



SINCE 1899

Oropi
School

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Lamb Information Booklet

To Begin

Great, you've decided to exhibit a lamb at your school's Calf Club. Before approaching a farmer for your lamb you may need to check you have a few essential things.

Grazing

Lambs need safe, well fenced paddocks with shelter from extreme heat or cold, and clean water in a low trough which your lamb can reach easily.

Lambs need good quality, fresh, long grass as (when they are very young) they like to nibble at the tips of the grass.

A milk feeder

Lambs – A plastic 1.5 litre lemonade bottle is fine, with a screw on teat which is available at any rural supply store.

Time

Make sure you have time to look after and play with your lamb before and after school.

You will need to allow up to 30 minutes morning and afternoon to care for your pet.

This is your responsibility, not Mum and Dad's, so you may need to get up earlier in the morning and allow time in the afternoon. Your lamb will be dependent on you for its food and shelter because you will be its foster parent for the next two to three months.

It's a big responsibility but one from which you will enjoy great satisfaction.

Where to get your lamb

Your school has a list of local farmers who are prepared to supply animals for Calf Club. You or your parents can contact them and see if they have any available. It is at the farmer's discretion as to how the animal is supplied to you, they may give it to you, sell it, lend it etc. This is for you to negotiate with him directly.

Breed

Make sure that when you pick up your lamb you ask the farmer what breed it is, and for what purpose they are grown. The Judge may ask you about this.

What to look for

There is one person to talk to when it comes to selecting your lamb – the farmer who bred it. He will select a lamb which is healthy, has been fed colostrum in the first 12 hours if possible (this may not be so for an orphan), and is feeding well from a bottle.

Keep a Dairy

Remember to record the dates when your lamb was born, when it came to you and the milestones which happen during its time with you: when you reduce the number of milk feeds in the day, when you supplement with meal or pellets, when you started to train it etc.

A Calf Club Diary for lambs will be available from the school.

FEEDING YOUR LAMB

Most of the lambs that become available for Calf Club are orphans. A newly born lamb must have colostrum. (When lambs are born the first milk the mother produces is called Colostrum; it is full of antibodies which will make your lamb healthy and strong).

Usually, the farmer will nurse them through the first few days and then they can be passed over to you. When you first take delivery of your lamb, remember that this is a baby animal which will be feeling lonely and lost without its mother, so make sure you give it lots of attention and love.

You may still need to help it suck from an artificial teat for the first few days.

You will by now have arranged a pen/small paddock where your lamb can be kept. For very young lambs you may need to provide shelter in the garage or laundry for a while until it's strong enough to be left outside at night time. An old dog kennel makes a great lamb house once it is outside in its pen/paddock.

For the first few days as you become friends, it will help to have a small area so wherever you are in the



pen you are close to the lamb. It can hear your voice and will soon begin to trust you. The best way to become friends is by feeding it.

Right from the start your lamb will need feeding at least four times a day. You may need Mum or Dad to help out with this while you are at school.

If you live on a farm you can get cows milk to feed your lamb. For many of you, you will need to purchase lamb milk formula and mix it with warm water.

It is very important to keep whatever equipment you use to feed your lamb completely clean. Lambs can get a tummy bug called scours (diarrhoea) from dirty feeding equipment, so clean everything after feeding with hot soapy water and rinse well, so it's ready for the next feed. Treat scours with an electrolyte first.

Should you need it an anti-scour product is available from your vet.

How much to feed

The farmer will tell you this and you will need to review this as your lamb will grow very quickly. As a general rule, after feeding, your lamb will look "full", its tummy will be round and the lamb will be happy, not calling for milk. To begin with your lamb will not drink much at each feed – probably no more than 150ml because its tummy is very small, and you need to be **very careful** not to over-feed it. Get Mum or Dad to check that its slides are flat – not bulging – after its feed.



Replacement milk powders will have mixing instructions at the correct levels so make sure you read them carefully.

Be sure to feed your lamb at the same time each day. That way it won't take long for it to know when dinner time is!

