



# Flushing Ewes

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Just what is flushing your ewes? Flushing means increasing the level of feed offered to the breeding ewes, mostly in the form of energy, starting approximately one month prior to the introduction of the ram. With the increased amount of feed offered, the ewe will begin to put on weight. This will then signal the ewe's body that she will be capable of raising more than one lamb. In turn this will increase her ovulation rate, which results in a higher lambing percentage or more lambs born per ewe.

Increasing the energy level of the ewe should continue throughout the breeding season until a few weeks after the ram is removed. This will allow for the implantation of the fetuses in the uterus. Ewes that are in good to fair body condition will respond the best to flushing. This is where body condition becomes really important. Ewes that are in poor body condition will tend to be less responsive as will ewes that are too fat. Rams will also benefit from the extra energy in the ration because they will tend to lose less weight over the breeding season. In addition, they will maintain their vigor for breeding.

Energy levels in the ration can be increased by adding grain at a rate of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound per head per day or by moving the flock to lush pasture. Many farm managers underutilize these two methods; the best management practice would be to group ewes according to body condition and feed accordingly.

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