

The Organic Shepherd's Lambing Kit

Along with the excitement and anticipation of lambing comes a certain amount of concern about being prepared, especially for folks who are new to shepherding. Being prepared for lambing starts several months before lambing actually begins with good nutrition. Proper nutrition and mineral supplementation is essential to a successful lambing season. Ewes that are properly nourished will have fewer lambing issues and their lambs will be stronger at birth. Making sure that your ewes are well supplemented with selenium and calcium is vitally important. But, even with correct nutrition, things can happen at lambing... and one wants to be prepared for those occasions when trouble arises!! New and experienced shepherds, alike, should go through the lambing section of Laura Lawson's book, *Managing Your Ewe*. It is a valuable resource that I revisit each year before lambing.

Many of the essentials in our lambing kit would be the same as for a conventional farm:

- ◇ 7 % Iodine for navels. We use Triodine-7 and I add some tea tree oil to that.
- ◇ Scale and sling for weighing newborn lambs. I like the ones they sell at Premier.
- ◇ A rectal thermometer for checking temps of newborn lambs. Essential for knowing whether or not a lamb is chilled.
- ◇ Bulb syringe for cleaning out excess fluid from nostrils and throat of lambs slow to start.
- ◇ Lubricant. Necessary for assisting deliveries. It is nice to have one with antiseptic qualities, like SuperLube. We use the powdered J-Lube, or SuperLube.
- ◇ Tubing kit for getting milk into weak lambs. A 60 cc. catheter type syringe and lambing tube. Good to have extra tubes on hand.
- ◇ Frozen colostrum. Do not thaw frozen colostrum in the microwave as it will destroy antibodies. New shepherds can collect colostrum from first ewes to lamb.
- ◇ Syringes and needles for giving injections.
- ◇ Milk replacer for bottle lambs.
- ◇ Milk bottle and nipple for feeding bottle lambs. Many prefer the Pritchard teat nipples.
- ◇ Ear tags and applicator and SuperLube for lubricating and disinfecting tagging applicator.
- ◇ Baling twine or lambing loops for assisting in difficult births.
- ◇ We keep all of the essential vitamin injections on hand: BoSe, Vitamin C, Vitamin B Complex, and Vitamin A, D, E.
- ◇ Clean rags and paper towels.
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Molasses to add to fresh ewe's water for quick energy.
- ◇ Small syringe for giving warm water enema.

Here are some of the certified organic products that we use:

- ◇ Ketonic: available from Agri-Dynamics or Lancaster Ag. Used to treat ketosis, stressed ewes.
- ◇ CMPK Oral from Lancaster Ag. Used to treat milk fever, stressed ewes.
- ◇ Ultra Cal Drench from Agri-Dynamics. Can use this for milk fever, tetany, dystocia, stressed ewes. Also used for stressed lambs.
- ◇ Neema-Tox and Vermi-Tox from Agri-Dynamics: For use in ewes with parasite flare up at lambing.
- ◇ Super Start Calf Bullets from Agri-Dynamics. Can be used for lambs that are scouring or

seem at all unwell.

- ◇ Udder Comfort Yellow Spray: Soothes and softens udders. Use for sub-acute mastitis cases. Can be ordered from PBS Animal Health.
- ◇ Homeopathic arnica and Rescue Remedy: Given after difficult birth to reduce swelling and stress.
- ◇ Banamine: Prescription pain reliever, Banamine, for use after very difficult assisted birth when a ewe may have a lot of pain.
- ◇ Aloe C: Available from Lancaster Ag. A great products to keep on hand. Fine nutritional qualities and antioxidant properties, aids digestive issues, soothing for wounds.
- ◇ Wild Herb Drench: Available from Lancaster Ag. Tonic tea for the lungs or any respiratory problems. Provides vitamins and antioxidants.
- ◇ Bio-Start Paste from Bio-Vet. Direct fed microbial and vitamin supplement for adults and lambs.

For those of you interested in moving toward a more "organic" operation using holistic products, please visit these websites: **Lancaster Agricultural Products:** http://shop.lancasterag.com/Animal-Health_c117.htm **Agri-Dynamics:** <http://www.agri-dynamics.com> **Crystal Creek:** <http://www.crystalcreeknatural.com> **Bio-Vet:** <http://www.bio-vet.com/index.htm>

So, get your your lambing kits in order, get out your Laura Lawson books, and relax a bit before lambing time begins. I wish you all the most successful lambing season!

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Certified organic hill farm raising purebred Icelandic sheep, chickens, veggies, and fruits. We are an off-grid farm, using solar and hydro to create our own power. We sell registered Icelandic breeding stock, certified organic wool, many different yarns and rovings, and certified organic grass fed lamb.