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Your Sheep Business

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WINTER RATIONS FOR EWES. If your ewes are receiving good alfalfa or other legume hay as the bulk of their roughage, then you are feeding a good winter ration. But if your roughage is prairie hay or some other common roughage, some grain should be added--say $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of oats per day. This will result in better fleeces, stronger lambs born, and heavier flow of milk from the ewes.

Special attention should be given to feeding the last 30 days before lambing. During this final month of pregnancy the lamb makes a third of its growth, putting an unusually heavy strain on the ewe. At this period, older ewes may die for no apparent reason. It is necessary at this time to provide extra feed to meet the greater demand made on the ewe's body. Even ewes that have been getting good alfalfa hay should have at least a pound of grain a day.

DO SHEEP NEED MINERALS? Yes, minerals are required. Salt should be kept before ewes all the time. Iodized salt helps prevent goiter in lambs by furnishing the iodine that is lacking in some parts of Minnesota, so feed iodized salt in block form. Start now.

When sheep are fed grain, they will usually get all the phosphorus they need. If they get good legume hay, such as alfalfa, they will usually be safe for both phosphorus and lime. Rations composed largely of common roughages, particularly prairie hay, may be deficient in protein as well as phosphorus. Supplementing such a ration with $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of grain a day or one-fourth of a pound of protein supplement such as linseed meal will take care of both mineral and protein needs.

PREGNANCY DISEASE causes heavy losses every year. It usually appears a month or so before lambing. It is most common in flocks of fair to poor conditions. Ewes carrying twins or triplets are usually the only ones affected. Symptoms are an unsteady gait, stiffness, and a tendency to lag behind. The head may be held upward with the neck stiff. The animals walk in circles and appear to be blind. The ewe may stand with the head pressed against the wall, gritting her teeth, or lie in a stupor. When helped to her feet, she may be unable to stand, hence the disease is often called lambing paralysis. Unless lambing takes place in the early stages, the death rate is high. Ewes that survive recover rapidly after lambing. Cause of the disease is unknown, but the symptoms indicate a deficiency in the ration.

Ewes getting good alfalfa hay seem less subject to this disease than those on common roughage. If common roughages must be fed, it is wise to feed some protein supplement such as one-fourth pound of linseed meal per head per day. Black strap molasses is being found helpful as a protection. Start feeding it six weeks or two months before lambing, using one-half pound per head per day; diluting it with an equal amount of water and pouring it on other feed. Molasses may replace other grain pound for pound. Ewes down with pregnancy disease may be drenched twice a day with six ounces of corn syrup in a pint of water. Exercise may prevent this disease, so it is recommended that pregnant ewes be fed their roughage at some distance from the shelter.

Write us at any time concerning your problems.