Sheep Production Calendar for Spring Lambs

R. E. Hudgens
J. B. Oouthouse
K. D. Johnson
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R. E. Hudgens and J. B. Outhouse, Department of Animal Sciences and K. D. Johnson, Department of Agronomy

The purpose of this calendar is to outline management practices for each month based on a spring lambing program. The information provided should serve as a guide to help the sheep producer stay abreast of the changing management decisions that must be made on a daily basis. Important dates to remember are outlined below. These dates are the bases for determining when other management practices will take place. Actual dates for accomplishing each management practice may be moved forward or backward a few days to meet a specific situation or location.

Breeding Dates—November 1 to December 4
Lambing Dates—March 26 to April 28
Early Wean Lambs by June 15
Wean All Lambs by August 1
Market All Lambs by October 1

CALENDAR

WEEK ONE

October

Shear ewes and rams.
Deworm ewes and rams then place animals on a pasture or paddock preferably where sheep have not been for at least 30 days. This should reduce reinfection of internal parasites.
Give rams a breeding soundness evaluation. This includes an evaluation of body soundness, reproductive tract soundness and semen quality.
Remove ewes from pastures with a high a content of legumes (greater than 30 percent). Live legume plants can contain estrogentic compounds that will adversely influence the reproductive performance of ewes.
Trim and check all hooves of ewes and rams for signs of foot rot: This may be done in conjunction with shearing.
Crop residues such as corn stover can be grazed. Before placing sheep on corn stover vaccinate them against enterotoxia.

WEEK TWO

Increase daily nutrient intake of each ewe (nutritional flushing) and ram. This can be accomplished by supplementing their diet with 1/2 lb./day shelled corn.
If pasture is not adequate supplement with hay.

WEEK THREE

Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

WEEK FOUR

Overgraze pastures that are to be oversown with legumes.
Weigh replacement ewes and rams between 180 and 240 days of age.
Complete the 210-day record portion of form ISPTP-2, "Indiana Sheep Performance Testing Program," and forward for summarization.
Collect soil samples from all pastures and hay fields and forward for analysis.
Paint brand a large identification number on each side of all ewes. This will aid in the identification of ewes at mating. The paint used should be specifically manufactured for branding sheep.

NOVEMBER

WEEK ONE

Turn rams with ewes.
Use a ewe marking harness or marking paint on the breast of the rams. When the ram mounts the ewe during mating a mark will be placed on the ewe's rump. An accurate breeding date can be recorded for the ewe.
• Continue to overgraze pastures that are to be renovated with legumes.

**Week Two**
• Continue grazing crop residue, if available.
• Record the breeding date for each ewe and approximate lambing dates can be calculated from these breeding dates.
• Change color of marking paint or ewe marking harness crayon on November 15. If the ewe does not conceive at the first mating then when she comes back into heat she will be marked with a different color.
• Stop supplementing ewes and rams with shelled corn.

**Week Three**
• Observe ewes for repeat breeders.
• Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

**Week Four**
• If pasture is not adequate, supplement with 3-4 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed.
• If pasture is not available, large round bales can be fed free-choice.
• Weigh replacement ewes and rams between 180 and 240 days of age.
• Complete form ISPTP-2, 210-day records and forward for summarization.

**DECEMBER**

**Week One**
• Remove rams from ewes on December 4.
• Rams can be placed together in a pasture or paddock.

**Week Two**
• Provide ewes 4-5 lb./day medium quality hay (9-13% crude protein) or an equivalent feed.

**Week Three**
• Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

**Week Four**
• Large round bales can be fed free-choice to meet the nutrient requirement of the ewes.

**JANUARY**

**Week One**
• Check body condition of ewes. If they appear to be losing weight, increase feed intake by 1-2 lb./day.
• Feed ewes 4-5 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed.

**Week Two**
• Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

**Week Three**
• Frost seed legumes in pastures and hay fields that contain less than 30 percent legumes.

**Week Four**
• An ultrasonic pregnancy detector can be used to test all ewes and cull or separate non-pregnant ewes from ones that are bred.

**FEBRUARY**

**Week One**
• Continue feeding good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed.
• Order lambing supplies.

**Week Two**
• Start supplementing the diet of each ewe with 3/4 lb./day shelled corn. The actual amount fed should depend on the body condition of the ewe. Ewes should be separated into groups based on their body condition and fed accordingly.
• Frost seed legumes in pastures and hay field if not already done in January.

**Week Three**
• Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
• Make ready lambing barn and/or pastures.

**Week Four**
• Shear all ewes.
• Trim and check their hooves for signs of foot rot. This may be done just before or after the ewe is shorn.
• Vaccinate ewes against enterotoxemia and white muscle disease 4-6 weeks before lambing. These vaccinations should give the developing lambs some immunity to these diseases. This may be done in conjunction with shearing and trimming feet.

**MARCH**

**Week One**
• Feed each ewe 4-5 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed.
• Increase the amount of shelled corn fed to each ewe to approximately 1 lb./day. The actual amount fed should depend on the body condition of the ewe. Ewes should be separated into groups based on their body condition and fed accordingly.

**Week Two**
• Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
• Check breeding dates to determine lambing dates.
• Deworm all ewes.

**Week Three**
• Sort off early-bred ewes and pen separately from later lambing ewes.
• Seed new pastures or hay land to recommended forages when soil conditions permit.
Week Four
- Apply spring fertilizer to pastures and hay fields as recommended by soil tests.

