



Maryland Sheep & Goat Producer



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Lambing and Kidding School Draws Large Crowd

More than 175 people attended the Lambing and Kidding School held December 10th at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Attendees were an equal mix of sheep and goat producers.

The school was sponsored by Maryland Cooperative Extension. Co-sponsors included Sheepman Supply Company, Land O'Lakes Animal Milk Products, and Northeast SARE.

Dr. Kevin Pelzer from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

at Virginia Tech was the primary speaker. Participants in the school received a lambing and kidding kit and a 10-lb. bag of milk replacer.

The handouts and PowerPoint presentations from the lambing and kidding school will be available on the Internet at www.sheepandgoat.com/programs/lambkidschool05.html. The goal is to have the information posted to the web by January 15, 2006.



Dr. Kevin Pelzer demonstrates how to deliver a lamb.

Educating People to Help Themselves

Local Governments • U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

University of Maryland Has a New Farm Manager

Lindsay Callahan is the new farm manager at the University of Maryland College Park. Lindsay replaced Jordan Thomas, who retired in 2004, after more than 30 years of service to the University.

Lindsay began her new position on June 2, 2005. She received a B.S. degree in Animal Science from the University of Maryland in 2003. During the past two years, she has worked at a large animal clinic at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in Blacksburg, VA, where she was a large animal ICU and necropsy technician.

Lindsay's primary responsibilities will be to manage the campus farm and to serve periodically as acting coordinator of Animal Care. The Campus farm is located immediately across from the Animal Science building and occupies approximately 5 acres of land. The farm consists of a small ewe flock (approximately 15 Katahdin ewes), a horse stable, and a few cattle. The animals are used extensively to support the undergraduate teaching program.

A "Lamb Watch" class is held every spring. It is a very popular class, as students gain hands-on, real-world experience in the pre- and post-parturition care of ewes and lambs. Lindsay will serve as the instructor for this class.

Lindsay can be reached via e-mail at lindsayeq@hotmail.com.

MPWV Meat Goat Producers Hold Fall Meeting

by Willie Lantz
1st Vice President

The MPWV¹ Meat Goat Producers Association held its fall meeting on September 30, 2005. An educational program was presented at 10:00 a.m. The program topic was on Goat Reproduction and Artificial Insemination. Willie Lantz presented a PowerPoint presentation on Goat Reproductive Anatomy and Hormone Control of Breeding. Cheryl Harris, Ivy Patch Goat Farm in Jefferson, Maryland, pre-

sented a program on artificial insemination. After the educational program, the group enjoyed barbecued goat for lunch.

After lunch the MPWV held its Annual Membership Meeting, with president Dick Dixon presiding. A few highlights of the meeting were a discussion of the 2005 National East Region USBGA² Show that was held in McHenry in June. The show went well with over 250 goats being shown. The group decided to apply to the USBGA to again hold the East Regional National Show at McHenry on June 3, 2006. Shirley Christner will be the show manager. The group decided to expand and try to attract more vendors to this year's show. Kris DeWitt was put in charge of vendors for the show. The group also set the date of March 25th for the Spring Goat Conference and Meeting. The final item of business was the election of officers. A moment of silence was held in memory of Cecil Ferguson who was serving as the Treasurer and was a founding member of the MPWV. The new officers for 2005-2006 are President, Brenda Maresh, 1st Vice President – Willie Lantz, 2nd Vice President – Mike Lucas, Secretary – Barbara Ferguson, and Treasurer – Pam Adams. If anyone has an interest in joining the MPWV, applications are available on the web at www.meatgoat.biz.

¹MPWV - Maryland-Pennsylvania-West Virginia

²USBGA - United States Boer Goat Association

VA-NC Shepherd's Symposium

The annual Virginia-North Carolina Shepherd's Symposium will be held on Friday and Saturday, January 6 and 7, 2006, at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center in Blacksburg, Virginia. The program will begin at 1 p.m. on Friday and conclude at 12 noon on Saturday. To see topics and speakers, go to the web at www.ext.vt.edu, then click on news, livestock update, 2005 December, and Virginia-North Carolina Shepherd's Symposium.

Following the symposium, a commercial bred ewe lamb sale will be held. Registration deadline for the symposium is December 22. For more information, contact Dr. Scott Greiner at (540) 231-9163 or sgreiner@vt.edu.

