



VBA eLearning — Module 9: Lambing






Preparing Your Lambing Kit









Having everything you need within arm's reach before lambing starts removes hesitation when seconds matter. Use this table to build and check your kit each season.




Please note: This is not an exhaustive list. The images in this table are randomly selected brands. They do not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by VBA. There are many excellent brands and suppliers available for the items listed. Breeders are encouraged to research options, seek advice from their vet or rural supplier, and choose products that best suit their individual circumstances.




Items are categorised as Essential - things you need, or Desirable - items that significantly improve your capability and care but can be improvised or sourced later if necessary.









Tip: Pack your kit into trays or boxes so it is always together and can be instantly taken to a ewe at a moment's notice. Check and restock prior to the start of each lambing season – don't assume last year's kit is complete.






| Item | Purpose & Notes | Priority |
|--|--|------------------|
|  | Record Keeping System A dedicated lambing record book, printed record sheets, or digital app (such as AgriWebb or a custom spreadsheet) to capture birth date, ewe ID, number of lambs, sex, birth weight, any assistance given, colostrum intake, and tag numbers. Accurate records are essential for registration, LPA compliance, breeding decisions, and identifying repeat lambing problems. | Essential |
|  | Veterinarian Numbers Save in your phone - the numbers of your livestock vet, their emergency number, and all other livestock vets in your area. | Essential |
|  | Sheep Vaccination Glanery 7-in-1 with B12 or Glanvac 6-in-1 – for ewes 4-6 weeks prior to lambing and for lambs at approximately 4 and 8 weeks of age. | Essential |
|  | Panels to Make Lambing Pens Portable panels (approx 1.5 m x 1.5 m minimum) to create individual bonding pens ('jugs') for ewe/lamb pairs. Lambing pens promote bonding, allow close monitoring, and protect the pair from disturbance by other ewes. | Desirable |
|  | Water Buckets Fresh water must be accessible to ewes, including in lambing pens, at all times. A newly lambled ewe has high water requirements for milk production. Use small flat-bottomed buckets to prevent lambs from falling in. Remember if your ewes have horns, their access is impacted and consideration of the bucket diameter is essential. As we do not want bedding to be damp, it is a good idea to use an S-hook on the handle where possible. | Essential |

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|  | <p>Trays or Plastic Boxes</p> <p>Organise and transport all kit items to the lambing paddock or shed; you may need different storage for the shed and the house – divide the items as to where you need them. Label each box by location or category for quick access.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Sheep Halter & Rope</p> <p>For restraining ewes during assisted births, udder checking, milking, or treatment. A properly fitted halter reduces stress to the ewe and improves safety for the operator. Soft rope halters are preferred over metal or rigid styles.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Gloves (disposable)</p> <p>Single-use examination gloves for routine handling, navel dipping, and lamb checks. Protect both the operator and the animal from cross-contamination.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Arm gloves (veterinary obstetric)</p> <p>Full arm-length disposable gloves (shoulder-length) for assisted births and correction of malpresentations. Essential for hygiene and protection when the hand and arm must enter the birth canal.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Lubricant</p> <p>Obstetric lubricant is essential for any assisted delivery. Reduces trauma to the ewe and the lamb during correction of malpresentations.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Resuscitator</p> <p>A small hand-operated resuscitator to draw birthing fluids from the airway or deliver breaths to a lamb that is not breathing spontaneously at birth. Fitted with a lamb-sized mask. Can make the difference between life and death in a newborn lamb.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Towels</p> <p>Old, clean towels for vigorously drying lambs, particularly in cold or wet conditions. Brisk towelling stimulates breathing and circulation. Dedicate towels to lambing use only and wash after each season.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Iodine or Iodine Tincture</p> <p>For navel dipping of newborn lambs within the first hour of birth. The higher the % of iodine the better; lower-concentration products (e.g. wound sprays) do not provide adequate disinfection of the navel cord. The moist umbilical cord is a high-risk area for infection entering a lamb soon after birth; drying the cord and protecting from infection is a critical activity for the ongoing wellbeing of a lamb. An ideal product is iodine tincture - this is iodine in an alcohol base and improves the drying-off effect due to the alcohol.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |

