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UTILIZE PRE-WEANING FEED CONVERSION OF LAMBS OPTIMALLY WITH FEEDTEK LAMB CREEP ELITE

By Sjoerd ten Cate (Pr Sci Nat)



Efficiency in the modern-day farming enterprise is of crucial importance. For sheep farming it entails, among other things, shorter intervals between lambing, higher lambing percentages and better utilization of self-produced roughages and grains. This is in line with the growing demand for red meat that is developing worldwide. Since there is a global scarcity of fallow land that can be used for the production of red meat, greater efficiency is effectively the only way to meet the growing demand.

As far as the management of a sheep herd is concerned, a lot of development has taken place relating to more intensive management systems, such as the eight and nine months lambing systems. Concurrent with this, a lot of attention is being paid to management aspects such as lambing percentages and effective roughage production. Part of the package is also more effective utilization of roughage, where strategic supplementation plays a very important role.

Further refinement on the nutritional front can be obtained by using feed additives that can optimize production. Among the best-known additives, for example, is the use of ionophores in the finishing of feedlot animals and in the raising of young ruminants.

One of the consequences of more intensive sheep management is that the popularity of creep feeding is increasing. With the use of creep feeding, we try to address the following aspects of the period after lambing:

- Optimum utilization of young lambs' highly effective feed conversion efficiency
- Faster achievement of weaning mass
- Reduction of weaning shock on lambs
- Easier and better adaptation of lambs in feedlots, resulting in lower culling percentages
- Upholding of ewes' condition, with associated higher conception rates



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Lamb Creep Elite is a speciality protein, mineral, trace mineral and vitamin macro premix developed for the convenient home mixing of high quality lamb creep feeds. Lamb Creep Elite's goal is to help the lamb achieve as much as possible of its potential up to the point of weaning. By using a combination of additives, attention is given to the following important components of lamb development:

- Rumen development
- Feed conversion efficiency
- Dry matter intake
- Growth
- Immunity
- Health

This will provide the necessary solid foundation for the next production phases of the lamb, whether it be breeding or finishing.

The vitamins and minerals in Lamb Creep Elite are optimally balanced to support the development of the young lamb. Essential oils help stimulate appetite and destroy unwanted bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract. At the same time, prebiotics supply nutrients to the good bacteria, which help to promote effective digestion. Effective digestion and disease resistance is further enhanced by probiotics, while the lambs' innate ability to resist disease is enhanced by highly effective antioxidants. Other additives stimulate the digestion of fat and protein in milk, thus yielding more energy and amino acids available for lamb growth. Special fibres are converted to butyric acid in the rumen, which stimulates the development of papillae. Furthermore, medicaments help in the prevention of coccidiosis as well as supporting more effective utilization of nutrients such as proteins. Thus, the benefits that Lamb Creep Elite offers to the lamb are as follows:

- Ensures optimal, healthy gut flora
- Stimulates the development of the gastrointestinal tract, with the emphasis on the rumen
- Reduces oxidative stress
- Improves the lamb's ability to resist disease challenges

Where Lamb Creep Elite is included in creep feeds, the following can, therefore, be expected:

- Decreases in gastrointestinal tract disorders such as diarrhoea
- Stimulation of dry matter intake
- Increased feed utilization
- Improved growth and development of the lamb
- More effective roughage utilization at a younger age
- Achieving weaning weight at a younger age
- Fewer unproductive lambs in the feedlot

It can, therefore, be expected that lambs who receive Lamb Creep Elite in their creep feed will grow



10% to 20% better than without it. Lamb Creep Elite is, therefore, a premier approach to lamb creep feeding, with the aim of maximizing lambs' potential, while still providing a solid foundation for the lamb's future productive life. The use of quality raw materials, such as maize and soybean oilcake, is essential in the amassing of Lamb Creep Elite feeds. Providing quality energy and protein is crucial in support of unlocking the potential of Lamb Creep Elite. Palatability of feed components is also very important in order to stimulate intake of creep feed.

Ingredients	Creep Meal	Creep Meal	Complete Creep Feed	Complete Creep Feed
Maize meal (*)	800	400	650	350
Milled Wintergrain		400		300
Soybean Oilcake 47	150		100	
Extrublend 36		50		50
Canola Oilcake 33		100		50
Lucern Hay (milled)			200	200
Lamb Creep Elite	40	40	40	40
Total (kg)	990	990	990	990
Composition (%)				
Protein	16.00	15.33	15.71	15.33
Protein from NPN (% of total)	17.53	18.28	17.84	18.28
Calcium	0.72	0.75	0.78	0.81
Phosphate	0.40	0.46	0.37	0.41
TDN (Energy)	78.23	74.34	72.92	70.42

(*) Take note: 50% of the maize meal may be replaced with milled barley meal

FEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide creep feed in creep feeding pens from 14 days after the first lambs are born until weaning
- Replace up to 10% of maize meal/milled grain with molasses if preferred
- Add Feedtek Buffer Pack or Marine Buffer Pack at 1 unit per ton of creep feed for control of acidosis
- Depending on the weaning age and breed, expected total intake of creep feed can be between 13 and 25 kg per lamb

Take note that Lamb Creep Elite may not be fed to the horse family, due to the presence of an ionophore. Standard urea precautions should also be followed as Lamb Creep Elite contains moderate levels of urea.

Consult a Feedtek nutritionist for the composition of Lamb Creep Elite based creep feeds if alternative ingredients are available. **For any inquiries regarding this article, please contact the author, Sjoerd ten Cate, on 082 380 2334.**