Pasture, Hay, and Grazing Conferences

Three hay and pasture conferences will be held in Maryland and Delaware January 18-20, 2006. These conferences will address key management topics for increased yield and quality of hay, silage, and pasture. In addition to Maryland and Delaware extension University and NRCS personnel sharing their hay and pasture expertise, outstanding industry and university forage experts from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin will provide information on the latest tools and practices for improved hay, silage, and pasture production.

These conferences will begin in Garrett County (Tri-State) on January 18, move to Southern Maryland on January 19, and conclude on January 20 in Delaware. For information about the conference in Garrett County, contact Willie Lantz at (301) 334-6969 or wlantz@umd.edu. For information about the Southern Maryland conference, contact Ben Beale at (301) 475-4484. For information about the Delaware conference, contact Richard Taylor at (302) 831-1383 or rtaylor@udel.edu.

Central Maryland

The Central Maryland Grazing Conference will be held on January 24th at the Carroll County Agricultural Center in Westminster, MD. Featured speaker will be Dr. Ed Rayburn, Extension Forage Agronomist at West Virginia University. A wide range of topics will be covered by Dr. Rayburn, University of Maryland educators, and a panel of producers. For further information on this conference, contact Bryan Butler at (410) 386-2760, (888) 326-9645, or bbutlers@umd.edu.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Grazing and Hay & Silage Conference will be held on February 22 & 23 at the Holiday Inn in Grantville, PA. The conference, while providing information to all forage growers, will focus on grazing/pastures on Wednesday (Feb. 22) and then on Thursday emphasize hay & silage production and storage. Both days feature numerous presentations and discussions focusing on forage management. This conference is being co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council and the Grazing Research and Educa-

tion Center.

For more information, contact Richard Hann at (717) 832-0127.

National Animal ID System and the National Scrapie Program: Words of Clarification

By Marilyn Bassford, MDA
and Dr. Diane Sutton, USDA/APHIS/VS

Recently, a mailing of 8,200 letters was sent from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) that went to all known equine and livestock producers across the State of Maryland to invite them to register their livestock premises in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). A livestock premises can be anything from a family residence with just a few poultry, goats, sheep, or horses, to an integrated livestock production unit. Anywhere horses, poultry, or other livestock are housed will need a premises identification number.

The NAIS program will give us the capability to traceback an animal who had direct contact with a foreign animal disease or a domestic disease of concern to their birth herd and other facilities where they have resided within 48 hours after discovery.

All are welcome to register their premises. Size does not matter. The program will register producers with one or more farm-type animals on their property. At this time, the NAIS program is voluntary, but will most likely become mandatory in 2007.

In 2001, sheep and goat producers were required to officially identify their sheep and goats when they moved in interstate commerce. Maryland is in the process of requiring official identification of sheep and goats when they change ownership. Putting this rule into place will allow Maryland to meet federal consistent state requirements, thus allowing Maryland sheep and goats to continue to move interstate with minimal requirements. To acquire official ID, sheep and goat producers must register with USDA and get the flock identification number that appears on most official sheep and goat tags. The flock ID number is also known as the scrapie premises identification number. Producers may register

and request free official sheep and goat tags from USDA by calling 1-800-USDA-TAG.

It is unfortunate that both NAIS and the scrapie program used the same term “premises identification number (PIN)” in their registration processes. However, there is good news. The Scrapie Program is integrating with NAIS and will use the NAIS PIN to describe the physical location of animals and the scrapie flock ID to describe a group of animals that is managed as a unit. All new participants (to the Scrapie program) will be asked to register with the NAIS program when they call to register for the scrapie program so that the NAIS PIN can be used as the premises number to describe the flocks location in the scrapie program database.

If you have a scrapie flock number we ask that you register with the NAIS program and provide your scrapie flock ID so that USDA can update your scrapie program registration to include the NAIS number. You will need to do this if you wish to purchase the new RFID³ tags and to receive any official tags once NAIS becomes mandatory. The scrapie flock ID will continue to appear on tags.

