

Lambs Saved By Ice-Cold Milk

Orphan lambs can be raised on an ice-cold milk formula fed by a dispenser filled only once a day.

At Beltsville, Md., some 90 percent of lambs started on the cold formula survived to weaning, compared to a survival rate of 80 percent for lambs reared naturally. The lambs gained 0.8 pounds per day on cold formula, compared to 0.6 pounds normal daily gain.

Sheep producers need a milk replacer because some lambs are left without an adequate natural milk supply because their mothers die, fail to lactate properly, or get behind milk requirements of multiple lambs. Current breeding research aims to produce more multiple births, so the feeding of milk replacers is bound to grow.

Lambs at Beltsville were started on the cold formula at ages ranging from 1 to 10 days, but they did best when they got at least 2 days of natural colostrum. It took 3 days of hard work to teach lambs to feed at the dispenser. I. L. Lindahl, ARS sheep nutritionist in charge of the project, says that each lamb requires at least four lessons per day.

The key feature of the new method is refrigerating to near 32 degrees F before serving the lambs. At this temperature, bacterial growth in milk formula is retarded enough during storage in the dispenser to prevent digestive upsets. Furthermore, cold milk keeps lambs from over-drinking. Big gulps set even the sturdiest lambs shivering—so they quickly learn to take small sips throughout the day.

Lambs were fed in two or three age groups to keep older ones from crowding young penmates away from the dispenser.

They were weaned abruptly when 60 days old.

Abrupt weaning caused no ill after effects, as the lambs had become accustomed to solid feed while on the dispenser. Slow weaning—tried with a few lambs—resulted in over-drinking and digestive problems, Lindahl says.

Researchers built the dispenser after European scientists first tried the idea of feeding cold milk. The ARS men grafted nipples from commercial feeding pails onto large, square polyethylene boxes with lids. Long plastic "straws" lead from the nipples to the bottom of the dispenser.

Lindahl's staff made up milk formula daily by mixing 20 parts

of commercial milk powder with 80 parts water. The powder, an Irish import, duplicates the proportion of solid nutrients found in natural ewe's milk.

Studies on feeding orphan lambs at Beltsville followed earlier work at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois, Ida., where lambs received warmed cow-milk replacer from commercial calf nursing machines. Under conditions there, survival averaged 70 percent and daily gains 0.47 pounds. That was an improvement over usual results with bottle-fed lambs, at a considerable saving in labor. At Dubois, up to 25 lambs shared each nipple on a milk dispenser without excessive competition, a finding also thought applicable to the new cold-milk feeding system.

Golden eagles average about three feet in length, weigh from eight to 12 pounds and have a wing span of six to seven feet. Our secretary is NOT a witch. She says it's perfectly normal for a girl to ride a broom to work.

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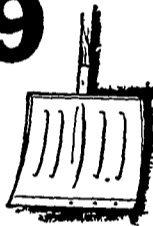


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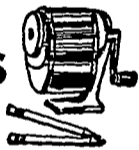
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According to a Pennsylvania State University correspondence course on perennial flowers, the plants need dividing every three to five years else the flowers become small and centers of clumps may die.

Lift the root clump from the soil with a garden fork. Tear fibrous clumps by hand or cut with a knife. Use two forks back-to-back to pry heavy clumps into sections, or split with a light axe.

The best sections for propagation are from outer edge of old clumps. Discard the centers.

Replant the root sections in well drained, fertile soil about as deep as the old clumps. Place sections 12 to 18 inches apart. Water well. Mulch with a layer of wood shavings, peanut hulls etc. to reduce drying of the soil.

To learn more about perennial flower gardening study the Penn State course. Send your name and address with \$2.75 to Perennials, Box 5000 University Park, Pennsylvania 16802. A course copy comes to you by mail.

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