

Calendar of Management Activities and Practices for Sheep and Goat Production

This calendar contains a monthly listing of the common management activities and practices needed for sheep and goat production in Alabama. Some are recommended at a certain time of the year and others are recommended when lambs and kids are a certain age or at a certain stage in their reproductive cycles.

Each bimonthly list is divided into three sections: general, management activity, and health. Management practices in the general category are seasonal and apply to most sheep and goat producers in the state. Lambing and kidding are based on a breeding season from August through December for sheep and July through December for goats. Few ewes and does cycle in March and April; February, May, June, and July are considered transitional months. Tropical breeds of goats

may cycle year-round. These dates are not necessarily the best dates for all producers. They are chosen because they are reasonably close to what many producers use. Establish lambing and kidding dates based on your feed resources and availability of labor. A ewe's or doe's energy and protein requirements increase greatly at lambing and kidding.

Use of any animal health product that is inconsistent (species, route, or dosage) with its label constitutes extra-label drug use and requires a veterinary prescription and valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. Exaggerated withdrawals should be used whenever administering a drug extra-label. It is important to note that many anthelmintics and other drugs are not approved for use in sheep and goats and require veterinary consultation.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor forage and hay availability. Be alert to the changing nutritional needs of the flock and herd during gestation, lambing, and lactation. Continue supplemental feeding until grass is plentiful. • Avoid overcrowding and overstocking. • Avoid feeding on the ground. • Offer a free-choice mineral mixture. A good calcium: phosphorus ratio is between 1:1 and 1.5:1. • Observe for symptoms of internal parasite infestation such as rough hair coat, weakness, bottle jaw, weight loss, diarrhea, and anemia. • Provide clean, fresh water to the ewe and doe immediately after birth. • Provide a place for orphaned lambs and kids. • Evaluate your inventory of animals that will be available for sale to target specific holidays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check ewes and does frequently during lambing and kidding season. Expect the first lambs 140 to 155 days or first kids 146 to 155 days after turning the ram or buck with the breeding. Within an hour of the water breaking, the first lamb or kid should be delivered, and all of the lambs and kids should be delivered within 3 hours. • Place ewes and does with newborns in a lambing or kidding pen (jug) for at least 2 days after birth. • Try to graft onto other ewes and does those offspring not receiving enough milk. Ewes and does sometimes fail to claim their newborns because of poor physical condition or other circumstances. • Tag lambs and kids at birth. Record birth dates, tag numbers, and ID. • Castrate and tail dock your lambs at an early age (2 weeks or younger). Male kids can be castrated and disbudded at the same age. • Provide creep feed to your lambs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect newborn lambs and kids from severe weather. Provide a place out of the cold and wind. • Be ready to provide birthing assistance, if necessary. • Assemble a survival kit. • Be sure that newborns nurse and get colostrum (first milk) during the first 2 to 4 hours after birth. • Apply iodine to newborn's naval as soon as possible after birth. • Vaccinate lambs and kids, whose dams had not been vaccinated before giving birth, with CD-T (or type D) at approximately 6 weeks of age and again 2 to 4 weeks later. If you are unsure of vaccination status, vaccinate for type D at 3 weeks followed by a booster. • Administer the tetanus antitoxin to lambs and kids at the time of docking, castration, or disbudding if the vaccination status of ewes and does is unknown. • Be aware that lambs and kids and lactating ewes and does are the most susceptible animals in the herd. Sheep and goats heavily infested with internal parasites will have pale mucous membranes due to blood loss or anemia. • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue monitoring forage and hay availability. Be alert to the changing body condition score of the flock and herd. Continue supplemental feeding until grass is plentiful. Check feet and legs to avoid lameness. • Watch for symptoms of parasite infestation such as rough hair coat, weakness, bottle jaw, weight loss, diarrhea, and anemia. • Consider feeding a lactating female based on whether she is nursing a single or twins, her age, and the time of year she gave birth. • Offer a free choice mineral mixture. A good calcium: phosphorus ratio is between 1:1 and 1.5:1. • Continue observing for symptoms of internal parasite infestation such as rough hair coat, weakness, bottle jaw, weight loss, diarrhea, and anemia. • Evaluate your inventory of animals that will be available for sale to target specific holidays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue checking ewes and does frequently during lambing and kidding season. • Try to graft onto other ewes and does those offspring not receiving enough milk. Ewes and does sometimes fail to claim their newborns because of poor physical condition or other circumstances. • Begin evaluating the number of lambs and kids born per female exposed (lambing and kidding rate). Is there a natural concentration of births in any particular month or months? • Shear your sheep and trim their feet in April. Sheep must be dry at shearing. Keep the sheared wool clean; do not keep it in plastic feed sacks. • Plan to start weaning at 10 to 12 weeks of age. Remove the dam from the offspring, Milk production in the ewe and doe is very small by that time. • Find out the dates for the Wool Pool delivery location in Mississippi and Tennessee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect newborn lambs and kids from severe weather. Provide a place out of the cold and wind. • Be ready to provide birthing assistance, if necessary. • Assemble a survival kit. • Be sure that newborns nurse and get colostrum (first milk) during the first 2 to 4 hours after birth. • Apply iodine to newborn's naval as soon after birth as possible. • Vaccinate lambs and kids, whose dams were not vaccinated before giving birth, with CD-T (or type D), at approximately 6 weeks of age and again 2 to 4 weeks later. If you are unsure of vaccination status, vaccinate for type D at 3 weeks followed by a booster. • Administer the tetanus antitoxin to lambs and kids at the time of docking, castration, or disbudding if the vaccination status of ewes and does is unknown. • Be aware that lambs and kids and lactating ewes and does are the most susceptible animals in the herd. Sheep and goats heavily infested with internal parasites will have pale mucous membranes due to blood loss or anemia. • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. • Observe for signs of external parasites and treat accordingly. External parasites such as lice, flies, mosquitoes, and ticks can also affect goats. These pests are prevalent during spring, summer, and fall.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that between weaning and breeding the ewe and doe are in a dry period with nutrient requirements at their lowest. A maintenance diet is sufficient as long as weight lost during lactation is recovered before breeding. • Supplement, if necessary, replacement ewes, lambs, and doelings for them to weigh at least 60 to 75 percent of their estimated mature weight by breeding time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose replacement young ewe lambs and doelings in early May and June. Choose with emphasis on multiple births and early-born lambs and kids. • Cull and sell nonproductive ewes and does that failed to give birth or failed to wean a lamb or a kid. Cull ewes and does that do not lamb or kid by 2 years of age. Also cull and sell those with bad mouths, bad feet and legs, or bad teats or udders. • Turn out bucks with does. Recommended buck to doe ratio is 1 buck per 20 to 25 does. Be sure young bucks avoid excessive weight loss. In some instances, limit the number of females to a lower ratio. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. • Observe for symptoms of parasite infestation such as rough hair coat, weakness, bottle jaw, weight loss, diarrhea, and anemia. • Observe for signs of external parasites and treat accordingly. External parasites such as lice, flies, mosquitoes, and ticks can also affect goats. These pests are prevalent in spring, summer, and fall. • Evaluate rams and bucks for breeding soundness 30 to 60 days before beginning of the breeding season. Do a physical examination, reproductive tract examination, and semen evaluation.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding season begins for some producers. • Well-fed animals are more resistant to diseases and parasites. Supplementing a ewe or a doe so she is gaining weight just before breeding is known as flushing. This practice may increase lambing and kidding percentage. Start about 2 to 3 weeks before rams and bucks are turned in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cull and sell nonproductive ewes and does that failed to give birth or failed to wean a lamb or a kid. Cull ewes and does that do not lamb or kid by 2 years of age. Also cull and sell those with bad mouths, bad feet and legs, or bad teats or udders. • Turn out bucks with does by early July. Does bred in July are due to kid by the end of November. Recommended buck to doe ratio is 1 buck per 20 to 25 does. Young bucks should avoid excessive weight loss, and, in some instances, limit the number of females to a lower ratio. • Turn out rams with ewes in early August when most ewes start coming in heat. Ewes bred in August are due to lamb in January. Recommended buck to doe ratio is 1 buck per 20 to 25 does. • Use a marking harness or rub colored grease on the ram's chest to detect breeding activity. If possible, change colors every 18 days. Record breeding dates to plan your lambing activity. Ewes bred in August are due in January. • Be aware that the presence and odor of the ram or buck, when introduced in the herd, will stimulate the ewe or doe to go into heat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and a valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. • Observe for signs of external parasites and treat accordingly. External parasites such as lice, flies, mosquitoes, and ticks can also affect goats. These pests are prevalent during spring, summer, and fall. • Check parasite load of ewes and does, and collect fecal samples on those showing signs of parasitism. • Evaluate rams and bucks for breeding soundness 30 to 60 days before the beginning of the breeding season. Do a physical examination, reproductive tract examination, and semen evaluation.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe for any female returning to heat as the breeding season continues. This could be an indication the ram or buck is not settling them. • Always feed properly. Well-fed animals are more resistant to diseases and parasites. • Record breeding dates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cull and sell nonproductive ewes and does that failed to give birth or failed to wean a lamb or a kid. Cull ewes and does that do not lamb or kid by 2 years of age. Also cull those with bad mouths, bad feet and legs, or bad teats or udders. • Ewes and does bred in October will lamb and kid in late February and March. • Remove rams or bucks in October if you want a shorter breeding season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and a valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. • Observe for symptoms of parasite infestation such as rough hair coat, weakness, bottle jaw, weight loss, diarrhea, and anemia. • Observe for signs of external parasites and treat accordingly. External parasites such as lice, flies, mosquitoes, and ticks can also affect goats. These pests are prevalent during spring, summer, and fall. • Evaluate rams and bucks for breeding soundness 30 to 60 days before the beginning of the breeding season. Include a physical examination, reproductive tract examination, and semen evaluation.

