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Sheep Management Pointers[®] for Winter

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SHEEP MANAGEMENT POINTERS FOR WINTER

I

Feed that otherwise would be wasted should be eaten by the flock in the fall and early winter. Ewes should not be made to rely upon such feed altogether when the supply begins to run low, because pregnant ewes should be kept in good condition. A ewe that suckles down to a thin condition should gain 25 pounds or more by the time her lamb is born. She can not do this if she does not get enough good feed to satisfy her appetite.

2

Clover, sweet clover, and alfalfa hay are splendid feeds for pregnant ewes. If ewes can feed in fields where there is no danger of damaging crops and have enough of any of these hays to satisfy the appetite, they will ordinarily need little grain before lambing time. If ewes have a chance to eat clean bright straw, particularly oat straw, or the straw from sweet clover, red clover or soybeans, they will not need so much hay.

3

Ewes can not be expected to eat the coarser stems of clover, sweet clover, or soybean hay. They will eat the leaves of corn stover, but not the stalks. These should not be fed in such a way as to

cause waste. Ewes do better when not allowed to waste feed.

4

A half-pound per head daily of oats, corn, or barley, or a little less than a pound of screenings, should be fed during the last six or eight weeks of pregnancy. If the ewes should be thin, a pound or more of these feeds can be used.

5

Pregnant ewes need water every day; it should not be ice-cold. They should have salt whenever they want it.

6

Late in pregnancy, ewes often become so heavy they do not care to exercise. If feed, such as hay or corn stover, is scattered thinly over a considerable area, ewes will get the exercise they need in picking it up. Violent exercise, such as rapid driving or chasing by dogs, is likely to cause abortion and other injuries.

7

Pregnant ewes should not stand, wade or lie in deep mud.

8

Pregnant ewes should not be out in winter rains, as they may contract colds that will cause them to lose in weight, or they may develop pneumonia, from which they do not often recover. "Dry" snow does not hurt healthy, vigorous

ewes. Often they prefer it to the dry, warm quarters of a barn.

9

Winter is the proper time to prepare the quarters for the little lambs. They need a warm, dry place where they can get into the sunshine. A frame of poles, roofed and sided with deep layers of straw, makes as good a place for lambing as is needed. Each ewe and lamb should have 16 square feet of floor space, but when a lamb is a few days old it can be moved to less protected quarters. Leave no small cracks or holes near the floor through which the young lamb may creep out into the cold.

10

Continue to get acquainted with the members of your flock. If the ram is inclined to be cross with the ewes, keep him away from them.

11

Watch for "Sheep Management Pointers for Spring."

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