



TUBE FEEDING NEWBORN LAMBS

LIFESAVING TECHNIQUE FOR WEAK OR NON-NURSING NEWBORN LAMBS

WHY TUBE FEED?

Tube feeding delivers colostrum or milk directly to the lamb's stomach when it cannot nurse or suckle on its own (weak, orphaned, or rejected lambs).

Colostrum is crucial: it supplies antibodies and energy, especially within the first 24 hours after birth.

1 | WARM THE LAMB

Cold lambs cannot absorb colostrum

- Check mouth with your finger
- Use heat lamp, indoor warming, or wrap
- Severe cases: use a warm water bath – Dry completely before returning outdoors

2 | PREPARE THE FEED

- Warm fluid to ~104°F
- Colostrum: first 24 hours only
- Milk: after 24 hours
- Thaw frozen colostrum in warm water only (Never microwave)

3 | EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Soft stomach tube (≈20 in / 6 mm)
- 60-cc syringe (plunger removable)
- Clean, sanitized supplies



4 | MEASURE THE TUBE

- Measure from mouth to last rib
- This ensures the tube reaches the stomach



5 | RESTRAIN CORRECTLY

- Lamb upright, never on its side
- Hold gently between knees, facing away



6 | INSERT THE TUBE

- Hold the animal so its head is in a normal position
- Gently insert tube towards back left of lamb's mouth— lamb should swallow
- You cannot pass the tube too far, but it is very important to pass the tube far enough

7 | CHECK TUBE PLACEMENT

Signs of correct placement

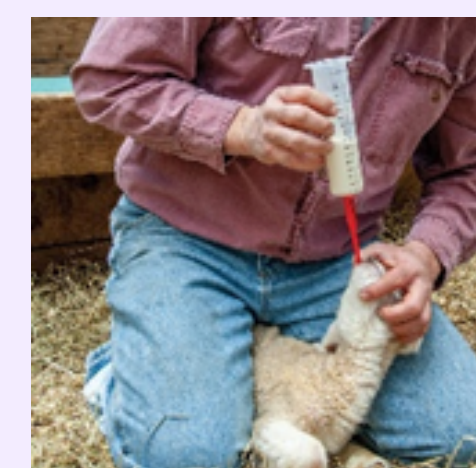
- Tube felt on left side of neck
- Inserted to full measured length
- Lamb not coughing or gagging
- hear a gurgling sound through the empty syringe

To check placement

- Attach syringe and pull plunger back
 - Hard to pull = correct
 - Easy to pull = wrong (remove immediately)

8 | FEED BY GRAVITY

- Remove syringe plunger
- Let fluid flow by gravity only
- **X** Do not force with plunger
- Should the solution not run, slide tube in and out about 1/2 inch.
- Be sure milk has had time to flow out of the entire length of tube before withdrawing tube



9 | REMOVE TUBE

- Crimp or plug tube while removing
- Prevents fluid entering lungs