General	Management Activity	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor forage and hay availability. Be alert to the changing nutritional needs of the flock and herd during gestation. • Provide supplemental feeding in the third trimester, if needed. Nutrition is critical in late gestation (last 50 days) because 70 percent of fetal growth occurs during this time. Protein and energy requirements increase. • Provide clean, fresh water to ewes and does immediately after birth. • Provide a place for orphaned lambs and kids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean the barn in November in preparation for lambing and kidding. • Provide a shelter for pregnant females in case of bad weather. • Check your breeding records in December and sort those early-bred females a week or two before their due dates. Does that conceived during July will give birth in December. Ewes that conceived during August will give birth in January. • Check ewes and does frequently during lambing and kidding season. Expect the first lambs or kids 148 days after turning the ram or buck with the breeding. Within an hour of the water breaking, the first lamb or kid should be delivered, and all of the lambs and kids should be delivered within 3 hours. • Place ewes and does with newborns in a lambing or kidding pen (jug) for at least 2 days after giving birth. • Tag lambs and kids at birth. Record birth dates, tag numbers, and ID. • Remember that breeding season should end by December. • Cull any ewe or doe that did not breed by the end of the breeding season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccinate ewes and does for enterotoxemia type C and D and tetanus (CD-T) approximately 30 days before parturition so the lambs and kids will receive passive immunity through the colostrum (first milk). • Remember that extra-label drug use requires a prescription and a valid veterinarian-patient-client relationship. • Observe for signs of lice and treat if necessary.