

Lamb Adoption – How Do “Ewe” Do It?

Page 1: Introduction

This survey is for UK sheep farmers and those involved in the care of sheep at lambing time. We are interested in the techniques used to deal with orphan lambs namely whether they are adopted onto another ewe or reared artificially.

From the data collected we hope to be able to share the best practice husbandry for dealing with orphan lambs.

Taking part is voluntary and much appreciated; this survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.



By ticking the below and completing the survey you are consenting to participating in this survey and that you understand the information below:

- Data will be anonymised, treated confidentially, saved securely and subject to UK general data protection, there is no personal information asked for as part of this study therefore no way to identify individuals.
- Any information cannot be used against you and will only be collected for the purpose of this project by the authorised researchers.
- The anonymised information may be used in publications.
- The survey has approval from the Royal Veterinary College's Ethical Review Board (Ref: URN SR2022-0045).

1. Confirmation of age (you must be over 18 to take part). * *Required*

I am over 18 years of age

2. By clicking confirm I am giving my consent to take part in the survey and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any point. * *Required*

Confirm

Page 2: Your Flock

3. What is the size of your flock?

- 50 or less
- 51-149
- 150-249
- 250-349
- 350-449
- 500-699
- 700-999
- 1000+

4. What percentage of your flock is taken up by the breeding flock?

5. What type of holding do you have / work on?

- Commercial Sheep only
- Commercial Sheep + Arable
- Commercial Sheep + Cattle
- Commercial Sheep + Cattle + Arable
- Pedigree breeders
- Small holder (sheep only)
- Small holder (mix of animals)
- Other

5.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

6. What is the main breed(s) of sheep on your farm?

7. Is your flock indoor or outdoor lambing? (please select one)

- Predominantly Indoor lambing
- Predominantly Outdoor lambing
- Mix
- Other

7.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

8. Do you synchronise lambing?

- Yes (e.g. sponge)

- Yes (e.g. teaser)
- No
- Don't know

9. When will/did you start lambing this year (2022)? Select the 1st of the month if you do not have a specific day

Dates need to be in the format 'DD/MM/YYYY', for example 27/03/1980.



(dd/mm/yyyy)

10. How long does lambing last on average (in weeks)?

11. If you lamb indoors do you use individual pens after lambing for the ewe and her lamb/s? (please select one answer)

- Yes
- No
- n/a Lamb outdoors
- Other

11.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

12. If you lamb indoors what bedding is used for ewes and lambs? (Select all that apply)

- Straw
- Woodchip
- Shavings
- n/a Lamb outdoors
- Other

12.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

13. What is the average age (in weeks) at which lambs are sent to slaughter?

14. How many people (including yourself) are involved in the lambing period? (note include full time staff and family helpers involved in lambing as well those that join as temporary help)



Page 3: Management of orphaned lambs

15. If you have orphan lamb(s) how do you normally go about adopting them onto another ewe? (Select as many methods as you use)

- Adoption pen (single)
- Adoption pen (multiple in one place)
- Tether in standard pen
- Cover in birth fluid from ewe + tie legs
- Cover in birth fluid from ewe + do not tie legs
- Attempt to disguise the smell of the lamb/make similar to other lamb (please explain how you do this below)
- Where possible use skin from a lamb that has died and foster
- Do not attempt to adopt/foster lambs onto other ewes
- Do not attempt to artificially rear lambs
- Other

15.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

15.b. If you selected "Attempt to disguise smell of lamb/make similar to other lamb" please add what you use here

16. How often and with what is the adoption pen cleaned out? (if you do not use adoption pens please leave out)

17. Please rank the reasons below for adopting lambs from 1 (most common) to 6 (least common).

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
Mother died	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Ewe not a good mother	<input type="checkbox"/>						
To put onto a ewe that only had a single	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Biological mother blind teat/not producing enough milk to sustain more than one lamb	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Mother not producing any milk	<input type="checkbox"/>						
High number of triplets/quads	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>						

17.a. If you selected Other, please specify here

18. If you removed a lamb not due to the ewe having triplets or more, do you mark the mother ewe so you know you had to take lambs from her? (please select one answer)

