Guide to rearing your Lamb

Selection of the Lamb

Lambs are usually found via local contacts. Check at the school office for anyone that may have notified the school of availability of lambs.

The lamb should be chosen no earlier than three days after birth, (but preferably five days after birth) as this allows the lamb to have its mother’s colostrum in the first twelve hours of life, giving it protection against diseases and it’s high in both vitamins and minerals.

On occasion lambs have been rejected by their mother, orphaned or are one of triplets, in which case one is removed from the mother as she is not able to adequately feed three of them. In these cases, the lamb may not have received colostrum.

The healthy lamb should have a dry small navel, lively movements, and clear bright eyes.

Your lamb will need to have its tail docked (a rubber ring placed around the tail). This can be done from a week old, the sooner the better, before the tail gets too big. Your lamb can receive pain relief from the vet at this time.

If a ram (male) is chosen, he should be wethered with a rubber ring from one week old, otherwise he will possibly become aggressive as he reaches maturity. Ensure both testicles are down before releasing the ring.

Basic Rearing Needs

- Two x 10kg bags of milk powder
- Two x lamb teats (it pays to have a spare in case they get chewed) or a complete bottle and teat + spare teat
- Lamb or multi-feed pellets
- Collar and lead
- Drench
- Vaccine
- Cover (optional)

Feeding

Lamb milk powders are specially formulated to meet the needs of your lamb. Lamb teats that can screw onto a coke or water bottle or complete lamb feeding bottles are available from Franklin Vets.

Mixing and feeding instructions are clearly written on the bag. Avoid sudden changes in the type (brand), quantity or temperature of milk or milk powder.
For best results milk feed your lamb until Ag day. When feeding your lamb in the first five days, watch that its tummy doesn’t get over distended. As a guide, feed 15% of body weight daily split into five small feeds. For example, a 3kg lamb needs 450mls per day fed at 90ml per feed. Thoroughly clean bottles and teats after each feed.

Supplement the milk with a lamb or multi-feed pellet and if your lamb is tethered keep moving it regularly so that it has access to fresh grass. Solid food should be offered from one week old.

**Scours - prevention and treatment**

Did you know that over 80% of diarrhoea cases in bottle fed lambs and kids are due to inappropriate feeding? Young animals can go downhill very quickly, so if you’re little one seems “off” or has lost his appetite, then he needs to see a vet. However, if he is bright, alert and happy, with a good appetite but loose stools, here are some simple things you can check for first, to rule out dietary scours. These include temperature, speed of flow, mixing and hygiene. For more information read our Addressing Dietary Scours flyer located on our website.

**Vaccination and Drenching**

If your lamb has had adequate colostrum in the first 12hrs, from a mother that has had a vaccine within 1 month of lambing, it will have 3 months protection. It will then require a Clostridial vaccine at weaning (or 3 months), a booster shot 1 month later and once a year, thereafter.

If the mother is not vaccinated, the lamb will need a Clostridial vaccine at 2 week of age and a booster at 6 weeks. If your lamb is unvaccinated at the time of docking, it should also receive a Pulpy Kidney/Anti-tetanus shot.

The 6-in-1 vaccine prevents pulpy kidney disease, tetanus, black disease, malignant oedema and blackleg. If your lamb is at high risk of abomasal bloat we recommend Covexin 10 vaccine from 2 weeks old. See the Franklin Vets website for more information on abomasal bloat.

Drench at about 4 - 6 weeks old and again at 10 weeks.

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**Poisonous Plants**

Lambs have a love of garden plants however; they are unfortunately not able to determine which ones are poisonous. Many plants that are potentially poisonous or have poisonous parts are found in our gardens at home. Here are some examples...

- Box (Buxus) and its close relations such as the Allegheny spurge used for ground cover.
- Many plants in the forget-me-not family which have harsh bristly leaves.
- Members of the Erica or rhododendron family eg. calico bush and its close relations.
- Bracken or rarauhe
- Camelia, Daphne, Azalea
- Daffodils, Snowflakes & Snowdrops
- Delphinium ferns
- Hyacinths
- Cress
- Red maple
- Oak
- Oleander
- Arums
- Ivy
- Five finger
- Swan plant
- Heathers
- Rhododendrons
- Lilies
- Poppies
- Clematis
- Cyclamen
- Oleander
- Poinsettia
- Hemlock
- Titoki
- Fox-gloves and snapdragons
- Rhubarb leaves.
- Many species in the large legume or pea family and the rose, peach and apple family are poisonous to some extent.
Housing Requirements
A dry, draught free house or kennel is required. Lamb covers are available from your local farm outlet.

Sudden changes in temperature when it is small can cause pneumonia and it will grow better if it is not using energy to keep warm.

Daily Care Requirements
• Regular feeding.
• Wash its face to remove any milk residue.
• Walk it on a lead and spend time playing with it.
• Practice calling your lamb before each feed.

Points to Remember
• Lambs should NOT be brushed – this is an instant disqualification.
• Hooves should be trimmed and clean.
• Trim any dags to tidy up around the lamb’s rear end.
• Make sure your pet’s face and ears are clean.

Judging
Each school has slightly different judging criteria, but generally ribbons are presented in three age groups –
Junior, Intermediate and Senior and an overall winner in the following categories:
• Rearing – general appearance and condition and size (with the lambs age taken into consideration).
• Calling – the lamb needs to come directly to you when called from a minimum distance of 4-5 metres (this distance will vary depending on the judge) and the child must be able to hook its lead back on.
• Leading – the lamb needs to walk through the course without dragging or pushing. The lead should be held in the right hand 20-35cm from the lamb and the slack of the rope held in the left hand.
• Best Pet – bond between the lamb and the child. Observed throughout the day.

You should know the breed, age and general feeding requirements (how many times a day it is being fed) of the lamb as some judges will ask.

Tips for Success
1. The child should always feed the lamb, mum or dad can assist younger children if needed. It is important to ensure the milk is mixed correctly.
2. Give your lamb a treat when leading and calling. Use the pellets or they often like raisins. Even a hug, pat and a few kind words are beneficial.
3. Spend lots of time with your lamb so you build a bond and it will come when called.
4. Set a course up at home and walk your lamb daily. Make sure you include a small fence post or piece of wood so the lamb gets used to stepping over it. They mustn’t touch the wood. Walk your lamb around your property, the more practice the better.
5. Don’t forget to take its food and water requirements with you on Ag day.

If you have any concerns about your kid’s health, please don’t hesitate to contact your local Franklin Vets Clinic. We are happy to give advice over the phone on whether the animal requires treatment.