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G79-434 Feeding Guides for the Ewes

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Feeding Guides for the Ewes

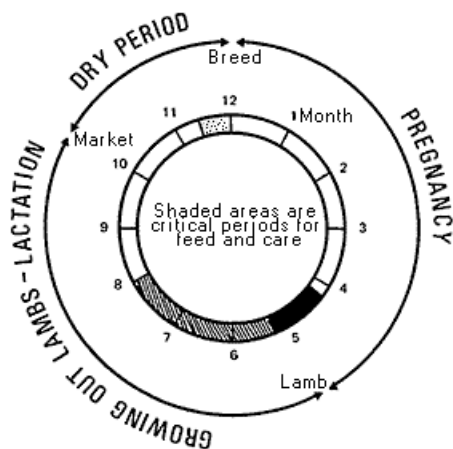
In utilizing the information in this publication, the sheepman and those advising him must keep in mind the ultimate objectives of the production program in question.

Ted H. Doane, Extension Sheep Specialist

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The major problem in nutrition is the definition of the desired animal function. Maintenance of the ewe, for example, is generally thought of in terms of the dry ewe. Yet maintenance of productive functions is a constant cost in ewe nutrition, whether she is pregnant, lactating, dry, or in the process of being bred for another year.

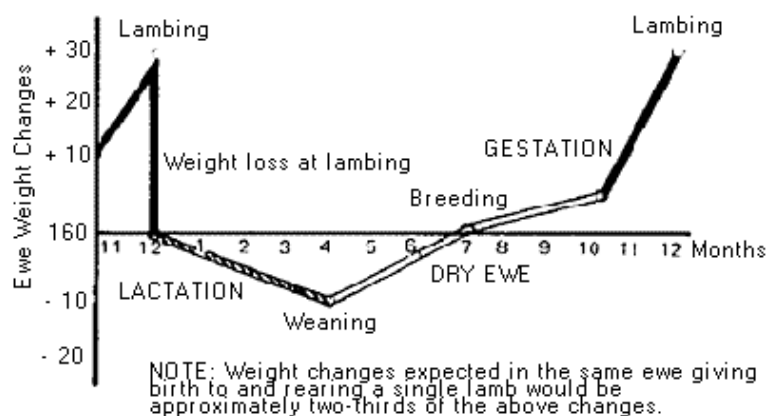
In utilizing the information in this publication, the sheepman and those advising him must keep in mind the ultimate objectives of the production program in question. Any specific recommendations must also be adapted to local conditions, particularly with reference to climatic conditions, grazing conditions, and the economics of nutrition recommendations in light of expected production. The relative feed requirements for the production year are illustrated in the following diagram.



THE SHEEP PRODUCTION YEAR University of California Diagram

Nutrient Requirements

Weight changes normally expected in a year for a 160 pound ewe giving birth to and rearing twin lambs.



The most reliable single source of information on the nutrient requirements of sheep is the National Research Council (NRC) bulletin. These requirements were derived by summarizing hundreds of trials in which the nutrient requirements for optimum production were evaluated.

The nutrient requirements are designed to maintain optimum production in a theoretical production system that would permit the weight changes as shown below. In this system, the ewe is expected to lose five to seven percent of her body weight due to lactation demands, recover this loss

during the dry period, and then increase in weight during gestation in proportion to the weight of fetal tissues and fluids.

The following rations are examples for meeting the requirements at certain production periods and within specific weight ranges. Feeding directions also are included.

Non-lactating, first 15 weeks gestation.								
	Ewes weighing 130 lbs.				Ewes weighing 150 lbs.			
	Ration/lbs.				Ration/lbs.			
Ingredient	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
No. 2 shelled corn	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.25
Ground ear corn	--	1.0	--	--	--	1.2	--	--
Mixed legume grass hay	3.4	1.9	--	--	3.8	1.9	--	--
*Corn silage	--	--	7.0	--	--	--	7.5	--
Alfalfa haylage	--	--	--	8.0	--	--	--	8.0
Complete supplement	--	--	0.25	--	--	--	0.33	--
Additional vitamin D	--	--	--	400 IU	--	--	--	400 IU
Calculated Nutrient Content, lbs. [Air-dry basis]								
Protein	.46	.33	.26	.51	.53	.35	.30	.52
TDN	1.63	1.63	1.62	1.60	1.82	1.78	1.78	1.80
Calcium	.027	.016	.015	.040	.031	.016	.018	.040
Phosphorus	.007	.007	.009	.009	.007	.008	.011	.010

Feeding Directions:

1. These rations are designed to be hand-fed at least once daily. The amounts given are required per ewe daily.
2. It is especially important that each ewe have at least 14 inches of feed bunk space.
3. Feed a mineral that is rich in phosphorus free choice for rations 1 and 4. For rations 2 and 3, provide a

mineral rich in both calcium and phosphorus. Feed iodized salt free choice in addition.

- These rations have been calculated to be nutritionally adequate. However, flockowners must observe the ewes closely and increase the amount fed if they are not staying in condition. Reduce the amount fed if feed is being wasted or the ewes are getting fat.
- If permitted, ewes will eat more than the amounts of feed indicated. Feed only these amounts with close observation of the condition of the ewes.

