SINCE 1929

Augusta Cooperative FARM BUREAU, INC.

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 80
Staunton, VA

AUGUSTA COOPERATIVE FARM BUREAU, INC.
1205B RICHMOND RD.
STAUNTON, VA 24401

AUGUSTACOOP.COM
/ AUGUSTACOOPERATIVEFARMBUREAU
/ AUGUSTACOOPFB

SMALL RUMINANT EDITOR
November 2025

SINCE 1929

Augusta Cooperative FARM BUREAU, INC.

WINTER MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR SHEEP AND GOATS

As cold weather approaches, it is important to consider the comfort of the sheep and goats we care for. Winter can be a stressful time for livestock. As owners, we need to help to reduce that stress by providing proper care, feeding, and management practices. Adjusting management practices will help to ensure that sheep under your care will thrive through the cold winter months.

Sheep

Sheep should be given some kind of shelter even if it is just a tree line or wind block. Shelters can include barns or three sided shed. Shelters should have adequate ventilation so that moisture does not build up and cause respiratory problems for the sheep. Hair sheep and wool breeds that have been recently shorn require more shelter than animals with longer wool. Ewes that are lambing during the cold winter months should be housed in a barn and checked regularly. Newborns must be dried quickly after birth as hypothermia can set in quickly. Avoid damp, dark, or drafty barns, and wet muddy areas in or around buildings. Young lambs are able to withstand cold temperatures quite well, but drafts and dampness can lead to losses from baby lamb pneumonia. Heat lamps can be used to help keep lambs warm, although care must be taken to prevent electrocutions and/or barn fires.

Sheep require more energy in the winter to help them maintain body temperature. The highest quality hay should not be fed during gestation. Utilize average to good-quality hay during the early gestation period, when ewe nutrient requirements are low compared to late gestation and lactation. If high-quality hay, such as alfalfa, is fed during gestation it is important to limit intakes as overfeeding is costly. Ewes up through 15 weeks of gestation should receive 4 lbs. of a good quality grass/legume hay daily. In the last 4 weeks of gestation they should receive 4 lbs. of a good quality grass/legume hay plus 1 lb. of corn [or concentrate] daily. To prevent wool picking and other problems, ewes should receive a minimum of 1.5 lbs. of hay per day and one lb. of corn can be substituted for 2 lbs. of hay. Once ewes lamb and begin to lactate, they should receive 5 lbs. of good quality hay and 2 lbs. of 15% crude protein grain mix a day. Hay should be fed in feeders to help minimize waste and help prevent the spread of disease. Sheep should have access to fresh water at all times. This may require changing water a couple of times a day to remove the ice or some other type of heated waterer. Michigan State University reminds producers to use caution with any type of electrical device with sheep and lambs may chew the cord. Salt and minerals formulated for sheep should also be available at all times.

Goats

Goats do not require elaborate housing during the winter months. The most important issues regarding housing is to block the harsh, cold north wind and to keep the animals dry. Goats that are properly cared for will have a thick coat of hair helping them to survive the winter with minimal housing. A three sided structure with the opening facing the south provides protection from the cold wind and yet allow plenty of ventilation to keep moisture down in the barn or shed. Make sure there is plenty of clean, dry bedding available. Goats kidding in the cold weather will require more shelter because young kids will not be able to maintain their body temperature outside. A heat lamp may be required in these situations but should only be used with extreme caution.

Feeding and watering goats in the winter requires a little more planning than during the warmer summer months. Goats should have access to fresh water at all times. This may require changing water a couple of times a day to remove the ice or some other type of heated waterer. Use caution with any type of electrical device with goats as they may chew the cord. During the winter, goats need more energy to help maintain body temperature. They will also need roughage which can be supplied in grass, alfalfa, or mixed hay. Alfalfa hay can be a great source of both energy and protein, although care should be taken when feeding bucks and wethers because of urinary calculi. Salt and minerals should also be available.

Lice are more prevalent on goats during the winter months. They can be irritating to the goat and in some cases, heavy infestations can cause anemia, poor coat and/or skin quality. Michigan State University Extension recommends working with your veterinarian to develop a treatment plan for your goat herd to control lice and other parasites.

Keeping a herd of goats, or even a couple of animals as companions, can be a rewarding experience. With a little preplanning we can help our animals not only survive, but thrive during the cold winter months.

Ohio State Extension

DETERMINING THE MOST EFFICIENT EWE SIZE FOR YOUR OPERATION

Big ones, little ones, fat ones, skinny ones; ewes come in all sizes and shapes. But, which is the most efficient ewe size for your operation?

The most efficient sheep or better yet the most efficient flock of sheep is what producers should strive for. But, the most efficient sheep for one flock is not always the most efficient sheep for another producer's should strive for.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

So, how do we arrive at first describing an efficient sheep and then go about choosing the size that best fits your operation?

