Questions answered for B+LNZ Triplet- bearing Ewe Webinar 6th August 2026

1. Our farm is fairly flat and ewe fitness tends to be an issue in late pregnancy, ways to improve this would be helpful. Treadmills?

a. Research in the early 2000's attempted this type of approach and found no impacts of fitness on lamb survival. Our recent work suggests that ewes lambing ease is improved and interventions are reduced when ewes are fed on higher covers (1800-2500 kg DM) in the last 6 weeks before lambing.

b. Check their condition at tupping – they might be a bit heavy then and it may carry over to spring. Once you are in late winter then you can't do much about it without significantly impacting on lamb and ewe survival.

2. What are the nutritional requirements for a ewe with multiple lambs at peak lactations. eg kgDM, Protein %, NDF, ME etc

Endeavouring to prevent a wool break. Are specific minerals helpful?

a. Check the B+LNZ feed app to start with for energy requirements. Protein is really important, so if you are feeding large amounts of silage/baleage or root crops then check the protein %. In late pregnancy ewes will need 14-16% CP. Minerals may need supplementing if your sheep are being fed low quality feeds such as poor pasture or baleage, or vey high energy feeds such as fodder beet or swedes. So checking the mineral status of the feed might help.

b. Generally a break in the wool is underfeeding, usually of energy, though could be protein depending on the pasture types, combined with increasing nutrient requirements of the ewe as she approaches lambing.

3. How do you ensure all 3 lambs get sufficient colostrum? The smallest lamb always seems to miss out on getting enough colostrum and therefore at higher risk than its bigger siblings.

a. Colostrum quantity and quality are both important. We cove this in the webinar.

4. Mastitis - our ewes are east Friesian/lacunae crosses (not milking them) and have very large udders. We have lost a few post lambing over the years and by the time you notice clinical symptoms it's too late as the disease progresses very rapidly and doesn't respond to antibiotics and anti-inflammatory. The vets don't seem to know much treating about mastitis in sheep.

a. Unfortunately Mastitis is hard to pick in the field and therefore hard to control.

5. The impact of lambing date.

a. Lambing date is a product of balancing the spring pasture growth with the increasing ewe feed demand, and on-going feed reserves. Bringing the lambing date too early means that usually pasture covers are depleted quickly and ewes use body reserves to cover the energy deficit. If the covers stay too low then lamb growth rates slow down. Research at Woodlands (Southland) found the weaning weight at 15 December was the same for lambs born 1 August, 1 September and 1 October.

6. Scanning for triplets rather than just multiples, and managing them differently, but also separating earlies from lates and feeding them differently too.

a. Scanning for triplets gives you the opportunity to differentially feed. If you are trying to manage late winter pasture covers then using early

7. The impact of genetics vs feeding on lamb survival (perceived low heritability).

a. The genetics of lamb survival is complex, and as such has a low heritability. However, every bit helps and it is cumulative over time, so you should incorporate it into your selection policy as in 20 years time it will have made a difference.

8. The impact of trace elements on ewe and lamb performance... eg does treating with Zn for FE result in better overall ewe health and lambing results.

a. Treating with Zn for FE means that there is less potential liver damage in the ewe and she is therefore more able to cope with the increased processing of feed during late pregnancy and early lactation. So it an indirect effect, rather than an effect of Zn supplementation.

b. Trace elements such as Se, I and Co are all important in reproduction and lamb survival. There may be some instances of Zn deficiency but it is relatively rare, and you should check with a vet and test your situation.