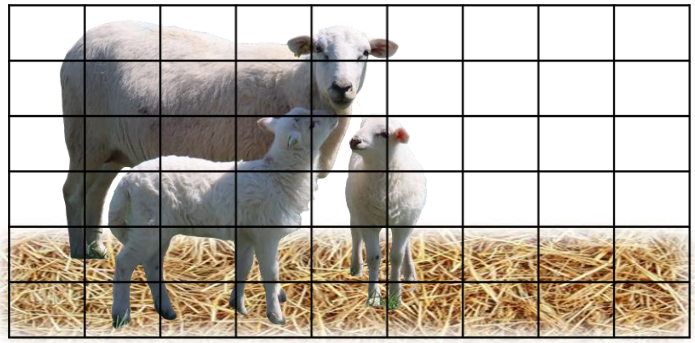
Jugging sheep and goats

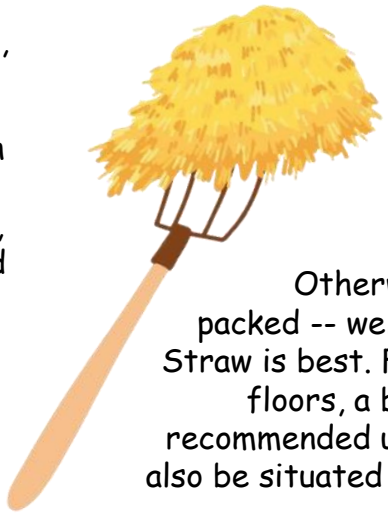
A jug is a small pen, a place to put a ewe/doe with her offspring for a few days. Jugs help with bonding and prevent mismothering. Jugging is not required but is recommended when lambing and kidding occurs in a barn or other confined area.



While some producers put ewes/does into the jugs before birthing, it is generally recommended that they be put in the jugs after birthing. Having ewes/does and lambs/kids in jugs makes it easier to monitor them and detect problems (early). Lambs/kids are easier to process – weighing, ear-tagging, castrating, docking.

A good rule of thumb is to keep females with singles in the jug for 24-36 hours, females with twins, 2 days, and females with triplets, 3 days. Time spent in the jug will also depend upon the number of jugs available and the rate at which females are birthing. A good rule of thumb is to have 1 jug per 7-10 females, but more will be needed if birthing is more closely spaced. Confined too long to the jugs isn't ideal, as it may increase risk of diarrhea and/or pneumonia in lambs/kids.

When lambing/kidding occurs on pasture, dams and offspring are usually not jugged, unless there is a problem. Sometimes, first-timers are put in jugs, while mature females birth on pasture or range.



Jugs need to have good ventilation but be free from drafts. They need to be kept extra clean. When feasible, jugs should be cleaned between ewes/does Otherwise, they should be deep packed -- well-bedded, and dry on top. Straw is best. For facilities with cement floors, a base of lime or sawdust is recommended under the straw. Jugs can also be situated on wooden or metal slats.

The size of the jugs depends upon the size of the female. 4 ft. by 4 ft. is the smallest. 5 ft. x 5 ft. is most common. Larger jugs may be required for larger females and multiple births. With small jugs, there is a greater chance the ewe/doe will lay on her offspring.

Jugs can be temporary and movable, made with 4-to-8-foot panels. Or they can be permanently set up in a barn or area of the barn. The panels can be open or solid, wood, steel, or wire. They need to be escape-proof.

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