Let's start by defining efficiency as it relates to animal production. Dr. Gordon Dickerson, who was a leader in defining efficiency in beef production, defined it as the ratio of total costs to total animal products from females and their progeny over a given period of time. He further looked at efficiency in two different ways. One was biologic efficiency or feed consumed to product produced. The other was economic efficiency, which is dollars spent compared to dollars returned.

It is well documented that the number of lambs weaned per ewe is the largest factor that affects profitability in an operation. But, we need to consider what size ewe will best utilize the resources available on a particular farm. Ewes need to be able to convert forage from pasture or stored feeds to maintain their body condition and also to produce lambs. Maximizing stocking rate on pasture is a key to arriving at efficient ewe sizes. Across the country stocking rate varies greatly depending on the productivity of soils as well as rainfall. In the east, a typical stocking rate would be 1,000 lbs. of animals per acre. But, with excellent pasture management, this stocking rate could double. Compare that to stocking rates in some western areas where you might need five or more acres to support just one ewe.

Let's use a scenario to compare the difference in costs for maintaining a 175 lb. ewe versus a 225 lb. ewe. For many operations, producers will need to provide about four months of supplemental feed during the winter months. A 175 lb. ewe requires about 2.9 lb. of dry matter per day and a 225 lb. ewe requires about 3.3 lb. of dry matter per day according to National Research Council's "Nutrient Requirements of Small Ruminants." Translate that into the amount of hay that would actually be fed, and we are looking at about 0.5 lb. per day more hay for the larger ewe. This is calculated using hay at 90% dry matter and by adding in a bit extra for waste. Over a four month period, the additional cost to maintain that larger ewe is $4.50 for $150 per ton hay costs. Well, that cost seems no big deal. But, remember that we also have to decrease the stocking rate on pasture to account for the additional dry matter intake of the larger ewe. If we consider a full year of additional dry matter intake needs using the value of hay, the larger ewe will cost about $13.50 more to feed. Bear in mind that this cost does not include the cost of the additional pasture acreage needed to meet her feed requirements.

There are obviously some additional costs that will be needed for health care, more feeder and barn space, etc. that we have not specifically accounted for. So, let's estimate that additional costs for that ewe at around $15 per year. If lamb prices for weaned lambs are $2.00 per lb., that ewe will need to produce lambs that weigh 7.5 lbs. more as a group at weaning than the smaller ewe to justify her larger size.

What have we missed in the comparison? Larger framed ewes are more likely to produce larger framed lambs at birth, which could possibly increase lambing problems which could in turn affect survivability and weaning percentages. Those larger lambs will have a higher dry matter intake than the smaller lambs. This won't make much difference for the small producer. But, if you are a large producer with 100 lambs or more this certainly will make a difference.

What this comes down to is that each individual producer will need to determine what the most efficient ewe size is for his or her operation. Pasture stocking rates, ewe productivity, feed efficiency and lamb values all play a part in determining what size ewe is most efficient for a particular operation. So, take a closer look at your farm records to sort through the pieces of the puzzle that determine what size is best for your operation.

Penn State Extension

THE POWER OF COLOSTRUM FOR LAMBS AND KID GOATS

Colostrum feeding is essential for newborns and can play a significant role in your animals' long-term productivity potential. Read these tips to help you get newborn lambs and kids off to a strong start.

The power of lamb and goat colostrum

Newborn lambs and kid goats can be exposed to unfamiliar bacteria and pathogens, putting their health and future performance at risk. Nearly 20 percent of lambs die before weaning, with 80 percent of those losses occurring during the first 10 days of life. Research on kid goat pre-weaning mortality rates showed similar trends.

Colostrum, or the first milk from ewes or does, protects newborn lambs and kid goats with antibodies that fend off intestinal, respiratory and other diseases. Kids and lambs don't receive immune support from their mothers while in utero, so feeding high-quality colostrum or colostrum replacer during the first hours of life is essential for long-term health and performance. Colostrum also contains high energy levels to help newborns stay warm and Vitamins A and E promote digestive and respiratory system development.

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

Feeding baby lambs and goats colostrum

Protection against disease hinges on high-quality colostrum fed immediately after birth. Timing is crucial because the intestinal wall begins to close only mere hours after birth, blocking the protective antibodies from entering the bloodstream.

Newborn lambs and kids should receive at least 10 percent of their body weight in colostrum by 18 hours of age. For example, a 10-pound animal should consume at least 1 pound (or 16 ounces) of colostrum in its first day of life. At least half of this volume should be consumed within 4 to 8 hours after birth.

Once in the system, the antibodies help fight off infections while the newborn lamb or kid builds a stable immune system.

