

Care of the Farm Flock in Springtime.

It is in the spring of the year that shepherds must look most closely to their flocks. If the ewes and lambs have plenty of range, well watered, in summer, and sufficient feed and shelter in winter they will get along very well indeed and rear good lambs. However, there is a period in the spring when neglect will vitiate the results of a whole season and convert a thrifty, promising flock into a band of unproductive, vermin-ridden, unprofitable sheep. Much of the "bad luck" we hear and talk about is nothing but bad management. Many of the most successful stockmen of all time have been individuals who were fond of their animals, and would light their lanterns at midnight or in the wee small hours of the morning and make their round of the stalls, paddocks or sheepfold. Attention, and doing the proper thing at the proper time are what is needed most.

Realizing the great importance of successful sheep-husbandry this coming season, we have asked some well-known raisers of sheep to write on different topics connected with the flock. We commend these short articles to our readers for they have been written by men of experience with a desire for improvement along all lines of sheep raising in this country.

Feed and Care of the Flock Before Lambing.

BY W. WHITELAW, WELLINGTON CO., ONT.

Good, careful treatment is required in handling the flock if good results are to be attained. Endeavor to have the ewes in a thrifty condition in the fall of the year, and if they are in good thrift they will keep in that condition during the winter months.

Late in the fall take a nice mild day, there are always some such days, and dip the ewes in some recognized dip as it does not pay to feed vermin. They will be more comfortable through the winter and the clip of wool will be greater in the spring. We used to, in former years, dip during the winter by shedding the wool and pouring, but we have found the other method more satisfactory. If dipping is attended to the battle is almost won in the care of the flock during the winter months.

In the matter of feed, ewes should be "well done" all winter. Feed good alfalfa or clover hay, and a moderate supply of roots. They should also have a dry, large, well sheltered yard to run in, with some roughage to pick through, such as pea straw, if one has any, and free access to salt and water. This should bring them up to lambing time in good condition. After having done this, I do not say there will be no losses. Freaks in nature will happen, and if the losses do come, one must needs not get discouraged, and the best way to look at these mishaps is, if you did not have them you would not have them to lose.

Care of the Flock at Yeaning Time.

BY ROBT. MCEWEN, MIDDLESEX CO., ONT.

In the female species, as Kipling terms it, approaching maternity is the most interesting and important period of its existence, and this is applicable just as much to the ewe as to others of her sex. She, at this time, requires special care and attention, more particularly if she is of pure breeding. She is specializing in the rearing of offspring by which sheep products are made more profitable to the producer and in accordance with the market demands, and her value is estimated not only by the quantity and quality of her wool and mutton, but also by her lambs. Amongst wild animals, in the struggle necessary to obtain a living, the weak and incompetent die off but in domestic life all depends upon the care and forethought the attendant exercises in supplying proper feeds in correct quantities with regularity.

The ewes at lambing time should be in fair condition; not too fat, arising from close confinement and too much grain, nor yet thin from lack of ample feed, or other causes such as ticks. Nothing worries a lamb more and prevents it basking in the sunshine than ticks which have a habit in spring of emigrating from the ewe to her little ones. The ewe, having had good winter care and plenty of exercise, notwithstanding her in-lamb condition, is strong, active and vigorous, as she needs to be in order to withstand the strain on her system at time of delivery, and also to nurse her one or two lambs to the very best of her ability. Ewes about due, should be looked at frequently during the day and the last thing before going to bed to see if any are in labor pains. If, in the course of 2 or 3 hours, a lambing ewe is unable to make delivery, the hand well oiled, should be inserted to ascertain if the forelegs and head are properly presented. After delivery, and the lamb is strong and active and has had a good pull at the dam, it needs, for a time, no attention except to see that its bowels are normal. If it begins scouring it should be get a small dose of castor oil, and the ewe should be milked out. Should the lamb come weak and helpless during cold weather, it can be wrapped in a sack and warmed up beside a stove for an hour or two until it is able to toddle about, but if, at the end of this time, it is unable to stand it should be given some spirits in its mother's milk. Sometimes a young ewe will not allow her newly dropped lamb to nurse, in which case she can be put into a small pen not much larger than herself and at frequent periods held until the lamb gets its fill. In the course of a few days she is usually reconciled and can be given her liberty. When lambs are about ten days old they should be docked, leaving about an inch of a stump in the down breeds, a little longer

in other breeds, and at the same time (this is very important) all ram lambs not to be kept for breeding purposes should be castrated.

If the ewes are still being fed about the barn they should now gradually receive increased allowances of roots and grain, and the lambs should also have a little pen into which they can creep and get some finely pulped turnips and mixture of whole oats, bran and oil cake. The aim is to obtain the consumption of the greatest amount of feed with perfect digestion and in order to accomplish this the lambs and ewes must be watched closely to detect any ill results arising. It is important that only such quantities of feed be given as will be readily cleaned up, and anything left over must be removed from troughs before fresh is put into them. The extra feed given to the ewe is not of course with the view of fattening her, but of increasing her flow of milk that will fatten her lambs and, while this is being



Docking.