There is another option for Maryland sheep and goat owners who have registered with the scrapie program to be automatically registered with NAIS. To do this we will need to hear from producer associations letting us know that this is what is desired. If we do this and you have other species besides sheep and goats, you will need to update the NAIS registration to include them.

You can obtain a NAIS registration form from the Maryland Department of Agriculture Animal Health/NAIS web page www.mda.state.md.us/animal_health/nais. Please remember to indicate your scrapie flock ID on the form so that we can have your scrapie registration updated. For questions, please contact Marilyn Bassford at (410) 742-6023 or nais@mda.state.md.us.

³Radio Frequency IDentification

MD-DE Shearing Schools

The Annual MD-DE Beginning Sheep Shearing School will be held Friday and Saturday, March 17 and 18, 9:30 a.m. to

3:30 p.m. at the Thompson Farm in Westminster, MD. An Advanced Sheep Shearing School will be held at the same location on Saturday, April 1. The beginning school is open to anyone who wants to learn to shear sheep and has the strength and willingness to do so. The minimum age is 16. The advanced school is for persons who have attended previous schools and have sheared over 150 sheep. Participation is limited to the first 25 people who register (beginning school); 10 for advanced school.

The registration fee payable to Carroll County Extension Advisory Council (CCEAC) is \$50 per person for the beginning school (registration deadline March 11) and \$25 per person for the advanced school (registration deadline March 25). It should be mailed to David Greene, 2014 White Hall Road, White Hall, MD 21161-9712, tel. (410) 329-6241, e-mail: greelamb@bcpl.net.

The New Zealand method of shearing will be taught at both shearing schools. The instructors will be retired Carroll County Extension Agent David Greene and Delaware State University Animal Science Professor Dr. Richard Barczewski.

What you should know about “Bird Flu” or Avian Influenza

Q: *What is “bird flu” or Avian Influenza (AI)?*

A: Bird Flu is the common name for Avian Influenza (AI), an infectious disease of birds caused by type A influenza viruses. Symptoms in birds range from mild illness to epidemics of highly contagious, rapidly fatal disease. Contact of domestic flocks with wild, migratory ducks and geese (which often carry AI virus) can cause outbreaks of the disease. Live bird markets are also believed to have a role in AI outbreaks in commercial poultry flocks.



Q: *How does AI or “bird flu” affect humans?*

A: Avian influenza viruses normally only infect birds and pigs. The H7 strain, that infected chickens at two farms in Delaware in 2004, is not known to infect humans. The first documented infection of humans occurred in Hong

Kong in 1997, when the H5N1 strain caused severe respiratory disease in 18 humans (6 died). Extensive investigation of that outbreak found that close contact with live infected poultry was the source of human infection. Genetic studies determined that the virus had jumped directly from birds to humans. The spread of infection in birds increases the possibility for infection of humans. There is concern that as more humans become infected, the risk increases that persons infected with both avian and human influenza strains could become "mixing vessels" for the viruses, resulting in a new, dangerous strain of influenza virus that could spread easily from person to person.

Q: *What do I need to know to protect my family?*

A: Because of the possibility that some types of bird flu virus can jump from birds to humans, it is best to avoid visiting places like backyard poultry flocks and live bird markets. Flu shots (vaccinations) can reduce the likelihood of humans becoming infected with both avian and human influenza strains, reducing the risk of the development of a new, dangerous human flu.

Q: *What is being done to protect the general public against "bird flu"?*

A: Quarantine and destruction of infected or potentially exposed poultry flocks are standard control measures aimed at preventing spread to other farms and establishment of the virus in the local poultry population. Avian influenza viruses are highly contagious and are readily carried by contaminated equipment, vehicles, feed, cages, or clothing. Strict biosecurity and sanitary measures on farms are essential.

Source: Tip Sheet #TP2. Center for Agrosecurity and Emergency Management, University of Maryland.

Focus on Research

Pasture and Progeny Testing in Western Maryland

Plans are underway to establish a pasture and progeny testing program for sheep and goats at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC) in Keedysville in 2006. Producers would consign

up to five animals, preferably from the same sire, to the test. The test would alternate between sheep and goats. In 2006, goats will be tested. The test will probably start in early June to enable kids born as late as March to be included in the test. Buck and wether kids will be eligible.

