



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Cooperative Extension

Livestock Extension

What's in your Lambing or Calving Toolbox?

Though some producers are months from either lambing or calving, it's good to be prepared for the big event now so you don't have to deal with additional stress later. Whether you're dealing with bred ewes or mama cows the basics are similar. Every barn should be equipped with a basic set of tools or items to deal with what we hope are all easy births but also the occasional emergencies. First, let's talk about facilities as it's a good idea to have some type of structure in place that you can use to bring up animals who do need help during the birthing process. For ewes having a few jugs set up under a lean-to or in a barn before lambing can help reduce stress for both you and the ewe if you need to intervene. For cattle, having a calving lot, especially for heifers, isn't a bad idea. Keeping your herd close to a working facility with a chute is another good idea. In case you needed to bring up a cow, you can catch her, so the cow and you are relatively safe during the process. Second, let your local veterinarian know when you'll be lambing or calving if they aren't already aware. This increases the relationship between you and your veterinarian in case you do need to call them for an emergency, they kind of have you on their radar that a call may come in. Also, working and consulting with your veterinarian, you can order items and prep a lambing or calving toolbox with the essentials. A typical lambing or calving box should have the basics of a bucket, drench gun, OB lube, OB sleeves, chlorohexidine, betadine, syringes and needles, clean water, halter and calf chains (species specific), antibiotics for mom (if needed), weigh tape or scale, and ear tagger and tag. Some extra items to consider based on operation management decisions, can vary between sheep or cattle, would be castration bands with castrator, nursing bottles and tips, a bag of milk replacer or colostrum, and vaccines. If you do have a toolbox in place, great! Maybe you can add one more item to it, or this serves as a reminder to double check that it's stocked and that the materials are not expired. Preparing these kits before lambing or calving can help reduce stress and time when you need to intervene, and hopefully result in a healthy mama and new baby into your operation Just a reminder, before initiating a vaccination plan or giving an antibiotic, it's a good idea to consult with your veterinarian about what products to administer and when to give those products.

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