

# Care of Club Lambs

The club lamb industry is one of the sheep industry's most popular segments especially in the summer months. Young 4-H and FFA members often learn stockmanship and herdsman skills taking care of a small group of club lambs. This can be a very educational and informational project especially when a mentor will help with basic feeding and management skills needed. As producers we need to take the time and offer both information and some hands-on help with these projects to insure a positive experience for the youth.

Once you have shorn the club lambs and washed them, they have no natural defense from flies or insect bites. You will need to keep them sprayed with a fly or insect repellent almost on a daily basis. Be sure that you spray their legs and underneath. Take care not to get any spray in their eyes as it will cause irritation and damage their eyes. Using a large fan on the lambs during the heat of the day will also reduce the amount of flies. The fan is mainly used to keep the lambs cool and comfortable on hot, humid days and is a good tool to help reduce the insect bites.

Also, you will need to keep an antifungal spray on the lambs following each show to help prevent the spread of "Club Lamb Fungus."

We recommend using Nolvasan or a similar product prior to and following any contact with other lambs or exposure to show blankets or equipment used on other lambs. Lambs that develop the fungus lesions are usually done with their show career because of the long recovery period following a fungal infection.

Feeding of club lambs is an art and science and there are no written rules to follow. The best and most successful route is having an experienced person evaluate your lambs and feeding program on a routine basis throughout the entire summer show season. Hand feeding them on a 2 or 3 times a day plan is the most common; you need to keep them gaining but not at their full potential if you want to be competitive. Exercise is required to the lamb for building muscle and keeping a "firm tone" in its muscle. There is no substitute for a good mentor when it comes to this area.

If your lamb develops a cough, the use of Naxcel is often an effective treatment. Naxcel does not leave an injection site lump or abscess if given properly and has no slaughter withdrawal.

Be sure to always provide fresh cool water and never leave the lamb tied on a halter for extended periods of time or unattended.

Lambs are likely to experience heat exhaustion if left in the sun or standing on a halter without access to water. Always consider the lamb when you haul it or have it at the fair for exhibition.

The common diseases seen in club lambs include: pinkeye, soremouth, club lamb fungus, rectal prolapse, fly strike, pneumonia and heat exhaustion. Most of these can be avoided with the application of good management. Be sure not to leave extra feed pails setting where the lambs can get to them if they get a gate open. Lambs on a limited grain intake will gladly eat any and all grain they can find. This is what we call acidosis or grain overload and is an emergency situation. Treatment with mineral oil, activated charcoal, bicarbonate and penicillin is sometimes successful, but it is difficult to get the lambs eating and feeling normal again if they ate very much grain.

The only vaccinations required are soremouth vaccine and clostridium types C&D. If you purchase lambs, most lambs are given these prior to selling. You simply need to ask the seller for the lambs current vaccination status, especially if you are mixing lambs from different flocks or showing at more than one fair with the same lambs.

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