*Ohio State University researchers have added 20 pounds urea, 10 pounds limestone and 4 pounds dicalcium phosphate to a ton of corn silage at time of ensiling or at feeding time. They found this provided adequate nutrition for the gestating ewe. Their recent research indicates the addition of 5 pounds of sodium sulfate would be particularly beneficial.

Last 6 weeks gestation (can also be used for flushing)

Rations to be hand-fed at least once daily

	Ewes weighing 130 lbs.				Ewes weighing 150 lbs.			
	Ration/lbs.				Ration/lbs.			
Ingredient	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
No. 2 shelled corn	0.5	--	1.0	1.0	0.5	--	1.0	1.0
Ground ear corn	--	2.0	--	--	--	2.0	--	--
Mixed legume grass hay	4.2	2.2	--	--	4.6	2.6	--	--
Corn silage	--	--	7.0	--	--	--	8.0	--
Alfalfa haylage	--	--	--	8.0	--	--	--	9.0
Complete supplement	--	--	0.3	--	--	--	0.4	--
Additional vitamin D	--	--	--	400 IU	--	--	--	400 IU
Calculated Nutrient Content, lbs. [Air-dry basis]								
Protein	.61	.44	.37	.60	.67	.50	.43	.66
TDN	2.42	2.50	2.46	2.40	2.61	2.69	2.73	2.60
Calcium	.034	.018	.017	.041	.037	.022	.021	.046
Phosphorus	.012	.010	.013	.013	.014	.011	.016	.014

Feeding Directions:

- These rations are designed to be hand-fed at least once daily. The amounts given are required per ewe daily. Note: The amounts given are average amounts for the 5-6 week late gestation period. A lesser amount would be fed early in the period and a greater amount the last of the period, with changes in the amount fed being made gradually.
- It is especially important that each ewe have at least 18 inches of feed bunk space.
- Feed a mineral that is rich in phosphorus free choice for rations 1 and 4. For rations 2 and 3, provide a mineral rich in both calcium and phosphorus. Feed iodized salt free choice in addition.
- These rations have been calculated to be nutritionally adequate. However, flockowners must observe the ewes closely and increase the amount fed if they are not staying in condition. Reduce the amount fed if feed is being wasted or the ewes are getting fat.
- If permitted, ewes may eat more than the amounts of feed indicated. Feed only these amounts with close observation of the condition of the ewes.
- The silage and haylage rations include shelled corn. Some ewes cannot eat enough silage alone late in pregnancy to meet their energy requirements. **This may result in some lambing paralysis, abdominal rupture or vaginal prolapse.**

NOTE: These same rations should be adequate for ewes sucking singles the last 8 weeks lactation.

*Ohio State University researchers added 20 pounds urea, 10 pounds limestone, 4 pounds dicalcium phosphate and 5 pounds sodium sulfate to a ton of corn silage. They found this provided adequate nutrition for the last stage of pregnancy and lactation.

First 8 weeks lactation. Ewes sucking TWINS--rations to be hand-fed at least once daily.
(Ewes sucking singles, decrease 20%)

This ration can also be used for ewe lambs, sucking singles.

	Ewes weighing 130 lbs.				Ewes weighing 150 lbs.			
	Ration/lbs.				Ration/lbs.			
Ingredient	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
No. 2 shelled corn	1.5	--	1.3	1.8	1.6	--	1.5	1.9
Ground ear corn	--	3.5	--	--	--	3.6	--	--
Alfalfa hay	5.0	2.6	--	--	5.4	3.0	--	--
Corn silage	--	--	12.0	--	--	--	12.0	--
Alfalfa haylage	--	--	--	11.0	--	--	--	12.0
Complete supplement	--	0.1	0.8	--	--	--	1.0	--
Additional vitamin D	--	250 IU	--	400 IU	--	--	--	--
Calculated Nutrient Content, lbs. [Air-dry basis]								
Protein	.89	.70	.67	.90	.96	.75	.75	.97
TDN	3.77	3.74	3.88	3.84	4.06	4.01	4.17	4.17
Calcium	.060	.035	.036	.064	.065	.037	.042	.069
Phosphorus	.014	.016	.025	.018	.015	.015	.029	.019

Feeding Directions:

1. These rations are designed to be hand-fed at least once daily. It may be desirable to split the feed into two equal feedings. The amounts given are required per ewe daily.
2. It is especially important that each ewe have 16 to 18 inches of feed bunk space.
3. A mineral mixture such as equal parts dicalcium phosphate-iodized salt should be fed free choice.
4. These rations have been calculated to be nutritionally adequate. However, flockowners must observe ewes and lambs closely and increase the amount fed if ewes do not seem to be milking adequately. Some weight and condition loss of the lactating ewe is to be expected.

NOTE: These same rations should be adequate for ewes suckling twins the last 8 weeks lactation.

*Ohio State University researchers fed lactating ewes the supplemented corn silage free choice and found it provided adequate nutrition.

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