

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING

In sheep/goats, gestation (or pregnancy) lasts for 142 to 152 days and averages ~147 days (21 weeks or ~5 months). Gestation length can be affected by several factors including breed, maternal age, nutrition, litter size, and fetal sex. Gestation is typically divided into three parts (trimesters).

EWE/DOE		WEEK	FETUS(ES)	
Fertilization occurs in the oviduct		0	Conception – embryo formed	
Adequate nutrition is needed to support minimal fetal growth and embryo survival	Maternal recognition of pregnancy between day 10-21. CL maintained.	1	Embryo begins to divide as it travels down the oviduct It (morula stage) enters the uterus on day 4 or 5.	
		2	Blastocyst grows and elongates Blastocyst attaches to uterine wall	
	Placenta replaces CL as source of progesterone in ewes (~day 50)	3		
		4	Embryo is extremely small. Most embryonic loss occurs before day 30	
		5	Heartbeat detectable Sexual differentiation (day 30-90)	
		6	Heart and organ definition Head visible	
		7	First signs of hooves (week 6-8)	
Adequate nutrition is needed to support placenta growth and normal development of organs and tissues of fetuses	Hormonal trigger from the placenta to stimulate lactating cells in udder, leading to the start of colostrum development	8	Beginning of hair follicle development	
		9	Primordial follicles begin forming around day 65-70	
		10		
		11		
		12	Development of secondary wool follicles, day 85-135	
		13		
		14		
Female has reduced rumen capacity Additional nutritional support is needed to meet high demands of fetuses	Majority of mammary growth and colostrum production	15	Brown fat begins accumulating	
		16	Structurally distinct hooves (day 90-120) Rapid growth of fetuses, ~70% of growth	
		17		
		18		
		19	Eyes open ~day 120 Lungs sufficiently developed ~day 125-130	
		20	Fetal cortisol initiates parturition	
		21		

