**SHEEP**

Can be lowland, highland or upland breeds.

Most common of each:

Lowland –
Suffolk – black face, bald, fluffy body
Hampshire

Highland –
Welsh Mountain
Swaledale – curly horns & speckled face.

Upland –
Marenos – wool, mainly Australian
Blue faced
Border

**Characteristics of highland sheep:**
Hardy, give mainly single lambs, good mothers.

**And of lowland sheep:**
Not so hardy, normally twins or better, not so good mothers.

Often, highland and lowland crosses are used – gives meatier lambs, lambs can be sold young and fattened on lowland.

Terminal sire – father of the lamb you eventually eat.
Highland ram – will be needed to replace any highland stock lost.

Gestation period: 5 months / 150 days.

Oestrus cycle length: 13 to 19 days. ~17 average.

Most important time in the sheep year is tupping:
Highland tup in November – lamb in April
Lowland tup in August – lamb in January.

Tupping usually done by natural service – only use AI to dramatically improve stock.

Lamb is normally about 12 weeks old when eaten – minimum.

Use a *raddle* on the ram – holds crayon to see when ewes have been tupped – change every 20 days as oestrus cycle changes – find out possible date of lambing and flag up any infertility problems.
Allow 3 tuppings before deciding on infertility.

Do nothing during the first trimester of pregnancy – egg still has to implant on the uterine wall – most likely stage at which something could go wrong.

Ewes start cycling as the days become shorter – they do not cycle throughout the year – seasonal breeders.

Use of a teaser ram (vasectomised ram) will help to synchronise the oestrus cycle of all sheep.

Want sheep going to be tupped on a rising plane of nutrition – weight gain due to slightly more food than needed. Produces more egg release – flushing. Also increases the % of twins/triplets.

Condition score – ranges from 1 to 5 – not fat or thin = 2.5, want 2.5 to 3 for tupping. Rams can be fatter (up to 4) at tupping.

After first trimester of pregnancy – diagnose pregnancy & how many lambs each ewe is having by ultrasound.

Sheep stop feeding when mass of cellulose inside the rumen is high – therefore feed triplet carriers on higher energy food – rumens smaller due to increased uterus size.

Lamb indoors – poly-tunnels / open sided barns. Move to pens when lambing signs shown – easier to observe, manage, lamb. Prevents mismothering.

As soon as lamb is born – clear foetal membrane, then give colostrum within first 1 – 2 hours.

Ideally within first 24 hours (NOT after 48 hours) castrate and tail dock.

3 – 4 days – put into (clean, not recently grazed) fields, worming the ewe just before.

Vaccinate at 8 to 12 weeks – tetanus, bacteria, chlostridia, mannheimia (causes pasturellosis – pneumonia).

To prevent enzootic abortion – vacicnate ewes against Chlamydia and toxoplasmosis just prior to tupping.

5 months pregnant – 3 months looking after lambs – 3 months dry period.

Lambing % - number that go to market and are saleable compared to no of ewes. % of lambs going to market per ewe given birth.

Lowland flock – 200 – 240%
Highland flock – 100 – 120%