

Tube feeding lambs

Tube feeding is not hard...really. Sometimes it is necessary. **It is not a bad idea to try it once or twice in a non-emergency situation...**

Measure the tube along the outside of the lamb with the tip located behind the front leg, where the stomach would be, and along the neck to the tip of the nose.

Note about how long this is and then just wet the tube with warm water and hold the lamb in your lap with it head facing your dominant hand and the lamb's head up cupping its lower jaw in you other hand, pointing the nose comfortably upwards. That position that closes the windpipe and makes it easier to slide the tube into the esophagus. Let the lamb swallow the tube if it is strong enough; if not, gently move the tube into the lamb's throat...if you are in the wrong pipe, the lamb may cough and struggle if it is not too weak. If you are not sure where you have placed the tube, place the end near your cheek, if air is coming out as the lamb breath, try again. Alternatively, hold the end under water to see if it bubbles with breathing – if it does, try again.

Place the syringe or turkey baster tube into the end of the tube. Let milk flow into the lamb via syringe or baster by gravity. Do not force it with a plunger or bulb in place. Remove the syringe or baster. Put your thumb over the end of the tube as you remove it in one smooth motion, which helps to keep milk from dribbling in to the windpipe.

Try it with just a little warm water on a healthy lamb. You will be more comfortable if you have to do it in an emergency in the middle of the night if you have tried it once. Lambs often get really warm after you feed them, a flush...like a hot flash (some of us may be able to relate to that too)...it is normal. If a lamb is too weak to suck and swallow, don't force any milk in without a tube, milk in lungs will make a pneumonia situation that is hard to treat.

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Frelsi Farm Icelandic Sheep & Icelandic Sheepdogs