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Your Sheep Business

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Check yourself on these practices. Are you following them now with your flock? They may save you money.

1. Are your early lambs getting extra feed, separate from the ewes by creep method?
2. As the lambs are born, are you cutting off the navel cord at once, leaving a stub one to two inches in length and dipping that stub in iodine to prevent navel infection?
3. Before lambing, are you clipping the wool from around the udder of the ewe and up behind?
4. If lambing has not started, are you giving ewes extra feed in order to grow stronger lambs before birth and insure a good milk supply?
5. Are you castrating and docking at ten days to two weeks of age?

Now is the time to think about parasite control this summer. This should start before the flock goes on grass; drenching before the flock goes to pasture will lessen the chance of bad infestation on the pasture this summer. If the flock has lambed before the pasture season opens, - all but the lambs should be drenched before the change to grass. If the flock is to lamb on pasture, do not drench pregnant ewes within a month of lambing, as there is danger that in handling they may be injured, causing abortion.

For drenching use the copper sulphate-nicotine sulphate combination which is described in our Extension Pamphlet No. 42. The more expensive phenothiazine is a very effective treatment for the nodular and stomach worms. The cost of phenothiazine cuts out possibility of repeated doses for the control of stomach worms. If you know the flock is badly infested with nodulars, one treatment of the phenothiazine, even though the cost is high, would be justifiable since it would reduce the number of nodular and stomach worms.

A simple pasture rotation is effective for parasite control. Two pastures should be located so that the flock can be shifted from one to the other easily, this shift being made every two weeks during the pasture season. This rotation materially reduces the number of parasites picked up by the sheep.

Pasture supply is important if we are to produce top lambs off grass without grain feeding. To do that we must control parasites and provide ample feed thru the pasture season. Many pastures get dry and short during July and August, and need to be supplemented. When grass gets short, the lambs lose weight and do not gain again until pastures revive in September. An extra grass supply during that dry period will hold down costs and put lambs on the market much earlier. If they go short on grass, it may require grain feeding in the fall to get them fat.

Second crop alfalfa makes an excellent grass to fill in. Sudan grass planted for that purpose is good. Rape also will supply the extra feed needed. The rape this year may be a little too high in price to use so Sudan grass or alfalfa may be the best bet.