The purpose of the test will be to determine performance (average daily gain) on pasture (with minimal supplementation) and measure differences in parasite resistance, as measured by fecal egg counts, and resilience (tolerance), as measured by FAMACHA© eye scores.

The animals will be handled every two weeks to determine FAMACHA© (eye anemia) scores and the need for deworming individual animals. In 2005, the FAMACHA© system was very effective in controlling losses from internal parasitism in grazing lambs. The only death loss that occurred was due to the ineffectiveness of Ivermectin® as a dewormer in these lambs. In addition to FAMACHA©, the animals will be examined for other signs of parasitism (scouring, body condition, and bottle jaw) to determine the need for deworming. Fecal egg counts will not be used to make deworming decisions, however, fecal samples will be collected every four weeks to determine genetic differences in parasite resistance. The animals on test will be weighed every four weeks to determine average daily gain.

Goats or lambs will be rotationally grazed on 10 acres of grass pasture, consisting mostly of orchard grass and tall fescue. The will be rotated onto paddocks of chicory and birdsfoot trefoil as a parasite control mechanism. These forage species have been shown to have an "anthelmintic" effect. The 10 acre pasture is divided into five 2-acre paddocks. There is a central laneway in the pasture where the animals have access to shelter. The handling system is also contained within the central lane way. Minimal supplementation may be provided as a means of parasite control and animal management. Protein supplementation has been shown to reduce fecal egg counts in grazing lambs. At the end of the test, the animals would be returned to their farm of origin or be marketed for meat. There would be a registration fee (as of yet, undetermined) to consign an animal to the test. The registration fee will cover the cost of operating the test (labor, supplementation, fecal egg tests, etc.).

Details about the pasture test will be included in the next newsletter. Some of the details have yet to be determined. For general information, contact Susan at (301) 432-2767 x343 or sschoen@umd.edu.

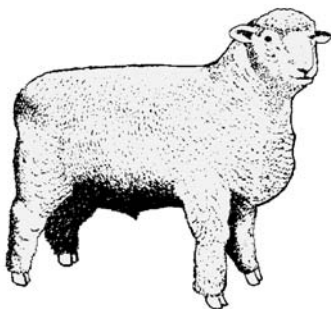
2006 West Virginia Ram Evaluation Program

In 2006, a West Virginia Central Ram Evaluation Program will be conducted with rams scheduled to be delivered to the testing facility in Wardensville on April 24, 2006. The test will be open to any breed of commercial or purebred ram. Both West Virginia and out-of-state breeders may consign rams to the test. Producers will be able to test rams for home use or to be consigned to an annual performance-tested ram.

The West Virginia Ram Evaluation program will be different from other sire testing programs as it will utilize the "GrowSafe 4000E" system, which more accurately measures feed efficiency than traditional methods of measurement. In addition to the rate-of-gain and feed efficiency data that will be collected, carcass data will also be collected using ultrasound.

The GrowSafe system utilizes a series of feeding stations that only one animal can use at a time. Each ram will be tagged with a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag, which will determine when the ram eats and how much it consumes. While feed efficiency is usually expressed as how much feed an animal eats compared to how much it grows, the GrowSafe system will determine Residual Feed Intake (RFI), the difference between expected intake vs. actual intake. RFI provides a more accurate comparison among animals than raw feed efficiency data by taking into account animal differences in physiological age and mature size.

In 2005, the GrowSafe system was tested using 37 commercial rams from WVU. Approximately half of the rams were Katahdin crossbred lambs while the other half were Suffolk or Suffolk/Dorset crosses. A 60-day test was



conducted, because it is the typical length of feeding between weaning and market. Average daily gain ranged from 0.16 to 1.05 pounds per day, with a group average of 0.64 lbs/day. Feed efficiency, expressed as RFI, ranged from 52.77 to (-) 49.37. The ram with the RFI value of -49.37 was more efficient and consumed 49.37 lbs. less feed than was expected, while the least efficient ram consumed 52.77 lbs. more feed than was expected. Thus, the difference between the most and least efficient rams was 100 lbs. of feed (a cost of \$8-\$12). Since feed efficiency is a moderate to highly heritable trait, genetic differences in RFI can be used to select more efficient rams that will pass this trait onto their offspring.

