+ or more is needed. Blood testing on a sample of ewes can be done if there is any doubt in silage quality.

Speak to your local NWF Sales Specialist about the use of protected feeds in ewe diets.

A new approach to feeding lambs



For the sheep farmer, business success means balancing a wide range of factors. At the heart of this challenge lies the need to look after lambs and optimise productivity, while simultaneously controlling workload and maximising return on investment.

Early provision of adequate energy in a highly digestible form is essential to support early life survivability, body temperature maintenance, immune system support, daily live weight gains and optimal development for flock replacements. Adverse weather conditions during the lambing period can further exacerbate body heat loss increasing these requirements even further.

Protein digestibility in milk replacers is well known. Carefully selected sources ensure optimal digestibility of the protein which supports lamb performance. Osmolality measures the concentration of solute particles in a solution and is calculated by adding the concentrations of sugars and minerals in mOsm/kg of solvent. Lamb milk replacers with elevated levels of osmolality can damage gut integrity, increase the risk of abomasal bloat and potentially exacerbate diarrhoea severity in sick lambs.

Choosing a product that has been carefully formulated with osmolality in mind will help to reduce the risk of diarrhoea.

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 gastro intestinal environment.

Milkivit Energized Lamb Milk (ELM) is designed to help lambs achieve their full growth potential. Energized Lamb Milk is a precisely formulated lamb milk replacer containing specially selected milk products, highly digestible oils and proteins plus vitamins and minerals to satisfy the requirements of fast-growing lambs.

4 Reasons To Choose Milkivit Energized Lamb Milk

Faster, more efficient growth: High energy density and optimal protein digestibility achieve excellent lamb performance

Reduced risk of scour and bloat: Lower osmolality and improved gut development reduces the risk of scour and bloat

Lower cost per feed: Low mixing rate of 175g/L makes 14% more milk per bag versus the same quantity of a 200g/L mix-rate powder.

Easy feed: Easy mixing makes the product easy to handle, and high palatability means lambs are eager to feed.



Top Tips for Turnout



By Louisa Lloyd, NWF Technical Formulator

**Discuss NWF
Ewe Minerals
on 01829 797100**



Grass Quality

At every stage of production, even late pregnancy and lactation, grass can provide sheep with the nutrition required. To ensure that sheep get the correct nutrition from pasture it is important to monitor the quality of the grass. The growth and quality of grass varies, impacted by seasonal temperatures and climate, along with grassland management.

Sheep farmers face several choices when managing how their animals graze grass. Typically, grassland growth rates should determine how long grass should be grazed and rested for and will, therefore, have a bearing on the grazing method chosen. Growth rates are influenced by a number of factors including season, weather, soil structure and soil nutrients, and may vary from field to field, and even within individual fields – depending on size, geography, and the stocking rate. **Speak to your NWF sales specialist about a soil analysis.**

Feeding Advice

For ewes with twins, milk yields will peak at three weeks, and ewes with a single lamb will peak at five weeks. Ewe's must be fed enough to maximise milk production, especially until peak yield has passed, or else the growth and performance of the lambs may suffer. After the ewe has reached peak milk yield, supplementary feed should be fed directly to the lambs rather than the ewe.

In addition to feeding concentrates, the use of feed blocks can improve the performance of ewes in terms of maintaining liveweight, which would have knock-on positive effects on fertility, lambing percentage, lamb survival and liveweight gain of the lambs reared.

Feed blocks are best used when the availability of either grazing or home-grown forage is limited, or to boost nutrition around flushing, tupping, and lambing.

Mineral Supplementation

Ensuring a sheep's mineral requirements are met correctly, while avoiding under or over supply, can be a very delicate balancing act. Deficiency occurs when the minerals in the feed do not meet the requirements of the ewe, while an oversupply of minerals in the feed can cause toxicity.

Trace elements are needed in small quantities of less than 100mg/kg in sheep diets. Trace elements are essential for growth, productivity and immunity. There are seven key trace elements that are required by sheep; iron, copper, cobalt, iodine, manganese, zinc and selenium.

Macro-minerals are needed in relatively large quantities and are necessary for bone development and nervous system health, alongside supporting growth. Macro-minerals include calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, chloride, potassium and sulphur. Typically, grass has sufficient levels of macro-minerals for sheep and therefore supplementation is not always necessary.

Spring Reseeding & Sheep Grazing Management



UK Grass Seed Experts

BARENBRUG



**Request a copy of the
NWF 2025 Grass &
Forage Seed Brochure**

By Janet Montgomery, Agriculture Product Manager, Barenbrug UK

With tupping underway or complete, the starting gun has been fired on a new 'sheep year'. That makes now a good time to consider – or reconsider – your farm's grass strategy.

Not just for the year ahead. Make your grass outlook a long-term strategy, tailored to the specific, unique characteristics of your farm, physical and economic. Chief among these should be your production goals.

Think carefully about when you need grass, and for what class of livestock: what do you need from it to ensure your farm and its enterprises run smoothly, productively, and profitably? Importantly, how might other resources – such as machinery and labour availability, your historic (or planned) level of inputs, land attributes (propensity to flood, susceptibility to dry weather, etc) – affect these goals?

Then it's time to snapshot your current grass situation. Pasture assessments are an easy but invaluable tool: we use the Barenbrug grassland index to guide you on field inspections. It includes explanations to score the species you observe, the density of the sward, and any weed incursions. For each field you index, you'll have a 'Grassland Index' of between 1 and 5. GI1 is poor, while excellent fields will score a GI5.

Armed with this information, you can make objective decisions about which fields are most in need of attention – and possible reseeding – and in what priority.



