

FLUSHING *your girls*

Flushing is the practice of providing extra nutrition (feed; mostly energy) to the ewe/doe prior to and during the early part of the breeding season. Nutrition has long been linked to reproductive performance in livestock.



Flushing improves lambing/kidding percentages primarily by increasing the number of eggs (ova) that the female releases (ovulates) from her ovaries, as it is the female that (primarily) determines the number of offspring in a litter. There is also evidence that flushing may improve conception rates and early embryo survival.

Flushing is usually accomplished by feeding a better-quality harvested forage (by moving ewes/does to a lush pasture) or by supplementing the forage diet with grain (usually corn, barley, etc.).

Grain feeding is most common. The amount of supplemental feed is varied by the size (weight) of the female and the quantity and quality of the forage in the diet. You should begin flushing 2 to 3 weeks before the onset of the breeding season and continue for 2 to 4 weeks into it.



or



Responses to flushing can be variable. Many factors influence the response. Flushing is not always cost-effective. It is most effective in females that have not recovered sufficiently from their last lactation. Ewes/does with sub-optimal body condition scores (2 to 2.5) will respond more to flushing than those already in good condition (3 or better), who may not respond at all. Flushing is usually more advantageous during the early or late part of the breeding season. It is most beneficial to females on an accelerated breeding system. Prolific breeds don't usually respond much to flushing.