Plans are already under progress to conduct a Meat Goat Feed Test at Wardensville. If it is as successful as the ram feed test, the ram evaluation program will be expanded into a West Virginia Small Ruminant Evaluation Program that would include meat goats.

For more information about the WV Ram Evaluation Program, contact the WV Sheep Management Project Office at (304) 358-3660 or Brad Smith at the WVU Grant County Extension Office at (304) 257-4688 or bsmith@mail.wvu.edu.

Source: West Virginia University *News Ewe Can Use*, Fall 2005.

Kiko vs. Boer Goats Fed in a Feedlot: Some Observational Data

by Dr. Niki Whitley
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

In doing our probiotics studies in goats, two of the three studies we conducted used Boer or Kiko sired Boer-crossbred kids. Although there was only one sire per breed with a different Boer sire the first year and the same Kiko sire both years, the following information is observational data about their performance in a feedlot situation. Boer-sired kids were 75% Boer, 25% Spanish/Myotonic; Kiko-sired kids were 50% Kiko, 50% Boer. The Kiko buck was from Kyle Jonak in Keedysville, MD; Boer bucks came from Texas and Georgia.

In Year 1, we had 8 Kiko-sired wethers and 16 Boer-sired wethers fed a commercially

available pelleted diet (15% Meat Goat Feed, Southern States) for 56 days. Kiko-sired kids gained 0.36 lb/day while Boer-sired kids gained 0.33 lb/day.

In Year 2, we fed the same diet and had 12 Boer-sired and 12 Kiko-sired wethers. Kiko-sired kids again gained a bit faster than the Boer-sired kids. Kiko-sired kids gained 0.28 lb/day while Boer-sired kids gained 0.20 lb/day during the 56-day feeding period.

We slaughtered all of the wethers in Year 2 and collected some carcass data. For these animals, Kiko-sired kids finished faster, having more fat over the loin (at the 12th/13th rib) at the same age, with 0.08 inches for Kiko-sired wethers compared to 0.06 inches for Boer-sired wethers. Kiko-sired kids also had a larger loin eye area (between the 12th/13th rib) than Boer-sired kids (1.98 square inches for Kiko-sired kids vs 1.79 square inches for Boer-sired kids).

Unfortunately, it seems that none of the animals gained weight very fast. Perhaps if we fed a different diet or started the animals at a younger age, they would have higher average daily gains. If the animals were bucks instead of wethers, they would also grow faster.

In *Ranch and Rural Living Magazine* (October 2005, page 21), San Angelo State University reported that bucks on their performance test gained an average of 0.50 lb/day during the 90-day test period, which is much higher than for our wethers. However, the average rib eye area for the San Angelo State University buck test was 1.90 square inches (as measured by ultrasound), and our average was 1.89 square inches, so our kids competed just fine in the muscling area.

Susan Schoenian is hoping to have a pasture-based progeny performance test at WMREC next year. Several Kiko breeders have expressed interest in putting animals in the test. If we also get some Boer goats for the test, perhaps we can get some information (Kiko compared to Boer goats raised mostly on pasture.



Management Tips

Dealing with Difficult Births

by Susan Schoenian
Area Agent, Sheep and Goat Specialist

A recent New Zealand study showed that about half of all newborn lamb deaths are attributable to dystocia, i.e. difficulties at birth. The research showed that dystocia accounted for 60% of deaths among single lambs, 47% amongst twins, and 48% amongst triplets. The study also dispelled several long-held myths, among them the belief that the heavier the lamb's birth weight the higher the survival rate and that a substantial amount of lambs suffocate due to placenta remaining over a lamb's nose. In the study, lamb deaths from placenta remaining over the lamb's nose accounted for less than 1%.

Losses due to dystocia can be reduced by timely visits to the lambing and kidding area and timely assistance to ewes and does.

There can be many causes of dystocia in sheep and goats.

