



## SHOW SOLUTIONS

### Baby Lamb Success

February 2021

**By: Dr. Kent Williams, DVM, Trinity Veterinary Hospital in Stillwater, Oklahoma**

*Dr. Williams also operates a highly competitive flock of sheep at Williams Family Show Lambs.*

The key to baby lamb success starts long before the lamb hits the ground. It is important to be prepared. This includes providing good nutrition alongside a high-quality mineral profile, such as [Blueprint® Sheep Mineral](#), as well as preparing the ewes and having the necessary supplies gathered at your disposal in advance.

Let's start with a lambing supply check list:

1. OB sleeves and gloves
2. Lubricant
3. OB supplies, like a lamb puller, leg snare, etc.
4. Syringes and feeding tubes
5. Iodine and possible navel clips
6. Clean towels
7. Nasal syringe
8. Lamb nutrient supplement
9. Colostrum and milk replacer
10. Tail docking and castration equipment
11. Ear tags or other desired lamb identification

During active parturition, I like to have a more hands-off approach until it becomes clear that assistance is necessary. There is evidence that shows that the pressures experienced by the lamb when passing through the birth canal can actually increase the lamb's vigor. That being said, the general rule of thumb is that if there is not an obvious progression of the lambing process in 30 minutes to an hour, assistance may be necessary.

Once the lamb is on the ground, I am pretty quick to use a dry towel to wipe off its nose and, if necessary, use the nasal syringe. I then try to let the mother clean the newborn where she lambled, weather permitting. Then I will move the ewe and lamb(s) to a lambing jug with clean bedding and a heat source, depending on the lambing time. I also dip the lambs' navels with iodine at this time. I rarely have to use navel clips or tie off the umbilical cord, but some producers prefer to do this with all lambs.

At this point, I go ahead and give a nutrient supplement to each newborn, as long as I feel that they are developed enough to be able to swallow it. Next, I clean and strip the ewe's teats to make sure good colostrum is present. **The single-most important factor to getting lambs off to a successful start and to achieving a healthy life in the long term is the consumption of colostrum.**

*Continued on next page ----->*

[WWW.SHOWWRITE.COM](http://WWW.SHOWWRITE.COM)

Part of the **Alltech** Feed Division





## SHOW SOLUTIONS

Each lamb should receive 10% of its body weight in colostrum within the first 18 to 24 hours of life. I typically tube any slow lambs or any lambs that I am unsure have nursed enough with 3 to 4 ounces (90 to 120 mLs) of warm colostrum within two hours of birth. This can be repeated for lambs every three to four hours, if necessary; however, if the lambs are strong and I actively see them nursing, I typically do not repeat the process.

Generally, I try to keep lambs in lambing jugs for a few days — as long as the space allows me to do so — and then turn them out into small groups. Many producers in deficient areas will provide vitamin E and selenium supplementation to each newborn. I typically go ahead and band tails and ear-tag at this time. The timing of these tasks varies from one producer to another but is typically done within the first week of a lamb's life. Also, once the babies are turned out, it's important to offer a creep pen so the babies can eat all the creep they need. I recommend the [Show-Rite® Newco Lamb Creep](#) pellet, but others also love the texturized [Show-Rite® Lamb Feed](#). Both products work great and are highly recommended. The lambs remain on this full-feed creep until at least 8 weeks of age; some producers even prefer 10 weeks.

We hope this information helps you map out the difficult journey of lambing. Best of luck to you all!

*For more tips, please visit [www.showrite.com](http://www.showrite.com) or contact a Show-Rite representative.*

[WWW.SHOWRITE.COM](http://WWW.SHOWRITE.COM)

Part of the [Alltech](#) Feed Division

