

For Your Information

Courtesy Of:

Cotati Large Animal Hospital

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Lambing and Kidding

Birth Supplies

- Betadine scrub
- Lube
- Towels
- Gloves
- Bucket
- Small pen with clean straw
- Stronger Iodine

Stages of Labor

- Stage 1: Cervical Dilation
 - 2-7 days prior to delivery
 - The ewe separates herself from the flock and may appear uncomfortable
 - Uterine contractions begin, pushing the fetus up against the cervix
 - These contractions are not usually visible
 - Cervix begins to relax and the thick cervical mucous plug is passed
- Stage 2: Delivery of the Fetus
 - Lasts 1-2 hours
 - Visible abdominal straining begins and the water breaks
 - The amniotic sac which surrounds the fetus appears at the vulva and tears
 - The lamb/kid appears shortly after
 - starting with two front feet (dew claws down) and then the head for normal presentation
- Stage 3: Passage of the Placenta
 - Up to 12 hours after delivery of last lamb/kid
 - Less intense uterine contractions continue after the lamb/kid is born

When to Be Concerned

- If 30 minutes after the onset of abdominal straining or breaking of the fetal membranes and no lambs/kids appear, then clean the vulva and your arm and with lubrication
- Wait 30 minutes more; then if no progress, check the cervix again
- If no progress, then please call your veterinarian for advice
- Please feel free to call your regular veterinarian at any time with questions or concerns

Definitions

- Meconium is dark orange/brown mucoid fecal material passed by the newborn lamb. It is composed of the secretions of the intestine and amniotic fluid swallowed while during fetal development. A lamb which becomes stressed or oxygen deprived during delivery may pass the meconium prior to birth, resulting in orange staining of the wool.
- Loschia is brown/red discharge from the vulva of the ewe/doe. The discharge can last for up to three weeks after delivery. This is the normal process of the uterus healing and involuting (returning to a non-pregnant state). If the loschia has an odor then, this could be a sign of a uterine infection.
- Colostrum is the first milk that is produced by the mother. It contains an increased number of antibodies and white blood cells that are absorbed through the lamb/kid's intestine during the first 24 hours of life. These antibodies and white blood cells passively give the baby its ability to fight off infection for the first few months of life. After 24 hours the baby's intestines lose the ability to absorb the colostrum unaltered directly into the bloodstream.