Special message for Mums and Dads

The New Zealand Sheep Council has issued a caution about a bloat which can affect lambs (and lambs) fed cow's milk or milk replacer - and

you may want to consider their advice in the rearing of your child's lamb. www.ceresfarm.co.nz/sheepcouncil.htm

Abomasal bloat occurs when bacteria ferments in warm milk in the lamb's stomach, causing the stomach to rapidly expand like a balloon causing death. Noticed immediately, this can be 'treated' to save much unhappiness.

The most effective treatment is to puncture the abomasum with a syringe just below the sternum to let the gas out.

If you are concerned about your lamb's housing and area, you can obtain from your rural supply store a broad spectrum sterilizing agent.

Supplements

Your lamb will grow quickly and begin to nibble grass and drink water. At around two weeks old you will want to introduce pellets or meal to its diet to help it grow extra well. Check the meal is suitable for lambs. Always keep it fresh and clean and supply a little more than your lamb requires each day.

Weaning

Refer to the instructions on the milk formula packet for reduction of feeds. Eventually your four feeds will be reduced to three, two and one a day.

Lambs generally remain on once-a-day milk feeds until after Group Day after which they are normally weaned (around 12 weeks of age). At first, your lamb will miss its feeds and will call for you, but you can soon make it happy – and forget the feed – if you spend time with it. You need to continue ad lib feeding of meal.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR LAMB

Keep a constant eye on your lamb and if anything changes get your parents to check it out.

Make sure its bedding is always clean. (You may have sawdust or hay on the floor of the pen or house) Take out any soiling regularly so your lamb has a clean dry place to rest.



Veterinary Care

1. Inoculations (disease prevention)

Right from the first day you have your lamb talk to the farmer about what inoculations it needs to remain healthy. He may provide the inoculations for you.

2. Parasites – Internal & External

Internal parasites are “worms” and your lamb may need to be drenched for these.

The farmer will help you with this.

External. Get Mum or Dad to check for lice every now and then.

PREPARING YOUR LAMB FOR CALF CLUB

Fitting a collar

Collars and leads can be purchased from your local rural supplies store. The collar can stay on the lamb. When fitted correctly, you should be able to fit two fingers between any part of the collar and your lamb’s skin. It should not pull off if the lamb pulls back.

As your lamb grows check the collar regularly and loosen it off as you need to.



Training

Always talk to your lamb and be their friend so they will respond to you. If you find this difficult tell them about your day or what you would like to do in the holidays etc. The friendlier they are the better they will perform for you at Calf Club.

How often, and how long, to train your lamb

Start with a few minutes training each day and lengthen the time. After each session, praise and pat your lamb.

Leading

When the lamb is used to the collar, you can begin to teach it to lead.

Be patient and have fun. You must never use a chain for leading.

Basically, you are going to train your lamb to do three things on the lead – to walk forward alongside you, to turn when required and to stop.

If you've been talking to your lamb, and it knows your voice, all you have to do to teach it to lead, is to attach a lead to its collar – at least once every day – and walk forward, with the lamb on your right, talking to it. Walk a few steps and then stop, give it some milk and make a fuss of it. Your lamb soon learns that walking forward, on your right side, means food!

Position when leading.

You want your lamb to walk to your right, and for its head/shoulder to be alongside you. Your right hand holds the lead close to the halter/collar (around 15 – 25 cm from the side of their head), with the rest of the lead on your left hand so it's not trailing on the ground. (Oops!)



Calling

Once your lamb knows your voice, ask Mum or Dad to come out with you, before feeding, and hold your lamb. Then go down the lawn or paddock, turn and call your lamb. It will run to you. Immediately feed it, and make a fuss of it.

The bottle is the biggest help in training your lamb at the start but, as calf club approaches, you want to reduce the number of times you reward it with the bottle, instead patting and cuddling it. (The reason you do this is that you are not allowed to show your lamb using a bottle).

Turning

If you have followed the steps described above, your lamb will move happily forward with you.

Now you have to learn to turn them. Give them a gentle tug and call them when you want to turn.

Stopping

You also need to learn how to stop your lamb. This is done by a gentle pull on the lead. Let it know you're going to stop, by giving gentle tugs on the lead, and saying 'stop'.

