

Basic Health Parameters in Sheep



BODY TEMPERATURE

Normal: 101.3–103.5°F; lambs slightly warmer. Fever indicates stress or infection. Low temperature may occur in shock, severe illness, or hypothermia.



RESPIRATORY RATE

Normal: 12-20 breaths/minute; lambs slightly higher. Elevated = pneumonia, heat stress, pain, parasitism.



HEART RATE (PULSE)

Normal: 60-90 beats/minute; Lambs 80-120bpm. Elevated = pain, fever, stress/excitement, infection, dehydration, parasitism. Slower rate in severe illness.



RUMEN MOVEMENTS

Normal: 1-2 contractions/minute. Reduced = diet change, indigestion, acidosis, bloat, pain, illness, dehydration, toxins, hypocalcemia. Increased = high fiber diet.



MUCOUS MEMBRANE COLOR

Healthy = pink & moist. Pale = anemia (Parasitism), Yellow = jaundice, Blue = respiratory failure, circulatory failure.



BODY CONDITION SCORE

Range: 1 (very thin) - 5 (obese). Ideal: 2.5 - 3.0. Reflects nutrition, health, disease, and management status.



FEED & WATER INTAKE

Normal intake indicates good health. Sudden drop suggests pain, fever, digestive disorder, or metabolic disease.



FECAL OUTPUT & CONSISTENCY

Normal: firm pellets. Diarrhea = parasites, diet issues, bacterial/viral disease, stress.



BEHAVIOUR & ACTIVITY

Healthy sheep: alert, active, grazing normally. Early signs of illness = isolation, lagging behind, head down.



HYDRATION STATUS

Common in diarrhea, heat stress. Check eye recession, skin tenting.

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