APRIL

Week One
- Observe ewes at lambing, give assistance as needed.
- Soon after lambing (30 min.-3 hr.) place each ewe and her offspring in a lambing "jug" or pen (a small 4 ft. x 4 ft. pen). These should stay in the jug for at least 2 days.
- Shortly after lambing (2-6 hr.) check to make certain each ewe has milk and help the newborn lamb get its first meal, if needed.
- Dip or spray the navel of each newborn lamb with fresh 7% tincture iodine and weigh the lamb. This should be done soon after birth (30 min.-6 hr.).
- Ear tag all newborn lambs and paint brand each ewe and her offspring with identical numbers on each of their sides. These numbers will aid in pairing the ewe with her offspring. Ear tagging and paint branding can be done concurrently with weighing and dipping their navel in iodine.

Week Two
- Just before moving the ewe and her offspring from the lambing jug trim and check all hooves of the ewe for signs of foot rot. Then move the ewe and her offspring to a lactation pasture or paddock.
- Group ewes and lambs by lambing date, or by single and multiple births.
- Dock all lambs at 3-14 days of age.
- Vaccinate lambs against enterotoxemia at the time of docking with a second follow up injection 14-21 days later.

Week Three
- Start lambs on creep feeders.
- Ewes grazing pasture and nursing a single lamb should be supplemented with 1-11/2 lb./day shelled corn. If pasture is not available, feed each ewe 4-5 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) in addition to the recommended corn allowance.
- Ewes grazing pasture and nursing twins should be supplemented with 2-21/2 lb./day shelled corn. If pasture is not available feed each ewe 5-6 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) in addition to the recommended corn allowance.

Week Four
- Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
- Complete birth data on form ISPTP-2.

MAY

Week One
- Give all lambs a follow-up injection to prevent enterotoxemia.
- Continue creep feeding lambs.
- Identify and cull all non-lactating ewes.
- Deworm all ewes and lambs.

Week Two
- Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

Week Three
- Select replacement ewes and rams. Select on the basis of measurable traits such as 90-day, 210-day and grease fleece weight records.

Week Four
- Cut hay for fall and winter sheep feed.
- Fertilize the forages with phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) to maintain a high soil test level of P and K.

JUNE

Week One
- Continue creep feeding lambs.
- Discontinue any supplemental feeding of corn.

Week Two
- Early wean all lambs.
- Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

Week Three
- Cut hay for fall and winter sheep feed.
- Apply a light application of fertilizer to the hay field following cutting.

Week Four
- Weigh all lambs between 70 and 110 days of age.
- Complete form ISPTP-2, 90-day records and forward for summarization.

JULY

Week One
- Clip pastures and rotationally graze.
- Wean all lambs that have not been weaned to this date.
- Weigh all lambs between 70 and 110 days of age.
- Complete form ISPTP-2, 90-day records and forward for summarization.

Week Two
- Market all lambs weighing over 100 lb.
- Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

Week Three
- Cull low producing ewes based on 90-day ad-
justed weight record summary of their offspring.
• Deworm all sheep on pasture.
• Cut hay for fall and winter feeding when growth warrants harvest.

**Week Four**
• Select replacement ewes and rams. Select on the basis of measurable traits such as 90-day, 210-day and grease fleece weight records.

**AUGUST**

**Week One**
• Market all lambs weighing over 100 lb.
• Deworm lambs if they are on pasture.

**Week Two**
• Adjust soil pH to recommended level on pastures where legumes will be seeded in February or March.
• New pastures or hay land can be sown to recommended forages.
• Purchase performance-tested stud rams.

**Weeks Three and Four**
• Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Week One**
• Market all lambs weighing over 100 lb.
• Fill silo with corn silage when physiologically mature (if used).
• Final hay harvest should be made in northern Indiana.
• After hay harvest the forage should be fertilized to encourage fall regrowth and promote winter-hardiness.
• Apply one-third of the annual nitrogen fertilizer on grass pastures; graze grass-legume pastures lightly for the remainder of the season or rest them so the carbohydrate reserve in the legume crown can be replenished.

**Week Two**
• Consider a supplemental grain source to increase gains on lambs being finished on pasture.
• Final hay harvest should be made in central Indiana.
• After hay harvest, the forage should be fertilized to encourage fall regrowth and promote winter-hardiness.

**Week Three**
• Cull and sell all unsound and unproductive ewes.
• Final hay harvest should be made in southern Indiana.
• After hay harvest, the forage should be fertilized to encourage fall regrowth and promote winter-hardiness.

**Week Four**
• Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
• Collect soil samples from all pastures and hay fields and forward for analysis.

**Summary**
If used properly, this calendar should serve as a guide to help sheep producers meet management deadlines. The month-by-month account of activities is not intended to describe management practices in detail. For more information about specific practices the reader should refer to Extension publications:

- AS-269 Indiana Sheep Performance Testing Program
- AS-400 Systems of Management for Ewes and Lambs
- AS-401 Sheep Production Calendar for Winter Lambs
- AS-403 Sheep Production Calendar for Fall Lambs
- AY-251 Improve Pastures by Renovation
- AY-253 Forage Selection and Seeding Guide for Indiana
- E-16 Sheep Keds and Biting Lice
- ID-128 Nitrate Toxicity—Problem and Prevention
- ID-153 Managing and Utilizing Pasture and Harvested Forages for Sheep
- MWPS-3 Sheep Housing and Equipment Handbook
- VY-27 Internal Parasites of Sheep
- VY-28 Foot Rot Control in Sheep