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Sheep Production Calendar for Fall Lambs

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The purpose of this calendar is to outline management practices for each month based on a fall 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—May 1 to June 4
Lambing Dates—September 23 to October 27
Early Wean Lambs by December 15
Wean All Lambs by February 1
Market All Lambs by March 1

CALENDAR

APRIL

Week One
• 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.
• Trim and check all hooves of ewes and rams for signs of foot rot. This may be done in conjunction with shearing.

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

Week Three
• When pasture has adequate growth (8 in.), turn ewes on the pasture. Pastures newly seeded with legumes should be grazed intensively to reduce competition from grasses.
• Apply spring fertilizer to pastures and hay fields as soil tests recommend, if not already applied in March.

Week Four
• 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.
• 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.

MAY

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.

Week Two
• 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 May 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 water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.

Week Four
• Cut hay for fall and winter sheep feed.
• Weigh replacement ewes and rams between 180 and 240 days of age.
• Complete form ISPTP-2 210-day records and forward for summarization.
• Fertilize forages with phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), if not previously done, to maintain a high soil test level of P and K.

JUNE

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

Week Two
• Deworm ewes and rams as needed.

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

Week Four
• Cut hay for fall and winter sheep feed.
• Apply a light application of fertilizer to hay fields following cutting.

JULY

Week One
• Trim and check all hooves of ewes and rams for signs of foot rot.
• Clip pastures and rotationally graze.

Week Two
• Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
• Rotate ewes and rams to a fresh pasture (one that has not been grazed for at least 30 days) as needed.

Week Three
• Deworm ewes and rams as needed.
• Cut hay for fall and winter feeding when growth warrants harvest.

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.

AUGUST

Week One
• Start feeding each ewe 1/4 to 1/2 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.
• Order lambing supplies.

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

Week Three
• Deworm all ewes and place them on a fresh pasture (one that has not been grazed for at least 30 days).
• Vaccinate ewes against enterotoxemia and white muscle disease. These vaccinations should give the developing lambs some immunity to these diseases. This may be done in conjunction with deworming.

Week Four
• Ready pastures and lambing barn for ewes that will soon be lambing.

SEPTEMBER

Week One
• Trim crotch, udder and face of all ewes.
• Feed ewes 4-5 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or equivalent, if pasture is not available.
• Start supplementing the diet of each ewe with 1 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.
• 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.
• Fill silo with corn silage when physiologically mature (if used).
• 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
• Provide fresh water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
Collect soil samples from each pasture and forward for analysis.

Final hay harvest should be made in central Indiana.

After harvest, the forage should be fertilized to encourage fall regrowth and promote winter-hardiness.

**Week Three**

- Sort out early-bred ewes and move to lambing pasture or paddock.
- Final hay harvest should be made in southern Indiana.
- After harvest, the forage should be fertilized to encourage fall regrowth and promote winter-hardiness.

**Week Four**

- Collect soil samples from all pastures and hay fields and forward for analysis.

**OCTOBER**

**Weeks One and Two**

- Observe ewes at lambing, give assistance as needed.
- Soon after lambing (30 min.-3 hr.), place the ewe and her offspring in a lambing “jug” or pen (a small 4 ft. x 4 ft. pen). They 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.
- Just before moving the ewe and her offspring from the lambing jug trim and check all hooves of the ewe for 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.
- Collect soil samples from all pastures and hay fields and forward for analysis, if not already done.
- Overgraze pastures that are to be oversown with legumes.

**NOVEMBER**

**Week One**

- Continue to overgraze pastures that are to be renovated with legumes.
- Consider culling all non-lactating ewes.
- If non-lactating ewes are kept, feed them 3-4 lb./day hay or an equivalent feed.
- Give all lambs a follow-up injection to prevent enterotoxemia.

**Week Two**

- Continue creep feeding lambs.
- Continue feeding hay and grain to lactating ewes.

**Weeks Three and Four**

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

**DECEMBER**

**Week One**

- Continue creep feeding lambs.

**Week Two**

- Early wean all lambs and begin feeding lambs to market weight in a drylot.
- If lambs are early weaned, reduce ewes feed to only 3-4 lb./day hay or an equivalent feed.
- If lambs are not early weaned, continue to feed lactating ewes 4-6 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed and reduce shelled corn to 1 lb. or less per day.

**Week Three**

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

**Week Four**

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

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

Week Two
- If lambs were not early-weaned, continue creep feeding.
- Feed ewes 4-6 lb./day good quality hay (13-17% crude protein) or an equivalent feed and drop the corn from the ewe ration.

Week Three
- Cull low-producing ewes based on lambs 90-day adjusted weight record summary.
- Identify replacement ewes and rams on basis of 90-day adjusted weight record.

Week Four
- Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
- Frost seed recommended legumes in pastures and hay fields that contain less than 30 percent legumes.

FEBRUARY

Week One
- Wean all lambs.
- Market all lambs weighing over 100 lb.

Week Two
- Purchase replacement breeding stock; select on basis of 90-day or 210-day weight records.

Weeks Three and Four
- Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
- Frost seed legumes in pastures and hay fields, if not previously done.

MARCH

Week One
- Market all lambs when finished for the Easter market.
- All remaining lambs should be placed on a finishing ration.

Week Two
- If not previously culled, sell all unsound and unproductive ewes.
- Purchase replacement breeding stock; select on basis of 90-day or 210-day weight records.

Week Three
- Feed ewes 3-4 lb./day medium quality hay (9-13% crude protein) or an equivalent feed; use wheat pasture, if available.
- Provide fresh, ice-free water and a salt-mineral mixture to all sheep at all times.
- Seed new pastures or hay land to recommended forages when soil conditions permit seeding.

Week Four
- Apply spring fertilizer to pastures and hay fields as recommended by soil tests.
- Shear all mature breeding stock.
- Market all lambs.

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-402 Sheep Production Calendar for Spring 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