

Udder health at lambing

The following can reduce levels of mastitis:



Better Returns Programme

Conformation

a symmetrical udder with teats at 4 and 8 o'clock

Condition

body condition score 3 or more reduces the risk of mastitis

Cull

ewes that have had mastitis, old thin ewes

Consider Supplement

if you have no grass, supplement ewes up to week 5 post lambing to keep in good condition and lactating well

Cover

exposed udders from wind and wet – causes chapping and teat lesions

Consult

your vet for more advice

Udder health is important to consider all year round and one reason for good nutrition at every stage of production: tugging, mid pregnancy and lambing.

Ensure you do your best at lambing to minimise the risk of mastitis. Remember.....

- Ewes produce a large volume of good quality milk when they are fit and fed well. A body condition score of 3 (lowland) or 2.5 (upland) and a good diet after lambing with high percentage of protein and energy will help ewes produce sufficient milk in the early weeks after lambing.
- Thin ewes and ewes feeding twins need extra feed to avoid teat damage, mastitis and to maximise the growth of lambs.
- Old ewes (six years and above) do not feed their lambs as efficiently as younger ewes and lambs reared by old ewes should be supplemented if maximum growth is the target.
- Mis-shapen udders, damaged udder skin and teats positioned away from 4 and 8 o'clock are prone to mastitis and lower growth rates in lambs.
- Avoid conditions that can chafe the udder such as wet, windy, exposed fields and consider culling ewes with poor udder conformation at weaning.
- Rapid treatment with an injectable antibiotic and painkiller as soon as a ewe has mastitis is the best approach to prevent a ewe dying, permanently mark treated ewes and aim to cull at weaning.

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