A Timeline for the Ewe and Her Lambs

The Ewe

DAYS 0–7 ➡
Greatest risk of embryo loss due to heat and humidity stress

DAYS 30–90 ➡
Critical period for placental and mammary gland development. Reduced fetal growth, birth weights, vigor, and lower milk production result from poor nutrition at this time. Macro- and micro-mineral supplementation is vital. Impairment cannot be made up for later.

DAY 60 ➡
Booster vaccination (following pre-breeding vaccine) protects ewe against chlamydiosis and vibriosis abortions

DAYS 100–BIRTH ➡
Nutritional demands of fetuses place greatest demand upon ewe

DAY 120 ➡
Vaccination against respiratory, clostridial diseases and tetanus stimulates high level of antibodies in colostrum, (forming by about day 136). Periparturient rise of internal parasite egg production: deworm to protect lambs.

BIRTH ➡
Colostrum production ceases; 24–36 oz available to lambs.

DAYS 21–28 ➡
Maximum milk production attained. Maximum production requires maximum nutrition. Feed best hay, match grain amounts to number of nursing lambs.

DAY 60 ➡
Many ewes producing less than half of the amount of milk they produced at peak production.

0 DAYS FROM CONCEPTION
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
140
150 OR BIRTH
10 DAYS AFTER BIRTH
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100

The Lambs

⬅ **DAYS 20–24**
Embryos implanted in uterine wall

⬅ **DAY 35**
First primary fiber follicles form

⬅ **DAYS 60–63**
Most primary fiber follicles formed; lateral primary follicles begin to form

⬅ **DAYS 90–100**
Secondary wool follicles begin forming

⬅ **DAYS 100–BIRTH**
70% of fetal growth occurs

⬅ **DAY 120**
Fetal lambs immunocompetent: capable of forming some antibodies

⬅ **BIRTH**
Antibody-rich colostrum (received within 24 h of birth) provides passive immunity for up to 10 weeks; primary follicle fibers shed

⬅ **DAYS 7–14**
Lambs begin eating creep feed; some rumen function by day 14; 250% increase (from birth) in growth/maturity of secondary follicles

⬅ **DAYS 28–42**
Lambs convert from high-milk, low-feed to low-milk, high-feed diet

⬅ **DAYS 42–56**
Rumen becomes fully functional; lambs vulnerable to coccidiosis (add coccidiostat to feed)

⬅ **DAY 60**
75% of secondary follicles growing fiber; lambs vulnerable to high parasite loads (deworm)

⬅ **DAY 70**
Disease immunity of lambs, gained by colostrum, depleted (vaccination vital)

⬅ **DAYS 91–98**
In vaccinated lambs, antibody titers peak; booster of vaccine at this period "confirms" to immune system that antibody production is important

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