Remain still for a minute or more then move forward again when you are ready.

Varying your leading routine

Remember to vary the routine when you walk your lamb. This way it will be alert to what you want them to do. As they get more used to going for walks with you, vary the route you take by walking passed different" things which might distract them. By the time Calf Club comes along, they will be almost "bomb proof" – used to all sorts of sights and sounds. Be sure to walk your lamb in various patterns too – circles, loops and zigzags.

Training time should be fun, for you and your pet, so train every day for short spells so neither of you gets bored or tired. Don't forget to hug and praise it when it does well.

Leading in preparation for Calf Club

At Calf Club you will have to lead your lamb in a large square, around pegs in the corners and doing a complete circle around one peg.

You also have to stop it and make it stand still for a few seconds.

The judge will explain what he expects you to do on the day, but practise these movements daily.

Teaching your lamb to stay tied up.

In the early days of tying up, don't walk away from them as they will just try to follow you. Instead spend this time talking to them.

GROOMING

Lambs don't require much grooming..

Washing

Washing of lambs is not allowed as it removes the lanolin.

Cleaning

- Keep the bottom area clean with warm water and a cloth by gently rinsing.
- Gently pick debris out of the wool when you notice it.
- Warm water and cloth can also be used to clean inside their ears and around their face and hooves if it is needed.

Brushing

Do not brush your lamb as it will look unnatural.

Warning:

Don't give your lamb a big feed the day before Calf Club as it will have a dirty bottom the next day!!

ON THE DAY

Your lamb will need to be transported to the Calf Club – this can be on the back of a ute, a trailer behind the car or even a truck.

Have all the gear you will need ready to go.

- A bucket with any washing equipment so you can spot clean anything when you get there.
- A cloth.
- A clean collar and lead.
- A water bucket so you can give them a drink at the grounds - remember to take a water container just in case there isn't a tap at the grounds.
- Some meal/pellets and a feeding container, so you can reward them after a good effort.

Remember that you are on display as well as your lamb, so be sure that you are neat and tidy and enjoying yourself. The Judges will be looking for signs that you are comfortable with, and care for your lamb.

Leading

The Judge will be watching your lamb to see how obedient it is so you will want your lamb leading well and obeying your instructions to turn and stop.



Call and Follow

The Judge will be looking at how quickly your lamb responds to your call, and how easily you can reattach their lead.

Rearing

The Judge will be looking to see how well it has been reared (fed, groomed and cared for).

You must present your lamb in spotless condition with

- Clean fleece
- Clean feet – remember to wipe any earth away from its hooves.
- Clean under-side and bottom.
- Clean its ears inside and out.
- Clean around its nose and eyes.

Your lamb has to be well behaved and stand still to allow the Judge to run his/her hands over its body.

The Judge may ask you some questions about your lamb – its name, when it was born, what breed it is, what you have been feeding it, what fibre it is growing and the reason it is farmed.

You're on your way. If you've followed all the tips in this resource booklet you and your lamb are ready for a wonderful day!
Good luck!

AFTER CALF CLUB

The day is over, and you're home with your lamb. Remember to take care to put it back in its paddock for a good sleep, and put all your gear away.

Depending on how well your lamb did at Calf Club, you might be talking to Mum and Dad about whether it should be entered in Group Day. If it is going to be in more events, you will need to keep feeding it meal and milk twice a day, and continue with its training.

FINALLY



It's been a long season but you will have a great friend in your lamb at the end of it.

You can be very proud that you took on a big task, and completed it.

You've fed and trained your lamb over a long period of time; you've learned a lot about yourself and self-discipline (making yourself go out and feed it when you would rather not), and you've gained a lot of satisfaction from forming a friendship with an animal which relied on you.

Don't forget to say thanks to Mum & Dad for their support and help, and the farmer who made it possible.

And remember, if the lamb goes back to being a member of a mob of sheep, it will still remember you. Many farmers can point out the Calf Club lambs in their mobs because they are often the quietest and friendliest.

And that's a nice thought, knowing you have trained such an animal.

Congratulations.

You've done it.