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# FACT SHEET

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## Keys to Accelerated Lambing Programs

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Accelerated lambing is a management system allowing producers to intensify production. The objective is the production of more lambs in a given period of time than is possible with once-a-year lambing.

Management is the key to a successful accelerated lambing program. The producer must attempt to increase production without increasing production costs excessively. Results from accelerated lambing practices have varied greatly and parallel the management skills of the producer.

There are several factors that are essential for an accelerated lambing program:

- Long range planning
- An abundant feed supply
- A flock of finewool breeding ewes
- A good health program
- An ample labor supply to provide care and attention at lambing and for lamb feeding
- Early weaning and finishing of lambs.

When plans have been made to follow these six points a successful accelerated lambing program may be accomplished.

### FLOCK REQUIREMENTS

A good flock of finewool breeding ewes is necessary because of their out-of-season breeding ability and their greater resistance to internal parasites. Maintain a good source of replacement ewes, since it is impractical to raise replacements for this system of production.

Older ewes fit into this type of operation because of easier lambing and their ability to produce a high percentage of lamb crop. The older ewes can be put on a speeded-up program for three lambings and then sold.

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### PASTURE MANAGEMENT

For best results in an accelerated lambing program, lighter stocking rates are necessary. Rotation grazing also is necessary for pasture improvement and for the control of internal parasites. Use stubble fields, small grain, sudan grass and bermudagrass pastures to supplement native pastures.

### BREEDING PRACTICES

Flush ewes for breeding by feeding  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  pound of supplemental feed daily or move to a fresh, rested pasture about 2 weeks before breeding. If the season has been dry, give the ewes 50,000 units of vitamin A two weeks before breeding.

Several products may be used to coordinate estrus in ewes if the ewes are already cycling. Results have been too erratic to recommend the use of other hormones.

Crossbreed with medium wool rams to obtain hybrid vigor, faster growth and greater feed efficiency. To condition rams, feed  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound concentrates per head daily for 2 weeks prior to breeding.

Rotate by turning out the top half of the rams first. After about 2 weeks take up the first rams and turn out the second half.

Table 1. Breeding and lambing schedule

Breed		Lamb
June.....	5 mo.....	November
	3 mo.	
January.....	5 mo.....	June
	3 mo.	
September.....	5 mo.....	February
	3 mo.	
May.....	5 mo.....	October

### SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

Ewes must be kept in good condition for the success of this program. Make use of stubble fields and supplemental pastures when available. Use hay, grain or other supplemental feeds to keep ewes in good condition. Supply the amount of feed necessary to keep the ewes in good condition at all times.

## LAMBING

Ewes require more care and attention to keep the lambing percentage high. Lamb on small grain or supplemental pastures when possible. Supply ewes with supplemental feed to insure good milk production. Some producers keep a salt controlled ration before the ewes at all times.

## MARKING

Castrate, dock, earmark and vaccinate for sore-mouth when a good number of lambs are on the ground. Continuous lambing requires working the lambs more often and in smaller bunches.

## CREEP FEEDING

Creep feeding is essential to this operation. Feed the same feed in the creep as the lambs will receive in the drylot when weaned.

## WEANING

Early weaning also is essential to this type of production. Wean at 9 weeks of age or 45 pounds live weight.

## FEEDING

Finishing the lambs in drylot is a necessary part of this type operation. Use high concentrate rations for finishing, and change ration ever 7 to 10 days as lambs are able to make the change.

If aureomycin is not included in the ration, vaccinate for overeating disease, and implant with 3 milligrams of stilbestrol.

## SHEARING

Shearing twice a year keeps the ewes in better condition for this type of production. Shear in March or April and again in July or August, and coordinate weaning and shearing when possible. Be sure fleeces are dry before shearing, and caution shearers about cutting teats and putting too much weight on their bellies.

Pack bags in an attractive manner. They should be firmly but not too tightly packed. Do not allow bags to touch the ground after packing. Place them in a clean vehicle or on a tarpaulin or clean floor.