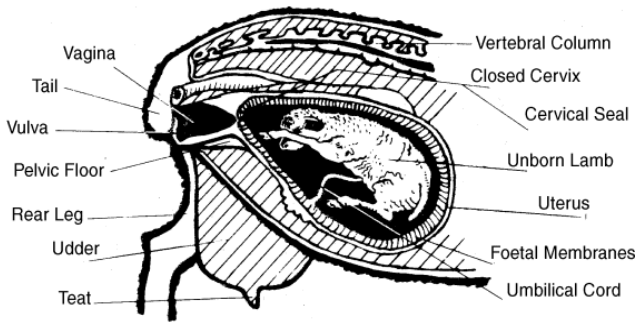
1. Malpresentation
2. Disproportionate size of fetus and dam
3. Failure of cervix to dilate (ringwomb)
4. Disease (e.g. abortion)
5. Prolapses
6. Birth defect

One of the most difficult aspects of shepherding is knowing when and how to assist a ewe/doe during parturition and when to call for help. It is generally recommended that if a ewe/doe has been straining for over an hour and has nothing to show for it, it is usually time to lend a hand.

Before entering a ewe/doe, be sure to take off your watch, rings, and other jewelry. Wash your hands in warm, soapy water. Wash the backside of the ewe/doe. It is a good idea to use gloves for the examination. Coat your hand up to your elbow with a non-irritating lubricant. The liberal use of a lubricant cannot be overemphasized.

You should not keep pulling your hand in and out of the ewe/doe and should not change hands without washing again. Getting the

Full Term Ewe with Lamb in Normal Presentation



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ewe/doe to stand up or elevating her hindquarters will allow more room for repositioning and result in less vigorous straining. If you have worked for a half hour with no progress, it is a good idea to call a veterinarian.

Normal birth. A normal presentation is when the two front feet appear with the head resting between them. Assistance is not usually required unless the fetus is oversized. A backwards (hind legs first) delivery is also a normal presentation and is common among twin and triplet lambs/kids. You should never attempt to turn a lamb/kid around.

Breech. A "true" breech birth is when the lamb/kid is positioned backwards, with the hind legs tucked under and only the tail is near the opening. When a ewe/doe has been straining for a long time and has nothing to show for it (very little discharge and a small water bag),



Breech

© Ontario

a breech delivery could be the problem. To deliver a breech baby, you have to bring the rear legs forward by cupping the fetlocks in your palm. Once the rear legs are forward, the lamb needs to be delivered quickly because once the umbilical cord breaks, the lamb/kid will begin breathing and could

drown in its own fluids.

Oversized fetus. Many lambing and kidding difficulties are due to the disproportionate size of the fetus and ewe/doe. This can be the result of a large lamb/kid or a small pelvic opening. Either the head or the shoulders of the baby may be too wide to be delivered by the ewe or doe on her own. Mild soap around the head and in the birth canal may help to deliver

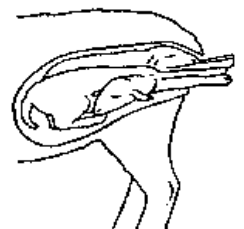
a baby whose head is caught in the skin and tissue of the vagina and vulva. Gradually, try to force the skin of the vulva over the baby's eyebrows. If the baby is stuck at the shoulders, sometimes you can deliver it by pulling on one leg, then the other, and rotating the baby as you pull it out.

Leg(s) back. If one or more front legs is back, you need to cup the hooves of the leg(s) and bring the leg forward. It is possible to pull a small baby out, with one leg back. If you are not able to bring the front leg(s) forward, you will need to push the fetus back far enough to allow the legs to be drawn forward. You can slip an OB rope around the leg(s) to make sure you don't "lose" it.

Swollen head. If the head is outside of the uterus for a very long time, it will become very swollen. The tongue may be sticking out. While the lamb/kid may look cold and dead, it can survive for a long time in this position. However, the head will need to be pushed back into the uterus for delivery. If it is covered with straw and manure, make sure you clean it first. Use plenty of lubricant. If the lamb/kid is dead, it may be easier to cut off the head.

Head back. If the baby's head is back, you will need to push it back into the uterus in order to turn the head around. Attach an OB rope to each leg to make sure you don't lose them. You should never pull a lamb/kid by the jaw. A lamb/kid with a broken jaw will not be able to nurse and will most likely die. It is possible to insert a finger into the eye socket for leverage without causing damage to the lamb/kid.

Tangled twins. Sometimes, lambs/kids are presented with the legs intertwined. To correct these situations, first you need to determine which legs belong to which babies. Sometimes, one lamb will be presented normal and the other will be coming backwards. In this case, you need to determine not only which legs belong to which baby, but whether you are feeling front legs or back legs. It may be necessary to push one lamb/kid back into the birth canal to allow easy delivery of another.