- Yes
- No
- n/a

19. Do you mark the adopted ewes so you can identify they had lambs adopted on them? (please select one answer)

- Yes
- No
- n/a

20. How long do you monitor the adoption technique before allowing the ewe and lamb(s) out?

21. What do you think is the best method to adopt lambs onto a ewe?

22. How successful is adoption/ rearing of orphan lambs on your farm? (please select one answer per row)

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	Never successful	Sometimes successful	Neutral	Somewhat successful	Always successful	Not applicable
How successful is adoption on your farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>					
How successful is artificially rearing orphan lambs on your farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>					

23. How do you think the growth rate of adopted lambs compare to those reared by their dam?

- Better
- Same
- Worse
- n/a

24. If you rear orphan lambs artificially how do you feed them? (Select all that apply)

- Bottle
- Milk Bar
- Not Applicable
- Ad lib milk via teats (e.g. mini maid)
- Other

24.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

25. If you rear orphan lambs where is the pen located? (Select all that apply)

- In the same barn as ewes due to lamb
- In the same barn as lambed ewes and their lambs
- Separate building to other sheep
- Next to farm office/ staff facilities
- Other

25.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

26. On average how many orphan lambs do you have during lambing?

27. How many of these do you think survive?

28. What's the average weaning age (in weeks) of artificially reared lambs on your farm?

29. What are your top tips for artificially rearing orphan lambs successfully?

30. What are your top tips for adopting lambs successfully?

Page 4: Demographics

31. Please state your gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Self describe

31.a. If you prefer to self describe please use this space here to do so

32. Please state your age

- 20 or under
- 21-30
- 31-50
- 51-70
- 70+
- Prefer not to say

33. Please state your highest level of education

- School education
- Further education (FE) (Any education after secondary school that is not an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. eg. College, Apprenticeship)
- Higher education (HE) - (Undergraduate or postgraduate qualification)

34. What is the length of time you have worked with sheep?

- <2 Years
- 2-5 Years
- 5 Years +
- 10 Years +
- 20 Years +
- 30 Years +

35. What is your role on the farm?

- Partner/ Owner
- Manager
- Shepherd
- Tenant
- Worker
- Family/ Family business
- Other

35.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

36. Which region of the UK are you based?



Page 5: Final page

Thank you for completing our survey if you have any questions about it get in touch with Dr Nicola Blackie (nblackie@rvc.ac.uk) or Dr Louise Whatford (lwhatford@rvc.ac.uk)

Key for selection options

36 - Which region of the UK are you based?

Aberdeenshire
Angus
Antrim
Argyll & Bute
Armagh
Ayrshire
Banffshire
Bath and North East Somerset
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
Berwickshire
Blaenau Gwent
Borders
Bridgend
Bristol
Buckinghamshire
Caerphilly
Caithness
Cambridgeshire
Cardiff
Carmarthenshire
Ceredigion
Cheshire
Clackmannanshire
Conwy
Cornwall
County Durham
Cumbria
Denbighshire

Derbyshire
Devon
Dorset
Down
Dumfries & Galloway
Dunbartonshire
East Ayrshire
East Dunbartonshire
East Lothian
East Renfrewshire
East Riding of Yorkshire
East Sussex
Essex
Fermanagh
Fife
Flintshire
Gloucestershire
Greater London
Greater Manchester
Gwynedd
Hampshire
Herefordshire
Hertfordshire
Highland
Inverclyde
Isle of Anglesey
Isle of Wight
Isles of Scilly
Kent
Kincardineshire
Lanarkshire
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Londonderry
Merseyside
Merthyr Tydfil
Midlothian
Monmouthshire
Moray

Neath Port Talbot
Newport.
Norfolk
North Ayrshire
North Lanarkshire
North Somerset
North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
Nottinghamshire
Orkney
Oxfordshire
Pembrokeshire
Perth & Kinross
Powys
Renfrewshire
Rhondda Cynon Taff
Rutland
Shetland
Shropshire
Somerset
South Ayrshire
South Gloucestershire
South Lanarkshire
South Yorkshire
Staffordshire
Stirlingshire
Suffolk
Surrey
Swansea
Torfaen
Tyne & Wear
Tyrone
Vale of Glamorgan
Warwickshire
West Dunbartonshire
West Lothian
West Midlands
West Sussex
West Yorkshire

Western Isles
Wiltshire
Worcestershire
Wrexham
