

## Ross Mosteller

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### **Lambing and Kidding Reminders**

I had a conversation earlier this week with a local sheep producer, who was showing me a live link camera from his lambing barn on his phone. This got me thinking about how nice that would be calving heifers for me personally, but also served as a reminder that many lambs and kids are being born now. North Carolina State has an excellent publication that serves as the reference today, found on the web for more information at: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/lambing-and-kidding-cheat-sheet-for-beginning-small-ruminant-producers>

Survival of newborn lambs and kids is key to the economic viability of the operation. During the period surrounding lambing and kidding, understanding and identifying normal versus abnormal behavior and physiology and knowing when to assist are essential to newborn survival, a healthy start to life, and productive individuals in the future. One of the most important references should be your Veterinarian's contact information, as they should be your go-to in times of concern. Trusted, experienced, mentors are great contacts as well.

Facilities: Housing areas must be dry and well ventilated. Bedding should be kept fresh and replaced as needed to keep the environment dry and free of excessive manure buildup. Good ventilation is essential, but it is important to minimize unwanted drafts. Temperature should be monitored to prevent condensation and ensure an environment unfavorable to pathogen development. Excessive heat can be more detrimental than cooler environments.

Essential Equipment: It is important to be stocked with equipment BEFORE lambing and kidding season starts. Some of the basic items include: gloves, antimicrobial soap, halter, dry towels, heat lamp, OB lube, lamb/kid pullers (head and/or leg snares), thermometer, syringes and needles, prolapse retainer and harness, vitamin supplements, tube feeder, nursing bottle, stored colostrum, ear tagger and an Elastrator, to mention just a few.

Birthing Process: Lambs or kids are delivered front feet first with head between the front legs just above the knees. Within 30 minutes of water bag delivery, feet should appear. Following the feet, delivery should proceed without much delay. Allow ewe or doe to complete the lambing process in the location she has chosen. In the case of multiple births, do not disturb unless necessary until all lambs and kids are born. Moving her will delay the birthing process for subsequent lambs or kids.

Recognizing and Addressing Dystocia: Dystocia is a general term used to describe an abnormal or difficult birth. Common dystocia issues include: abnormally long birth time, head or shoulder lock, leg back, or breech deliveries. Fluids during delivery should be clear or have a slight yellow tint. A dark yellow or brown coloration indicates a stressful delivery. More than 30 minutes without progress means the ewe or doe likely needs assistance.

There is much more that can be discussed pre-birth, post-birth, processing newborns and early life care, but for today will refer interested individuals to the publication mentioned above. Educating or refreshing on these processes before the season starts can prove to be invaluable. Good luck to everyone lambing and kidding, here's to no more below zero windchills!

### **Power of Negotiation and Communication; Land Leasing Series**

One final reminder that registration for the four week land leasing series that we are hosting in Holton is due Friday, January 13 at: [www.AgManger.info/events](http://www.AgManger.info/events) This is a three state programming effort that will give participants information on how to successfully navigate leasing land. If you have interest, we encourage your participation! Questions can be directed to David Hallauer or myself, by contacting any of the Meadowlark Extension District offices.