Colostrum quality matters

Colostrum is a critical ingredient to newborn goat kid and lamb success. However, poor quality or quantity of colostrum produced by the ewe or doe can – and does – happen. Colostrum production is highly variable, with older ewes and does often producing higher volume compared to younger animals.2 Ewes and does with multiple offspring are often unable to produce enough colostrum for all newborns,3 potentially leaving some of their offspring unprotected.

The health of the mother also impacts the quality of the colostrum produced. Ewes infected with Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) or does infected with Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE) can transmit the disease to their young through the colostrum.

Colostrum replacer

One way to ensure all newborns receive high-quality colostrum in adequate quantities is through a high-quality colostrum replacer designed for lambs and kids. Colostrum replacers can provide the same – or even better in cases such as OPP or CAE – protection to newborn lambs and kids than maternal colostrum. Colostrum replacers give lambs and kids the nutrition they need with less risk of disease transfer.

High-quality colostrum replacers are typically made of dried bovine colostrum and contain high levels of natural colostral fat, protein, vitamins and minerals needed by newborn goat kids and lambs. When choosing a colostrum replacer, look for one that's high in Immunoglobulin G (IgG) to help provide essential antibodies to build the immune system. LAND O LAKES® Colostrum Replacer for Kid Goats and Lambs contains over 20% IgGs.

Also, look for a product that's licensed and tested by the USDA to meet passive transfer requirements and is designed specifically for lambs and kid goats.

The first few hours of life can determine a kid or lamb's future performance. Start your newborns off right with LAND O LAKES® Colostrum Replacer for Kid Goats and Lambs.

Purina Mills

THREE GOAT MINERAL "MUST-HAVES"

How do you decide what goat mineral to feed? Is it the same mineral you've always fed, a mineral your neighbor feeds or are you skipping mineral altogether?

While mineral may be a small portion of a goat diet, it aids in many vital functions and impacts everything from reproduction to feed efficiency and overall herd health. Provide a quality goat mineral that supports performance.

Here are three things to look for in your goat mineral supplement:

1. Provides consistent intake

The most important aspect of a mineral is to provide vital nutrients your goats might be lacking. But how can you be sure your goats are getting the intended nutrients if they don't consistently eat the mineral?

Choosing a palatable mineral assures that your goats are eating and receiving proper amounts of essential minerals like copper and calcium. Also, look for a goat mineral supplement that's formulated for low intake.

Palatability and low intake might sound like a contradiction, but the idea is for goats to get the nutrition they need while avoiding overconsumption. When goats consume mineral at target intake levels, no minerals get wasted and each goat gets the nutrition it needs.

2. Supports goat reproduction

Many forages lack the essential minerals needed for sound reproductive health. And, if goats don't receive supplemental nutrition to fill the gap, you may see an impact on reproductive performance.

This could cause your cost per kid to rise steadily, which no producer wants to see.

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

Goats also have significantly increased energy needs during late gestation. Mineral deficiencies during this time can impact both the doe and the kid. Supplementing with a mineral high in calcium can help prepare goats for increased nutrient and energy needs to support overall health.

Providing a quality goat mineral can help, but so can another key ingredient: fat.

Fat provides energy and helps optimize body condition to support goat reproduction. Consider using high-fat protein supplements in conjunction with your goat mineral.

3. Formulated for year-round feeding

Many producers only offer a goat mineral during the fall when forage quality decreases. But your goat may lack minerals throughout the year and you might not know it. Mineral deficiencies are often overlooked because the symptoms can be slow to show or difficult to connect back to a goat nutrition issue.

Supplying a mineral when forage quality decreases is common practice, but the best way to support goat reproduction and performance is to provide a mineral year-round. Long-term mineral deficiencies can directly impact your bottom line since your herd won't perform its best.

Look for a weatherized goat mineral supplement that can stand up to the changing seasons year-round. Minerals formulated with larger particle sizes can help prevent waste due to wind, water or anything else Mother Nature throws at it.

Purina® Goat Mineral is uniquely formulated with essential nutrients to support development and health in goats of all ages and breeds.

Purina Mills

SHEEP HOUSING AND FACILITIES REQUIREMENTS

Well-designed sheep facilities should promote the health and welfare of sheep. They should provide a comfortable, stress-free environment for sheep to live. In addition, the facilities should allow producers to complete routine management tasks efficiently.

Sheep require a minimum pen size and a minimum size for feeders. Pen and feeder sizes both vary based on the size of the sheep. Well-designed facilities will also save labor and allow for more efficient management tasks throughout the year.

Housing Facilities

All sheep operations should include some type of housing facility. For example, a barn or a shed would be a typical housing facility for a sheep operation. Housing facilities may be needed when lambing during the winter or early spring, for problems related to lambing, managing sick sheep, handling or sorting sheep, or other reasons. These facilities will need pens large enough to accommodate mature sheep. Sheep generally require 12 to 16 square feet per ewe in open pens inside a barn while at maintenance through mid-gestation. This area increases to 15 to 20 square feet per ewe when they have lambs. Rams require 20 to 30 square feet. Sheep housed outside should have 25 to 40 square feet per sheep for rams and ewes, and 30 to 50 square feet for ewes with lambs.

