

IMPORTANCE

Good quality feed results in good animal performance leading to high birth rate, high lamb birth weight, faster growth rate and stronger and healthy lambs.

Non producing sheep (e.g. non-pregnant ewes and non-lambing ewes) do not require as much quality feed as the producing sheep. Grazing alone is not sufficient for producing sheep if farms have poor quality pasture. Supplementary (extra) feed should be provided during the important stages of production.

WHEN TO PROVIDE EXTRA AND QUALITY FEED

A. *PRE-MATING (before breeding)*

Begin with the breeding stock at least 2 weeks before mating by carefully examining the ewes and the rams ensuring that hooves are trimmed, over-grown horns cut back and extra feed given to improve the body condition. “Flushing” is providing good Nutrition for maintenance & production by having Breeding Ewes on an increasing plane of Nutrition for 3 weeks prior to



mating which will ensure increase in the number of Ova (eggs) at Oestrus.

Good body condition of rams will improve Semen production and their ability to mate. Poor feeding will result in rams being tired quickly and mate less number of ewes.

Flushing will improve the ewes’ body condition and increase the chance of getting more than one lamb per ewe. Supplementary feeding should be carried out 2 weeks before and until 2 weeks after mating.

B. *PRE-LAMBING (before giving birth)*

Once pregnant, ewes do not need supplementary feed until the last 6 weeks of pregnancy to until the lamb is weaned. Ewes need supplementary feed to produce healthy lambs. Lack of quality feed will result in weak lambs, which can die easily after or even before birth.

C. *POST-LAMBING (after birth)*

The survival of lamb after birth depends largely on the lamb’s birth weight and ewes milk production. Continue feeding the ewes with quality supplementary feed. Amount of supplementary feed depends on type of grass available and the number of ewes with lambs. “Steaming up” is the process of maximising milk production after lambing through quality feeding.

Lack of feed will result in low ewe milk production, low growth rate and high death rate of lambs and poor body condition and death of ewes.

D. *WEANING (separating lambs from ewes)*

After weaning, the ewes can be fed on grass only. Continue feeding weaners or lamb with supplementary feed as they will not be getting milk from the ewes.

TYPES OF SUPPLEMENTARY FEED AND ITS PREPARATION

1. *Coconut meal, mill mix and molasses diet.*
Mix 50 parts of coconut meal, 50 parts of mill mix and enough molasses so that the feed is not dry and dusty. Feed the diet at the rate of 250g/sheep/day.

2. *Coconut meal, mill mix, molasses and urea diet.*

Mix 50 parts of coconut meal and mill mix each, molasses and 3% of urea by weight of molasses, e.g. for 10 kg of molasses mix 300 grams of urea. It is important to dissolve the urea in hot water and then mix it well with molasses.

3. *Coconut meal, mill mix, molasses plus 3% urea and fodder (paragrass, guinea grass, guatamala, elephant grass, sugar cane tops) diet.*
Mostly given when there is less grass available for grazing - drought feeding. The amount of fodder



to be mixed depends upon the number of animals and the pasture condition. However, the more fodder the better since it does not cost anything.

4. *Molasses + 3% urea diet*

Can be given to the adult sheep when the pasture is still available for grazing. Dissolve urea, 3% by weight of molasses, in hot water - e.g. 300g urea to 1litre of water. Mix the urea solution with molasses properly and pour on the feeding troughs or containers. Feed at the rate of 50 - 100 grams/sheep/day.

5. *Urea Molasses Block (UMB)*

Can be given to any class of stock after they have started grazing. A well mixed block will allow the sheep to consume about 70 - 110g/sheep/day. High UMB intake by sheep can cause urea toxicity (poisoning), so mix hard blocks and keep it away from rain or water spillage to stop sheep from eating more than required.

Please ensure that your Livestock Officer is present during the preparation of UMB.

E. WATER

Ensure that a continuous supply of clean water is available to the stock at all times.

F. UREA MOLASSES BLOCK RECIPE

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Molasses | 50% |
| Urea | 3% |
| Coconut meal | 20% |
| Mill mix | 10% |
| Calcium | 10% |
| Salt | 5% |
| Super Phosphate | 2% |

Method of Preparation

1. Heat molasses to dissolve urea and salt properly
2. Remove it from the heat
3. Mix super phosphate with half of the coconut meal
4. Mix calcium with half of the mill mix
5. Mix the remaining coconut meal and mill mix
6. Add coconut meal mixed with super phosphate to the molasses and mix thoroughly
7. Add calcium mixed with mill mix and continue mixing
8. Add the remaining coconut and mill mix mix thoroughly and fill into a container or box to form a block.
9. Store the block in a dry place to avoid spoilage.



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