



➔ by Dr Louis du Pisani

Every second month the production advisory service of the National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) publishes a list of management practices it considers to be important. The idea is to assist producers in managing their flocks. The following tasks should be completed in the summer rainfall areas by August/September.

➔ **Pregnant ewes (mated in March and April)**

These actions need to be concluded four weeks prior to lambing:

- Crutch or shear ewes. Newborn lambs will suckle on anything that is oblong or round in form, even lox. Ensure therefore that the udder is without any lox pieces.
- Vaccinate ewes against *Pasteurella*-related diseases and pulpy kidney. Vaccination against blue udder, redgut, and bloodgut are optional, depending on whether these diseases are prevalent in the areas around your farm.
- Look out for liver fluke and conical fluke infestations, as both parasites can cause major production losses in winter. These parasites are particularly common in groundwater dams. Typical symptoms of liver fluke are bottle jaw, and diarrhoea in the case of conical fluke.
- Inject or dose with vitamin A (especially if the animals have not had green forage for a few months) and minerals.
- Monitor the condition of ewes every week for the final eight weeks of pregnancy. A thin, underweight ewe will have an underdeveloped udder and will have insufficient body reserves to produce enough milk to raise her lamb properly. If necessary, start immediately with a feeding programme and ensure that these ewes do not lose condition. Condition-score the ewes every week and provide feed or lick as soon as their condition begins to deteriorate. Take particular note of the condition of ewes carrying twins, as well as the two-tooth ewes. Although they may appear to be in a good condition, as their abdomens expand rapidly during the last trimester of pregnancy, they can easily lose condition without it being visible or noticed.
- Ensure that these ewes lamb with sufficient amounts of good-quality forage available, preferably on rested veld or planted pasture.

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➔ Ewes to be mated in October and November

- Move the ewes to fresh camps at least 14 days prior to mating, as a natural stimulus to go into oestrus (teasing). Rested veld is a very good option. Another simple way to tease ewes is to shear them.
- If necessary, crutch the ewes as this facilitates better penetration by the rams during mating.
- Inject or dose with vitamin A (especially if the animals have not had green forage for a few months) and minerals.
- Inoculate the ewes against enzootic abortion at least six weeks before mating starts (if this disease is prevalent in your flock).
- Ensure that the ewes are free of ticks.
- Be on the lookout for liver fluke and conical fluke infestations.



➔ Rams

All actions must be concluded approximately eight weeks prior to mating to avoid temporary sterility.

- Shear the rams and conduct all the necessary vaccinations, drenching, and mineral supplementation for autumn mating.
- Dose the rams with 20 ml wheatgerm per week for the last four weeks before mating. This will improve semen quality and quantity.
- Ensure that all rams are in peak condition before mating. Flush them with oats; a good-quality lick delivers good results. Don't only use maize or chocolate maize, as this may lead to the accumulation of fat around the testes, which could affect the fertility of the rams. A lick high in protein also works well. When providing feed, ensure that there is sufficient feeding space. It is a good sign if the skin between the hind and front legs starts to turn purple.
- Test all rams for fertility, as well as for genital and venereal diseases.
- Dose or vaccinate with a broad-spectrum remedy against roundworms (particularly hairworm) and nasal worm. It is important that a ram's sense of smell is not inhibited, as he identifies ewes in heat by smelling their pheromones.
- Ensure that rams and ewes are free from ticks.

➔ Teaser rams (important this time of the year)

- Tease the ewes nine days prior to mating. Remove teaser rams by late afternoon of day nine and replace with rams.


➔ Predators

- Monitor lambing camps and adjacent areas for unwanted predators. Put precautionary measures in place by stacking holes underneath fences. Do not postpone this until the ewes start lambing, because the ewes will require your full attention.



IMPORTANT

- Read the animal health product pamphlets carefully to ensure that the product is safe to use with pregnant ewes.
- Do not vaccinate pregnant ewes with live vaccines, such as vaccines against bluetongue and Rift Valley fever. These can cause abortions, among other things.
- Read the vaccination, dosing remedy, and feed pamphlets thoroughly to ensure that they are used responsibly.
- Contact your local veterinarian if you are in doubt about any of the animal health recommendations.

The NWGA offers a production advisory service to all wool producers on contract with Cape Wools SA (CWSA), funded by the Wool Trust. Should you require more information, please contact your nearest NWGA office. 



Skandeer hierdie QR-kode vir die Afrikaanse bestuurskalender.

