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Sheep Management Pointers for Autumn

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SHEEP MANAGEMENT POINTERS FOR AUTUMN

I

Give breeding ewes the run of as much of the farm as possible. They will not grow too fat on full grass. Flesh gained in the fall means reduced winter food bills, stronger lambs, and better wool.

2

Sheep founder easily on wheat grain. It is very dangerous to let ewes eat their fill of it. If good pasture is available it is not advisable to feed grain to thrifty breeding ewes in autumn, except during the breeding period, in order to get all the ewes to breed about the same time.

3

Sheep often bloat on alfalfa and sometimes on red clover. In pasturing proceed very cautiously with alfalfa and somewhat carefully with clover.

4

Sheep *do* drink water though some persons do not think they do. If sheep are on green pasture they will not drink much water but they will drink some. Water is usually cheap—let your sheep have it.

5

Don't let your sheep get salt-hungry. Give them salt every two or three days, or keep it where they can get it when they want it.

6

It is best not to breed ewe lambs nor to use ram lambs. One strong, vigorous ram is needed for every forty or fifty ewes.

7

The best western sheepmen feed their rams during the breeding season. After about a week spent in gradually getting the rams accustomed to grain, they will be much more vigorous if fed from one to two pounds per head daily. Nervous rams sometimes refuse to eat grain because of their desire to circulate among the ewes. In such cases they can't be kept from getting thin.

8

Sheep like well drained, fairly dry ground when they lie down to rest and sleep. They dislike, also, to wade in mud. If forced to do so, they are likely to develop sore feet.

9

Lame sheep should be examined. The cause may be caked mud, a pebble, a weed stem or a corn stalk between the toes. If no cause is apparent, carefully pare down the bottom of the hoof. By this a pus pocket may be opened, in which case a speedy recovery will be likely. If many of the flock become lame, make a careful examination. If you find foot-rot, we can help you.

10

Dung will collect on the rear of some ewes. The collection should be sheared

away before it becomes very large. The wool should be cut close about the tail or dock to prevent further collection of dung. Dung injures the wool, and in warm weather it attracts the maggot fly.

11

All burrs reduce the value of the wool. Keep the ewes away from them if possible.

12

Record the date when rams are turned in with ewes. One hundred and forty days after that date, you should be prepared for the coming of the lambs. The normal period of pregnancy for ewes is about 146 days.

13

To insure effective mating in the breeding season, ewes should be trimmed about the tail or dock, if they are very wooly there. Often, it is well to trim the wool on the belly of the ram just in front of the penis.

14

Look your sheep over as often as you can. Acquaint yourself with their habits. Learn to know when they feel well and when they don't. Learn to identify different individuals in the flock as you do your horses and cows, and you will manage your flock better.

15

Be on the watch for "Sheep Management Pointers for Winter."