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|  | <p>Small 'shot' cups</p> <p>Small wide-mouthed plastic cups for dipping the navel cord in iodine. Immersion in a cup ensures full coverage of the cord stump; spraying alone is insufficient.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Thermometer</p> <p>Thermometer for assessing rectal temperature in lambs suspected of hypothermia or fever. Normal lamb temperature is 38.5–39.9°C. Temperature guides treatment: a lamb below 37.5°C must be warmed before feeding.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Lamb Bottles</p> <p>For feeding colostrum or milk replacer to lambs that are unable to nurse from a ewe or who are being hand reared. Small drink bottles are a cheap and easy option or you can purchase purpose-designed bottles. Keep several clean and ready throughout the lambing period.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Lamb Teats</p> <p>Rubber teats sized for lambs, fitted to feeding bottles. Different teats suit different lamb sizes — Pritchard teats are the most widely used but others can be helpful. Keep spares as they perish with use and cleaning.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Colostrum</p> <p>The single most critical item in the lambing kit. Maintain a supply of frozen ewe colostrum (collected from high-producing ewes at lambing) or commercial colostrum supplement. Every lamb must receive colostrum within six hours of birth, preferably sooner – this is because the lamb's ability to absorb immunoglobulins will decrease with every hour that passes. If giving manufactured colostrum, please ensure the correct dosage of colostrum is given (varies depending on the brand). NB. Ensure you have a kitchen scale and/or correct measuring abilities in your kitchen.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Udderly EZ milking device™</p> <p>A hand-held suction device for collecting colostrum from ewes with engorged udders, ewes whose lambs cannot nurse, or to build a frozen colostrum bank. Far quicker and less wasteful than hand stripping. NB. Extremely viscous colostrum may be difficult to collect with this device.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Refractometer</p> <p>Measures immunoglobulin (IgG) concentration in colostrum. A Brix refractometer reading of 22% or above in colostrum indicates good quality. Where a ewe's colostrum is poor quality, supplemental colostrum is advisable.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Tube Feeder</p> <p>A flexible stomach tube (sized for lambs) and connection vessel to hold milk. While some people use a syringe to push milk when the tube has been inserted, it is safer to utilise gravity; you can do this by removing the plunger of the syringe and allowing milk poured into the barrel of the syringe to drain into the lamb's stomach. Practice this technique before lambing begins.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |

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|  | <p>Lamb milk replacer</p> <p>Lamb-specific milk replacer for supplementing or fully raising lambs. Use a product formulated for lambs - not calf or general-purpose replacer. Mix according to instructions; incorrect dilution causes digestive scours. Another alternative is goat milk; this is the only other comparable milk suitable for lambs.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Lamb Collars</p> <p>Lamb collars are a useful strategy to identify lambs if they are born in smaller flocks.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Marking Spray Paints</p> <p>Temporary visual identification for ewes and lambs where electronic tagging has not yet occurred, or to mark ewes requiring follow-up. Use livestock-safe, non-toxic spray paints only.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>'Fish' Scale & Weighing Sling</p> <p>Record birth weights for each lamb. Birth weight is a key predictor of survival and dictates feeding requirements if supplement or hand rearing. Observing weight changes post-birth is a useful strategy to identify lambs who are not thriving. A lightweight hanging scale with a fabric sling is the most practical option but many scale-styles will do.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Lamb Jumpers</p> <p>Hand-knitted or commercial lamb jumpers provide additional warmth for small, weak, or premature lambs, particularly in cold or wet conditions.</p> | <p>Essential (in cooler months) Desirable (in warmer months)</p> |
|  | <p>Heat Mat</p> <p>A low-wattage electric heat mat provides gentle, consistent warmth for hypothermic or premature lambs. Safer than heat lamps for unattended warming as there is no fire risk. Place under bedding so the lamb is not in direct contact with the mat surface. For rapid warming, electric throw rugs can be used to wrap a lamb (always remain with lambs to ensure appropriate heat levels).</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Heat Lamp</p> <p>Infra-red heat lamp for warming hypothermic lambs or maintaining temperature in a sick lamb pen. Bottle-fed lambs appreciate extra heat in cold weather when they do not have a ewe for weather protection. Fix at a safe height to prevent burns on lambs. WARNING: Always use on a secure fitting and observe carefully. Ensure the heat lamp has 3 fixing methods to prevent dropping to the floor as this is a serious fire risk.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |

