

# Increase your lamb/kid crop

Percent lamb or kid crop is the number of lambs/kids sold per female exposed for breeding (expressed as a percentage). It is one of the primary factors affecting profitability of sheep and goat enterprises. Many factors influence it.

## Ways to increase lamb/kid crop

- Accelerate breeding
- Breed ewe lambs and doelings
- Cull underperforming females
- Don't overlook ram/buck fertility
- Manage for seasonal changes
- Match reproduction to management
- Optimal nutrition
- Prevent disease
- Reduce lamb/kid loss
- Select for prolific genetics
- Use crossbreeding



Genetics has a big impact on percent lamb/kid crop. Crossbreeding improves survivability. Some breeds are naturally more prolific. Selection for multiple births is one of the most effective strategies for improving reproductive rate. Estimated breeding values (EBVs) can assist in selection decisions.



Reducing the birthing interval to less than 12 months will improve reproductive efficiency. Lambing/kidding every 8 months is most common. Another way to increase reproductive efficiency is to breed ewe lambs and doelings.



Goats and especially sheep are seasonal breeders. Pregnancy and ovulation rates are reduced in females that are bred outside the normal breeding season. Ovulation rates usually, peak during October and November.



Most lamb/kid deaths occur in the first 10 days. These deaths need to be kept below 10%. Predators and parasites are two of the biggest killers of lambs/kids. Management practices which minimize these losses need to be implemented.

Nutrition has a very large impact on reproduction in sheep/goats. Ewes/does in better body condition (3+) will ovulate more eggs. Flushing can improve the reproductive rate of ewes/does in sub-optimal body condition.