Grass experts agree that an ideal reseeding rate, for a whole-farm grass strategy, should be around 10-15% each year. But rather than rely on a basic reseeding rotation, you can use regular indexing to work out which fields have the greatest capacity for improvement and prioritise those – they'll provide the greatest return on investment.

Adopting this index-led approach is particularly valuable in managing grassland for sheep, owing to their specific requirements. For example, fields used for outdoor lambing or turn-out must provide a good, early 'bite'. Likewise, enterprises featuring early weaning must programme sufficient grass provision. Management of summer grazing options is, for many farms, influenced by access to hill grazing. Speciality finishing might demand access to higher quality grass, at specific times.

Perhaps the most fundamental point is that, in contrast to cattle, sheep typically overwinter outside. Winter grazing plans need varieties with sufficient winter growth; it's easy to overgraze in winter. Sheep are less likely to cause damage to the fabric of the pasture – along fence lines, around troughs and feeders – but their manner of overgrazing, the classic 'pool table' effect – means pastures can need more recovery time.

Combined, all this information makes it easier to define and refine your potential variety choices, and which mixture offers the best bet.

Remember that many mixtures can be tweaked to provide different performance levels and use characteristics through appropriate management: nitrogen inputs, cutting times and grazing duration. Within every bag, a myriad of strategies is waiting to be realised.

To find out more about Barenbrug UK visit: www.barenbrug.co.uk

Get the Best from your Flock this Season with NWF Molasses



Around 70% of the lamb’s growth takes place in the last 2 months of pregnancy. It is therefore essential to ensure that the ewe’s nutritional requirements are met during this time.

It is vital to get the most from home-grown forage as it represents over 50% of the ewe’s nutritional intake and it’s the most cost-effective feed on farm.

It is always important to get the best out of your sheep and liquid products can help achieve this by providing a balance of readily fermentable energy and protein levels. The base for all the liquid feeds is highly palatable cane molasses, supplying readily fermentable sucrose, a 6-Carbon sugar, which is an ideal supplement to add to low energy/high fibre forages. 6-Carbon sugars are essential for effective rumen fermentation, as they are rapidly digested and have the effect of stimulating overall rumen function leading to better animal performance.

The NWF Sheepmol Range provides a balance of both sugar and high energy glycerine, which are the best forms of immediate available energy. This is required at times when the ewe is under any metabolic stress and intakes are reduced, making a molasses based liquid feed an essential ingredient in any pre lambing rations.

Molasses based liquid feeds have also been proven to increase fibre digestion allowing pregnant ewes to get more nutritional value from every mouthful of forage consumed. NWF also offer a range of lick feeders and storage tanks as well as full nutritional and feeding advice.

The Challenge	Liquid Feed Can Help Overcome This By:
Maintaining effective intakes when gut fill is reduced due to lamb growth	Stimulating dry matter intake and having a low substitution value
All ewes need to be encouraged to eat as much as possible	Improving palatability
Avoiding costly alternatives and getting the most cost-effective nutrition	Increasing fibre digestion
Lambs take up feed space, so rumen capacity is reduced	Increasing energy density and intake during this period
The incidence of ‘Twin Lamb’ disease	Helping to reduce this by providing cost effective sugar and glycerine, both of which are effective sources of glucose and glucose precursors

Preparing for Topping: Looking ahead to Autumn 2025

Topping is a critical time of year for any sheep farmer, as it fundamentally sets the scene for the next year’s lamb crop and future profitability.

- Rams should be bought at least eight weeks pre-topping to acclimatise.
- Check feet, teeth, testicles and health.
- Book a vet to check fertility.
- Introduce feed to achieve a condition score of 3.5 to 4.0.
- Flush ewes on fresh pasture.
- Consider supplementary feeding and mineral packs.

On arrival, feet, teeth, testicles and general health should be checked. Get your vet to check fertility, as surveys have shown that up to 10% of rams are infertile. In addition to ensuring the health status, good nutrition also plays a vital role in ensuring the successful implantation of the eggs in the ewes.

At least four to six weeks before being introduced to the ewes, ram diets should be adjusted to achieve a condition score of 3.5 to 4. Normally, early lambing flocks are topped when adequate grass is available; either by reducing stocking rates, moving to fresh pasture or aftermath, or grazing on undersown forage crops. Flocks can suffer from poorer lambing percentages if rams and ewes are not prepared sufficiently for topping.

If grass is in short supply, the condition of both ewes and rams will not be good enough to achieve the maximum number of eggs shed by each ewe. Semen quality will also be poorer, leading to fewer eggs being fertilised. In those circumstances, body condition can only be brought up to optimum levels through supplementary feeding. At the same time, ewes in poorer condition at drying off must improve in condition at least three weeks before topping; otherwise, ovulation rates will be reduced. On the other hand, excessively fat ewes will need to be kept on tight grazing.



View the NWF Topping Series on our YouTube Channel

SCAN HERE!



Did you know NWF sell more than compound feeds and blends?

A comprehensive range of high quality products for your flock delivered direct to farm.

- Straights
- Protected Feeds
- Molasses
- Minerals
- Milk Replacers
- Moist Feeds
- Seed
- Fertiliser
- Silage Additives
- Protected Fats

Maximise your flock with NWF

NWF Agriculture provide a comprehensive portfolio of services for your farm.

- Flock Costings
- Ration & Diet Formulation
- Forage & Feed Analysis
- Dung & Diet Sieving
- Body Condition Scoring
- Soil Analysis
- Mineral Analysis
- Clamp Capacities
- Water Testing
- Soil Analysis



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



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