When penning ewes in jugs during lambing season, small to medium-sized ewes will need 4 ft. X 4 ft. pens, and larger ewes will need 5 ft. X 5 ft. pens. Very large ewes may need even larger pens to allow a ewe enough space to maneuver without stepping on her lambs.

Sheep with at least one inch of wool are often housed outside during the winter with access to an area that blocks the wind. Hair sheep can also handle cold winter temperatures as they grow thick undercoats to protect themselves from the weather. All sheep should be in good body condition and have access to plenty of good-quality feed and water.

Sheep will often lie down near a hay feeder during inclement winter weather, or they may seek out natural windbreaks such as wooded areas or hollows. Another option that some sheep producers utilize for winter housing is a three-sided shed open to the south or east. No matter what type of barn or shed, the facility should have adequate ventilation to provide fresh air to the sheep without producing drafts that could chill newborn lambs.

continued on page 5

continued from page 4

Feeders

Pennsylvania producers will need to feed their sheep stored forages at some point during the year. The use of feeders promotes sheep health by minimizing fecal contamination as well as limiting the amount of feed wasted. Many different feeder options are available for forages, grain, or both. It is essential to consider feeding facilities in terms of ease of use, function within the production system, and how the facilities promote animal health and well-being. Facilities do not need to be elaborate, but they do need to be both animal and producer-friendly.

The Midwest Plan Service publication, Sheep Housing and Equipment Handbook, recommends different feeder lengths, depending on feeding practices. Limit-fed rams require 12 inches of feeder space, while self-fed rams require 6 inches. Ewes require 16 to 20 inches of feeder space when limit-fed, regardless of their production status. However, when self-feeding, ewes require four to six inches from maintenance through mid-gestation, and 6 to 8 inches when nursing lambs.

Creep Feeding Facilities

Many producers choose to creep-feed the lambs to increase lamb growth rates and thus weaning weights. Producers should consider both the size of the creep feeder area and the size of the feeders within the creep area.

Lambs weighing up to 30 pounds should have 1.5 to 2 square feet of creep feeder space. As lambs grow, they require a larger creep feeder area. The square footage should increase to 8 to 10 square feet per lamb when lambs weigh 30 to 110 lbs. Weaned lambs with access to an outdoor lot should have 20 to 30 square feet per lamb.

Producers should plan for 2 inches of feeder space for lambs weighing 5 to 30 pounds. Lambs weighing 30 to 110 pounds that are limit-fed require 9 to 12 inches of feeder space and 10 inches when self-fed.

Watering Systems

All livestock require fresh, clean water for maximum performance. Ideally, animals should always have access to a high-quality water source. Water consumption varies based on animal size and weather conditions, ranging from one to three gallons per day per head. Producers should plan the watering system size based on the number of animals in a group. Rams should have adequate water access with a system that allows for two rams per foot of watering system length. One foot of watering system length for ewes can provide enough water for 15 to 25 ewes or 25 to 40 lambs weighing 30 to 110 pounds.

Summary

Providing adequately-sized facilities promotes animal health and welfare. Housing facilities should provide enough space for sheep to move around and lie down comfortably. Feeders should be large enough for less dominant, shy animals to meet their feed requirements and limit pushing and shoving amongst animals. Because water intake impacts feed intake and performance, producers should pay close attention to watering system size.

Penn State Extension

NOVEMBER 6TH

5:30 – 8:00 PM *(after store hours)*

FRIENDS & FAMILY SALE

40% OFF ALL BOOTS & CLOTHING

All Brands

EXCLUSIVE AUGUSTA CO-OP MEMBER EVENT

If you are a current member you are invited to this event!

PLUS DEALS THROUGHOUT THE STORE:
***PET, MILWAUKEE, YETI, WILD BIRD SEED, & MORE!* STAUNTON LOCATION ONLY.**

Milwaukee®

$10 OFF

$37.99

23PC SHOCKWAVE™ Impact Duty RED HELIX™ Titanium Drill Bit Set #48-89-4631

$25 OFF

$174.99

PACKOUT™ 3-Drawer Tool Box
#48-22-8443

$5 OFF

$14.99

18PC SHOCKWAVE™ Impact Duty Driver Bit Set
#48-32-4403

In-store savings on select products

EVENTS / CALENDAR

FRIENDS & FAMILY SALE (AFTER HOURS)
November 6 • 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Staunton location only.
40% off all boots & clothing! Plus deals throughout the store. Member only event.

BLACK FRIDAY SALE
November 7-8
Staunton location only.
40% off all boots & clothing.
Open to the public.

Scan to view event details