Twins trying to be born at the same time

© Ontario

Ringwomb. One of the most difficult problems to deal with is failure of the cervix to

dilate (ringwomb). While the exact cause is unknown, a selenium deficiency is believed to be a contributing factor. Ringwomb is most commonly encountered in ewe lambs. While hormonal injections may result in further dilation of the cervix and manual manipulation of the cervix is also possible, a c-section is often the only recourse to save the lamb(s) and ewe.

Dead or deformed. If dead or deformed lambs cannot be extracted from the ewe/doe in a timely fashion, veterinary assistance should be sought. Lambs/kids that have been dead for a long period of time often need to be removed in pieces.

Post-Parturition. After delivering a lamb/kid, place it in front of the ewe/doe. If she is too weak or exhausted to care for her baby, be sure to clean the mucous and amniotic bag from the face and nose of the lamb/kid. Lambs/kids should nurse within at least one hour of birth, preferably 30 minutes.

After all assisted deliveries, you need to check to make sure there are no other babies remaining in the uterus. You should give the assisted ewe/doe an injection of an antibiotic.

If your flock or herd experiences excessive birthing problems, you need to consider breeding and nutrition problems. Oversized lambs and kids can be the result of overfeeding during late gestation. Fat females are more prone to dystocia. Ewe lambs and doe kids should not be bred until they reach 60-70 percent of the expected mature weight. Pregnant and lactating ewe lambs and doe kids should be maintained and fed separately from mature females.

There are no hard and fast rules with regards to dystocia. Experience is the best teacher. At the same time, it is important to remember that lambing and kidding has been taking place for thousand of years and most ewe and does will deliver without any trouble.

Good luck lambing and kidding!

4-H Sheep and Wool Skillathon

The Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival will host a 4-H Sheep and Wool Skillathon in 2006. The Skillathon will be held 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Sunday, May 7, in the new rabbit building at the Howard County Fairgrounds.

A skillathon consists of various learning

stations where participants are asked to complete a task at each station. The stations may include identification exercises such as identifying breeds, feeds, cuts of meat, wool, or hay samples. Other potential activities could include judging a class of sheep, fleeces, meat, or hay and a keep-cull exercise. A written exam is usually part of the skillathon.

The skillathon at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival will be open to all youth (ages 18 and under). Youth may compete as individuals or teams. Pre-registration will be required. Awards will be given.

For more information, contact Susan at (301) 432-2767 x343 or sschoen@umd.edu.

Featured Web Site

UM Animal and Avian Sciences Department

The Animal Science Department at the University of Maryland offers programs related to agricultural and other domestic animal species, wildlife, and zoo animals. The department is committed to the development and application of new knowledge in biology for the humane use of animals for food production, recreation, and conservation. Dr. Richard Erdman serves as the department chair. The department's web site includes sections on academics, research, and Extension.

<http://ansc.umd.edu>

Calendar of Events

January 6-7

Virginia-North Carolina Shepherd's Symposium (followed by commercial ewe lamb sale)
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Info: Scott Greiner at (540) 231-6141 or sgreiner@vt.edu

January 13-14

Future Harvest-CASA Farming for Profit and Stewardship Conference, Hagerstown, MD
Info: (410) 549-7878 or fhcasa@verizon.net



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Susan Schoenian
Area Agent, Sheep and Goat Specialist

January 24

Central Maryland Pasture Conference
Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, MD
Info: Bryan Butler at (410) 386-2760 or
bbutlers@umd.edu

January 26-28

American Sheep Industry Association/National
Lamb Feeders Association Annual Convention
Phoenix Marriott, Phoenix, Arizona
Info: Judy Malone at (303) 771-3500 x35 or
judym@sheepusa.org

March 17-18, April 1

Beginning and Advanced Shearing Schools
Westminster, Maryland
Info: David Greene at (410) 329-6241

March 25

Spring Meat Goat Conference
Garrett College, McHenry, MD.
Info: Willie Lantz at (301) 334-6960 or
wlantz@umd.edu

May 6-7

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival
Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD
Info: www.sheepandwool.org