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|  | <p>Chlorhexidine</p> <p>Broad-spectrum antiseptic for cleaning hands, equipment, and even ewound sites. Use diluted as a scrub or wound wash. Also suitable for disinfecting lambing pens between uses although products such as F-10 are better options for this task. Available in concentrate — dilute accurately. Can be used to scrub prior to ewe examination if arm gloves are not available.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Paper Towels and Detergent</p> <p>For drying lambs, cleaning equipment, and general hygiene. Can be easier than managing fabric towels during lambing; dispose after use to prevent disease spread.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Antibiotic Spray</p> <p>Topical antibiotic spray (e.g. Oxytetracycline aerosol / blue spray) for application to minor wounds, assisted-birth sites, and navels with signs of infection. Record use in chemical records as required.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Vet Wrap / Cohesive Bandage</p> <p>Self-adhesive cohesive bandage for securing dressings, supporting leg injuries, or bandaging prolapsed tissue temporarily while awaiting veterinary attention. Does not require tape or pins; sticks only to itself.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Bandages & Padding</p> <p>For dressing wounds, supporting injured limbs, or padding pressure points in recumbent lambs or ewes. Sterile wound dressings and non-adherent pads are the most useful formats. Pipe can be an added item to function as back slabs for contracted tendons and other joint issues.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Blue Sheets (absorbent underpads)</p> <p>Disposable absorbent under-pads for placing under ewes during assisted births or under lambs receiving tube feeding or indoors. Keep the work surface clean and protect against disease spread by disposing after single use.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Selenium / Vitamin B12</p> <p>Injectable selenium/B12 (e.g. Multimin or Selovin LA) may be required for ewes or lambs in selenium-deficient areas. Consult your veterinarian regarding dosage, timing, and whether your region requires supplementation. Observe withholding periods.</p> | <p>Desirable (Essential if needed in your area)</p> |
|  | <p>Syringes & Needles</p> <p>Required for administering injectable treatments including selenium, antibiotics, and calcium. Keep a range of sizes: 1, 3, 5, 10, 20 and 50mL syringes; and 18G, 21G, and 23G needles. Use a new needle for each animal/injections.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |

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|  | <p>Allflex TSU applicator™ & TSUs (vials)</p> <p>The Allflex TSU (Tissue Sampling Unit) applicator is the tool to collect tissue from a sheep's for genotyping or disease testing. Required for breeders participating in genomic or parentage verification programs, such as registration with VBA.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>NLIS eID Tags & Matching Tag Applicator</p> <p>NLIS-compliant ear tags for permanent individual identification of each lamb. Apply shortly after birth, e.g. after 24-48 hours; some people tag when they are weeks old but please have a clear identification system in place if waiting. Ensure tags are NLIS-approved for your state and contain all necessary information.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>Docking Bands & Applicator</p> <p>Used for docking tails and castrating male lambs. The rings and an applicator are essential tools to safely conduct these procedures.</p> | <p>Essential</p> |
|  | <p>NumNuts™</p> <p>This is an alternative to the standard Docking Applicators. It is used for tail docking and, where required, castration of male lambs. NumNuts™ applicator applies a rubber ring with a local anaesthetic-impregnated patch to minimise pain. Follow welfare guidelines on timing and age restrictions and ensure the correct NumNuts™ vial of Lignocaine is purchased.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |
|  | <p>Creep Feeder</p> <p>A small pen or enclosure where lambs can access supplementary feed (or warmth). It is useful when needing to offer free feed to lambs but to stop ewes from over feeding. You can buy ready-made options or easily create your own using various panels or fencing.</p> | <p>Desirable</p> |