



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

SHEEP AND WOOL WEEK: WHAT ARE “EWE”?



A Billings Farm Ewe with her Lambs

What exactly is a ewe? A ewe is a female sheep over 1 year of age. Most ewes who are 1 year or older have had at least one lamb. This is because sheep are bred around 9 months old to have lambs when they are a little over 1 year old. A ewe is pregnant for 5 months and typically has 1-2 lambs each season.

At Billings Farm, we breed our Southdown ewes in late October and November so they will have their lambs in February and March. A male lamb is called a ram lamb and a female lamb is called a ewe lamb. The newborn lambs weigh 8-10 pounds and are often born in the very early morning. The ewe will lick her lambs once they are born to dry and clean them.

Soon after birth, the lambs will begin nursing from their mother. Each ewe has an udder with 2 teats and she will produce enough milk to sustain 2 lambs. Sometimes when a ewe has 3 lambs one of them will need to be fed by bottle instead of nursing from its mother. These are called bottle babies and they are raised by a farmer. These lambs tend to be very affectionate



Brian with Maple and Marvin

towards people because they spend so much time with them. At Billings Farm we have two bottle babies this year named Maple and Marvin. One of our farmers, Brian, takes great care of them and they love following him around the farm.



A Newborn Lamb

At Billings, we don't usually keep our ram lambs. When breeding season comes, we “rent-a-ram” from another farm to breed our flock. This is a good practice because it continually adds new genes to our flock's gene pool which helps to keep the flock healthy.