The knife is laid over the second joint.

done, an eye should be kept on the udder that may go wrong from exposure to cold biting winds. Teats also sometimes get cut with the sharp teeth of the lambs, and if the ewe refuses to allow the lamb to nurse the milk must be removed by hand. Ewes with only one good teat seem to have a faculty of dropping two lambs, one of which has to be provided for, either with a foster mother or raised on a bottle. If a ewe at this time happens to have lost her lamb, to transfer one to her is not a serious job. Perhaps the easiest way is to remove the skin of her dead one and to tie it on to the back of the one she is to adopt. But the pet lamb, (and who has not had one,) is the cause of much worry, and never worth, from a dollars and cents point of view, the attention which it demands; but we all have tender feelings towards newly-born, helpless creatures, and plaintive bleatings bring forth the bottle and nipple. The



Castrating.

Removing the bottom half of the scrotum.

youngster about the farm is given the ownership and the charge of feeding the orphan. In attending to this lamb's wants the lad has unconsciously developed certain instincts which cling to him and, as a grown-up, he is known about the pens at the shows as a stockman; the man of whom you hear people remark that he always seems to have "good luck", and that his flock had done well, simple evidence of the fact that he knows the details of his work, and ungrudgingly devotes abouts is behind the times. He can't whistle the latest popular song or do the newest two-step, but he can talk to you enthusiastically about the pedigrees of every animal in his charge, he can tell you the quantities and proper mixture of feeds they require, and he can pose one of the greatest of lessons—how to grow an animal to perfection.

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Feed and Care of the Flock after Lambing.

BY J. W. SPRINGSTED, LINCOLN CO., ONT.

I do not think that there is any animal that likes a change of feed better than the sheep. It should consist of early cut clover or alfalfa hay. Pea or oat straw is also relished for a change. It has been surprising the amount of oat straw, the sheep would eat, even when getting plenty of good clover hay. They should be fed hay or straw, morning, noon and night, and the racks should be cleaned out after each feeding. Ewes nursing lambs should be fed grain, night and morning. It should consist of one half bran and as many different kinds of grain as convenient, preferably oats, peas and barley. My plan in feeding grain is to give each sheep all I can hold in one hand and increase it in a few days to two handfuls. The more bran in the mixture, the more one can take up in the hand. I add to the mixture about one-tenth nut oil cake. A box filled with rock salt, placed in some convenient spot should be in every sheepfold. Wood ashes, salt and charcoal mixed are also good for the flock, when in winter quarters. I have obtained good results, in feeding silage to the ewes, after lambing. I think silage is a better milk-producer than roots, although either one is good.

Feed should never be carried over the sheep, but fed from the alleyway. If racks are made properly, hay, grain and pulped roots can be fed from the alleyway. As soon as the lambs are two weeks old, they should have a small pen, where they can be fed grain, bran and nut oil cake by themselves. Whole grain is best for either sheep or lambs. If possible, it is best to have a passage way about twenty inches wide, with a scantling at the bottom, another, two-and-one-half feet up and three upright. The lambs will soon learn to go in and the ewes cannot get through. They should be given all the mixed grain and bran they can eat, and it will be considerable.

As soon as the ground is dry and the grass has started to grow, the flock should be turned out in daytime, but put in pens at night and fed. It is surprising the amount of hay they will eat, for a few days, after they have been turned out to pasture. After the flock is turned out for good, they need little attention but they need that little badly. It is very important that they should have plenty of good fresh water and rock salt within reach.

Docking and Castrating Lambs.

BY A. A. MACMILLAN, MACDONALD COLLEGE, QUE.

Undocked and uncastrated grade lambs are always an indication of primitive methods in the handling of sheep, and no farmer who takes an interest in his flock will neglect the performance of these operations. Both are very simple and if properly performed at the right age there is little or no danger of loss. Moreover, docking adds to the neatness, comfort and appearance of the flock while castrating enables the farmer to hold his wether lambs for late fall sales when a heavier weight usually brings a higher price per pound. Ram lambs become troublesome about the middle of September, their gains are slower, they have to be separated from the rest of the flock or sold, and their value per pound is below that of ewe or wether lambs.

Docking and castrating should both be performed when the lambs are ten days or two weeks of age. Lambs under ten days of age are likely to be weak while those over two weeks have greater development of the organs and their removal is more of a shock to the system. It would be easier on the lambs to allow a few days to elapse between each operation. However, the farmer is usually rushed with work and a saving of time is effected if both are performed at once, and moreover, if the lambs are of the proper age, no serious results are likely to follow. When a few days are allowed to elapse between each operation, castrating is best performed first as the wound heals quicker, bleeds less and is better protected, not being so liable to injury when catching for docking. An assistant is necessary for castrating and although he may be dispensed with for docking, his services are useful and result in a neater and more uniform dock. A good sharp jack knife and a basin of water to which some disinfectant has been added is all the equipment that is required for the work, except that it is best performed in the morning of a bright clear day.

CASTRATING.

The lamb is held by the attendant at the proper height with the underside of the body outward, rump downward and the front and hind legs held together. The scrotum is grasped with the left hand of the operator and pulled outward to its full length when it is severed straight across about one inch from the body, removing one-third to one-half. The testicles will now protrude and may be removed by the teeth of the operator or with small pinchers specially made for the purpose or by slitting the peritoneal covering with the knife and pulling the testicle with the finger until the cord breaks. The first method is most commonly practised in all large sheep raising countries. It is quicker and is seldom followed by complications of any kind. Removal with pinchers having claws that fit around the testicle is very similar to the first method except that the pinchers are substituted for the teeth. There is more danger of crushing the testicle and it is slower. Lambs which show any tendency towards rupture should not be castrated by either of the above methods as the removal of the peritoneal lining allows the intestines to protrude. The last method, namely, slitting

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