



Nutrition plan of ewe lambs from weaning to mating

Need/issue: Knowledge of nutrition requirements in different stages of development.

Aim: to stimulate the growth and development of lambs for early entry into production.

How to implement:

Phase	Age (months)	Ration phase duration (dd)	Target body weight (kg)	ADG (g /day)	Alimentation
1a	0-1.5	45	12	180-200	Colostrum/suckled milk + "weaning" concentrate (19-20% Crude protein (CP), 30-32% starch, 5-6 % Crude Fiber (CF), including whey and possibly a pre-probiotic) creep-fed ad libitum up to an intake of at least 200 g/day per lamb with the ewes milked thoroughly once a day from the beginning of the third week. It is thus possible to wean at 30-35 days.
1b	1.5-3	45	18-20	130-150	Shift from "weaning" to "growth" concentrate (17% CP, 33-35% starch, 7-8% CF) up to a maximum of 30-35 g/kg live weight + good quality hay ad libitum
2	4-6	90	22-24	40-60	200 g/day of "Breeding" concentrate (15-16% CP, 27-29% starch, 9-11% CF) + hay ad libitum + rationed grazing.*
3	7-9 (mating)	90	32-35	100-120	300-400 g/day of "Breeding" concentrate + hay ad libitum grazing** Possible flushing of underweight lambs



Description:

- Nutritional requirements of ewe-lambs are poorly known, with lasting effects on the lifetime performance of ewes.
- For example, a surplus of feed supply from weaning of lambs to mating, can cause an excessive deposition of fat and connective tissue in the udder.
- Check the growth of the lambs to achieve target body weights at different ages and a weight at mating of at least 60-65% of the adult ewe weight.
- Underweight ewe-lambs appear not to respond either to dietary flushing or to cycle-activating and synchronising hormone treatments.



Expected benefits:

- Early entry into production
- Higher milk production at first lactation
- Healthier animals

Adopting a nutrition plan for lambs from weaning to mating according to the needs reported in the solution involves an increase in labour, equipment, and materials costs. On the other hand, it allows for an increase in income due to an increase in milk production and the sale of more lamb.

Prerequisites and/or limits:

- Weighing at target ages (see table).
- Breeds other than the Sarda shall have different target weights.
- For other dairy sheep breeds increase or decrease the weights according to the mature other breed/Sarda breed weight ratio.

Country: Italy

Dairy sheep

Category of Animal: Replacement ewe lambs

Topic:

- Health
- Nutrition**
- Management

Level of solution:

- Knowledge
- Practical**

Sustainability assessment

A positive impact on the environment is expected from the increase in the fertility and productivity of the flock. Better animal conditions due to greater homogeneity in groups are also expected to decrease inter-individual competition for feeding improving animal welfare.