## SPRAYING

Spray ewes out of the shearing pen, following recommendations in Extension Service publication

MP-691, *Texas Guide for Controlling External Parasites of Livestock and Poultry.*

Observe these precautions:

- Use only recommended sprays or dips in strengths recommended by the Food and Drug Administration.
- Follow guidelines for spraying or dipping animals to go for slaughter.
- Do not spray under a shed or barn.
- Spray with the wind, not against it.
- Do not mix materials with your hands.
- Treat animals at a time of day when you will be able to bathe and change clothes afterwards.
- Follow recommendations as to strength of solutions.
- Do not mix chemicals.

## DRENCHING

This type of operation requires closer observation of the animals. Drench animals as needed with special or regular phenothiazine or thibenzole. Change drenches occasionally so parasites do not build up a resistance to one type of drench. Avoid drenching ewes within 6 weeks of lambing with phenothiazine. Be careful not to injure the membranes of the mouth or throat when drenching. Isolate and feed those animals showing heavy infestations of internal parasites.

## MARKETING

Good marketing practices are essential to the success of an accelerated lambing program. Sell lambs as they reach a desirable weight and finish. Many lambs will be ready when they weigh 75 to 80 pounds.

Lambs should not weigh more than 110 pounds alive. Packers may discriminate against heavy lambs. Market directly to the packers or to a packer order buyer. Sell wool through one of the Texas wool and mohair warehouses.

## RECORD KEEPING

Keep records on percentage of lamb crop, lamb weights and fleece weights to help with future plans for this type of program. Records of feed costs, pounds of feed per pound of gain and veterinary expenses are also important.



Table 2. Estimated costs and returns per ewe

Economic data

	60 AU/Sec.	Your Estimate or Experience
General expenses		
Feed	\$ 2.50	_____
Veterinary and medicine	.50	_____
Salt and mineral	.20	_____
Fuel, oil, etc.	.60	_____
Utilities	.15	_____
Shearing	1.00	_____
Supplies	.45	_____
Maintenance and repairs	.40	_____
Freight and marketing	1.00	_____
Taxes	.10	_____
Feed for finishing lambs	9.00	_____
Miscellaneous	1.00	_____
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Subtotal	16.90	_____
Ram Cost	.50	_____
Interest on borrowed capital	.65	_____
Interest on ewe	1.00	_____
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Subtotal	2.15	_____
Subtotal	19.05	_____
Replacement	4.00	_____
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TOTAL	\$23.05	_____
Returns		
Lamb 150% × 80 lb. × \$.26	\$31.20	
Wool 10 lb. × \$.35	3.50	
Incentive on wool		
\$.35 × 65% = \$.2275 × 10 =	2.28	
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	\$36.98	
Returns to land, labor and management	13.93	

The authors acknowledge the assistance of Robert H. Kensing, Area Farm and Ranch Management Specialist, in preparing this economic information.

LAMING

Good records must be kept and attention must be given to the health of the ewes. Lambs should be born in good health and be able to suckle. Supplemental feeding is necessary in some cases.

WEANING

Castrol, dock, camara and vaccines for sore mouth when a good number of lambs are on the ground. Continuous weaning requires working the lambs into smaller bunches.

CREEP FEEDING

Creep feeding is essential to the operation. Feed the creep feed in a trough or bucket and allow the lambs to eat at will.

WEANING

Early weaning also is essential to this type of production. Wean at 2 weeks of age or 15 pounds live weight.

FEEDING

Flushing the ewes in early spring is a necessary part of this type of operation. Use high concentrate rations for finishing and change rations every 7 to 10 days as lambs are able to make the change.

If the ewes are in the ration, they will be able to make the change with less trouble and less loss of milk.

WEANING

Shearing twice a year keeps the ewes in better condition for this type of production. Shear in March or April and again in July or August, and coordinate weaning and shearing when possible.

Be sure ewes are dry before weaning and check them about cutting teeth and condition of milk teeth.

Keep ewes in an open lot. They should be able to touch the ground with their feet. Place them in a clean lot or on a concrete or asphalt floor.

WEANING

General expenses

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes Feed, Veterinary, Salt and mineral, Fuel, etc., Shearing, Supplies, Maintenance and repairs, Freight and marketing, Taxes, Feed for finishing lambs, Miscellaneous, and interest on bonded capital.

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes Subtotal, Reproduction, and Returns to land, labor and management.

Good records are essential to the success of an economical lambing program. All lambs should be weighed and sexed.

Keep ewes in an open lot. They should be able to touch the ground with their feet. Place them in a clean lot or on a concrete or asphalt floor.