



# Survey of Lamb Fostering Methods Used in UK Farming Practices

Case #:

**Moulton  
College**  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



The following survey has been planned to assess how often fostering lambs onto other ewes occurs in UK sheep farms, how it is achieved and which methods are most successful. These results can then be used to compare popular and successful methods in terms of production and animal welfare. The results of the survey will be analysed and made available for interested parties.

Please complete all questions as fully as possible. All comments will be treated anonymously. Please find enclosed a pre-paid envelope for your reply.

The table below list and defines some of the fostering methods which are mentioned in this study.

Method	Description
Skinning	Removing the skin of the dead natal lamb and placing it onto the alien lamb
Textile Jacket	Placing cloth jackets onto the natal and alien lamb and swapping the jackets prior to fostering
Birth Fluid	Rubbing the birth fluids from one lamb onto another lamb prior to fostering
Odorants	Coating the foster lamb and natal lamb in the same lotion, such as neatsfoot oil to ensure both lambs smell the same to the ewe
Restraint	Placing the ewe in a crate of some form to restrict her movement allowing the lambs to suckle beneath her without allowing her to discard them
Cervix stimulation	Inserting your hand, for example, into the ewes' vagina and applying pressure to expand the cervix. This simulates contractions, so the ewe believes she is in labour
Induced lactation	Injecting or sponging areas of the ewe with hormones to provoke the production of (more) milk

## Location

Please give the beginning of your postcode so that area comparisons can be made

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Section 1: Your Flock				
Do you have any of the following?	Number of ewes		Number of rams	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hill (above 500m)	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
<input type="checkbox"/> Upland (300m - 500m)	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
<input type="checkbox"/> Lowland (below 500m)	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed breed	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:
	N°	Breed:	N°	Breed:

Section 2: Lambs (Most recent season)					
How many lambs were born alive?					
How many lambs were weaned?					
How many lambs were sold?					
Age at sale of finishing lambs?  <i>(Tick 1 per birth type)</i>		7-9 wks	10-12 wks	13-15 wks	16-18 wks
	Single				
	Twin				
	Triplet				

Section 3: Fostering Methods	
Do you ever foster lambs onto other ewes?  <i>(Tick one)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes (up to 10 out of 100 lambs) <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently (between 11 and 30 out of 100 lambs) <input type="checkbox"/> Always (over 35 lambs per 100)
Why do you decide to foster?  <i>(Tick all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ewe dies <input type="checkbox"/> Triplets are born <input type="checkbox"/> Ewe too weak <input type="checkbox"/> Ewe not producing enough milk <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state) ..... ..... .....
Which lamb would you normally choose for fostering onto a ewe?	<input type="checkbox"/> The strongest <input type="checkbox"/> The smallest <input type="checkbox"/> Average size/weight

Definitions for the following questions can be found on the front page. For the following questions please select one of the following:

- Never
- Sometimes (up to 10 out of 100)
- Frequently (between 11 and 35 out of 100 lambs)
- Always (over 35 lambs out of 100)

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALWAYS
Do you ever bottle/tube feed the lamb(s)?				
How often do you use the skinning method?				
How often do you use the textile jacket method?				
How often do you use the birth fluid method?				
How often do you use the odorants method?				
How often do you use the restraint method?				
How often do you stimulate the ewes' cervix as a method of fostering?				
How often do you induce lactation using injection or vaginal sponges?				

**Fostering Methods continued...**

Do you ever use any other forms of fostering?

- No  
 Yes (please specify)

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Fostering Methods continued...	
<p>Do you ever combine two or more methods at the same time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please specify)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If you had to choose <b>one of these 3</b> methods which would you prefer?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Bottle/tube feed lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Foster the lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not interfere with the lamb</p>
<p>Which of the methods described above do you feel is the <b>easiest</b> method of fostering?</p> <p><i>(Tick one only)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Skinning a dead lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textile jacket</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Birth fluid</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Odorant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restraint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cervical stimulation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Induced lactation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Which of the methods described above do you feel is the best and most <b>preferred</b> fostering method for <b>yourself</b>?</p> <p><i>(Tick one only)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Skinning a dead lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textile jacket</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Birth fluid</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Odorant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restraint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cervical stimulation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Induced lactation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)</p> <p>.....</p>

Fostering Methods continued...	
<p>Which of the methods described above do you feel is the best and most <b>preferred</b> fostering method for the <b>animals</b>?</p> <p><i>(Tick one only)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Skinning a dead lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textile jacket</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Birth fluid</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Odorant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restraint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cervical stimulation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Induced lactation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Place in order of preference your top four fostering methods</p> <p><i>(Indicate by numbering 1 - 4 in order, where 1 is the most preferred)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Skinning a dead lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textile jacket</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Birth fluid</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Odorant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restraint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cervical stimulation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Induced lactation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Do you think that fostering methods used have any impact on the lambs'/ewes' welfare?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No welfare implications</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Slight welfare implications</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium welfare implications</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Severe welfare implications</p>
<p>How do you decide if the fostering method is successful or not?</p> <p><i>(Tick all that apply)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour of ewe</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Weight of lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Growth of lamb</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Amount of time showing success</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify below)</p> <p>.....</p>

## Section 4

The next part of the survey will look at your thoughts and opinions towards fostering lambs.

Using a five point scale:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 neither agree or disagree
- 4 agree
- 5 strongly agree
- N/A not applicable

Please circle the answer that most closely matches your personal opinion:

Strongly disagree → Strongly agree

I enjoy lambing time	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
It is important to keep as many live lambs as possible	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I have tried a variety of fostering methods	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I tend to stick to fostering methods that I know about	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I tend to stick to fostering methods that I know have worked before	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I would be interested in finding out about other fostering methods that are used	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I think that fostering is an important way of increasing my returns	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I would like to know the most successful fostering method to increase my returns	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I always have the animals' health and wellbeing in mind when fostering lambs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I always have the production levels in mind when fostering lambs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Please use the space below to add any additional comments you think may be beneficial to this study.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Finally...**

Would you be willing to be contacted again if needed?

- Yes
- No

Would you be interested in receiving a summary of the results of this questionnaire?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to either of the above questions, please could you leave your contact details below.

Address: .....  
.....  
.....

Email: .....

Telephone: .....

Please return in the SAE provided or to the following address:

Sam Ward  
Moulton College  
Moulton  
Northampton  
NN3 7RR

You can also contact me on:

Tel: 01604 491131 ext: 607  
Email: SamW@moulton.ac.uk