



BILLINGS

FARM & MUSEUM

BABY FARM ANIMAL CELEBRATION: LEARN ABOUT LAMBING

It's lambing season! But, what does that mean? Let's first discuss some terminology. A ewe is a female sheep and she can have ewe lambs and ram lambs. A ram is a male sheep. At Billings Farm we have a breed of sheep called Southdown and our ewes are getting ready to have their lambs!



We breed our ewes about 5 months before we want our lambs to arrive. That means we bred them in late October and early November. We put a ram in the pasture with our ewes and a few months later our vet informed us all the ewes are pregnant!

A few months before a ewe has her lamb she is often vaccinated for diseases that affect her gut health. This vaccination can pass temporary immunity to the lambs to prevent common diseases. Once the lamb is born it will drink the ewe's milk, called colostrum, which passes antibodies and any vaccination immunity to her lamb.

LEARN ABOUT LAMBING

Typically, a ewe will give birth to 1-3 lambs each breeding season. A ewe only has two halves to her udder, unlike cows which have four quarters. This means that ewes ideally want to have two lambs.

When a ewe has more than two lambs there are several things that could happen. She may produce enough milk to raise all her lambs, we can cross-foster a lamb (meaning another ewe will raise her lamb), or that lamb can be raised by the farmer; we call these lambs bottle babies. All these ways will raise a healthy and happy little lamb.

Lambs on average weigh between 8-10 pounds when they are born.

The ewe will lick the lambs until they are clean, and their wool can dry. Some farmers will give their lambs a shot of Selenium. This element works with vitamin E to prevent cell damage and promote cell repair. These two substances are very important for immune function in sheep.



LAMBING QUICK FACTS

- A female sheep is called a **ewe** and a male sheep is called a **ram**.
- At Billings Farm we have a breed of sheep called **Southdown**.
- Ewes have a gestation of about 5 months.
- Ewes can be vaccinated before lambing and can transfer some of their immunity to their lambs through milk.
- Ewes have between **1-3 lambs each season** on average.
- When lambs are born, they can weigh between 8-10 pounds.
- Ewes have two halves to their udders unlike cows that have four quarters.
- Lambs that are raised by the farmer are called **bottle babies** because they are fed by bottle instead of nursing from their mother.
- Often after birth a lamb will be given a shot of **Selenium** which helps them have healthy immune function.

SHEEP BREEDS & THEIR PURPOSE



East Friesian – Dairy



Black Welsh - Wool

Assaf - Dairy



Icelandic - Wool

