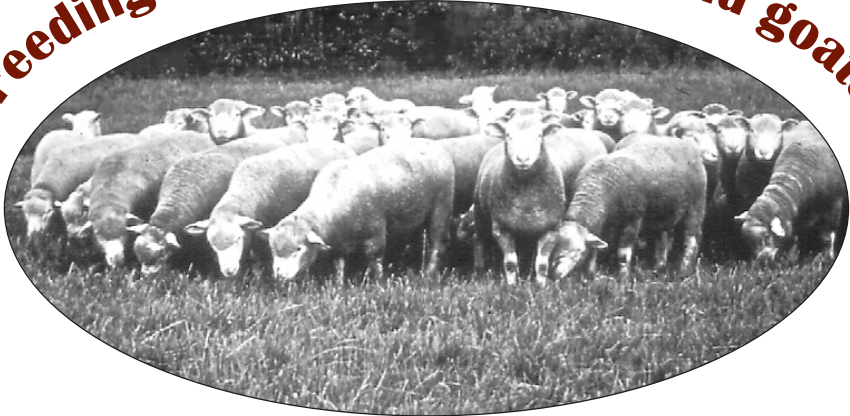


Feeding reproductive sheep and goats



The most important objective of small-stock farming is to produce lambs. Most of the lambs are sold, and the rest are kept for breeding. The profitability of an enterprise is determined by the number of lambs that reach weaning and slaughtering age. The lamb crop therefore determines how much money can be made.

Feeding influences production level and sexual activity

- Sufficient feed must be available throughout the year.
- Animals have special nutritional needs during certain production stages.
- The nutritional requirements of a lactating ewe can be up to 3 times higher compared to the time that she is dry.



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Pregnant ewes

- The condition of ewes influences their ability to conceive and lamb.
- Feeding during late pregnancy (6–8 weeks before lambing) plays a role in birth mass and the lamb's ability to survive.
- Nutritional deficiencies during late pregnancy result in the birth of small, weak lambs or kids and low milk production in ewes.
- Overfat ewes are also not desirable. They lamb with difficulty because the unborn lambs are too big and too much fat is deposited in the reproduction canals. These ewes easily fall prey to “domsiekte” (a disease of pregnant animals) if there is a sudden scarcity of grazing.

Lactating ewes

- The nutritional needs of ewes are very high when they are lactating.
- Lambs must suckle and take in colostrum as soon as possible after birth.



Frozen sheep

colostrum (defrosted and heated slightly) can be given as an alternative. In emergencies, artificial colostrum can be used.

Artificial colostrum consists of:

1 liter full-cream milk

1 beaten egg

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon cooking oil

Beat thoroughly and heat to body temperature.

Warning!

- Do not keep too many ewes.
- The veld can only provide feed for a limited number of animals.
- When too many animals are kept on the veld, the demands on the animals as well as the veld are high.
- Ewes rearing lambs, in particular, suffer when sufficient feed is not available.

Contact the Animal Production Division of the
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