

It's lambing time for Dorsets

By KENDACE BORRY

NARVON - Although most breeds of sheep normally lamb in the winter and early spring months, the Dorset sheep can lamb at any time of the year and most breeders favor the late Summer and early Fall months for lambing. From the beginning of September until the middle of October, on many Dorset sheep farms, young lambs will be appearing.

Such is the case on the farm owned and run by Dr. Robert Herr and his family, Narvon, R2. The first lambs were born on September 2, and the crop of little ones has been steadily increasing since that date. According to Dr. Herr, the last ewes are due to lamb around the beginning of October.

The Herrs prefer having their lambing season now because of the season of nice weather. The lambs can be dropped in the pasture, and cold weather worries can be forgotten. Also, the fact that the calendar year for sheep

runs from September 1 to September 1, in showing ages, gives the Dorset sheep born in September, the advantage in age, growth, and maturity over lambs born in the late winter and early spring.

In preparing for the lambing season, the Herrs shear their sheep around March 15 and put the ram in the flock April 15.

After a lamb is born, the Herrs have developed their own system to insure that the lamb has a healthy chance at life. First, they try to be there when the lamb is born to dry the lamb off and clean it up. Secondly, they treat the navel of the lamb with iodine, to prevent infection, and they give the lamb 1/2 teaspoon of teramyacin (water soluble), to further protect it. Third, they milk the ewe out and try to get an ounce of colostrum into the stomach of the lamb.

The Herrs dock their lambs when they are five days old, using a system with a rubber band. The

rubber band is placed around the lamb's tail, for two or three days, depending on the season, and then the tail is cut off. A tetanus shot is given to the lamb when it is docked.

The lambs are given creep feed from the time they are born, and the mix used for the lambs is the same as that given to the ewes when they are fed. Herr and his wife, Betty, mentioned that the only times that the ewes are fed grain is when the lambs are beside them and when they are flushed in the spring, after being sheared.

The formula for the feed that the Herrs use for their sheep is as follows:

- 300 lb. bran
- 800 lb. crimped oats
- 400 lb. corn chop
- 150 lb. molasses
- 18 lb. minerals
- 18 lb. salt

The Herrs also tattoo ears of their lambs rather than tagging them for they believe this is a more permanent way of marking the animals. They also worm

their animals six times a year, and give them shots for enterotexemia, or over-

eating disease. When the lambs are one month of age, they are given a shot to protect against the deficiency of vitamin E. Some parts of Pa. are extremely deficient in Vitamin E and selenium, a mineral

that works with Vitamin E, the Herrs stated. Signs that a lamb has this disease is a slow-moving, stiff animal, and the condition is

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A protective Dorset mother watches the photographer as her lamb gets her lunch.



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