Sheep Lesson Plans for 4-H Leaders
SELECTING 4-H SHEEP PROJECT MEETING TOPICS

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This project meeting guide is designed to help you and your 4-H project members identify the topics you will explore at your five or more yearly project meetings. Following each activity is a (1), (2), or (3) to give you an indication of the degree of experience it will usually require for a 4-H’er to be able to demonstrate this skill to others. The higher the number, the more experience needed. If your learn-by-doing activities can be sequenced so your members may build on what they already know, a better learning experience will result. You will find a line preceding each topic for you to write in the date of the meeting at which your members will explore that particular topic. Check with your extension agent for the availability of project meeting guides for the topics you and your members choose. The program planning meeting guide (“Steps in 4-H Program Planning,” 4H 0-1-90) will help your group get off to a good start.

4-H SHEEP PROJECT MEETING TOPICS

Selection and Judging

- Identifying Breeds of Sheep (1)
- Identifying Parts of Sheep (1)
- Selecting Your Project Animal (1)
- Judging a Judging Class (1)
- Constructing the Ideal Sheep (2)
- Recognizing Abnormalities and Faults of Sheep (2)
- Talking Like a Livestock Judge (2)
- Talking Sheep Talk (2)
- Presenting Oral Reasons (2)
- Scoring a Judging Class (2)
- Conducting a Judging Contest (3)
- Selecting a Judging Class (3)

Management Practices

- Determining a Sheep’s Age (1)
- Purchased a Feeder Lamb—Now What? (1)
- Setting a Sheep on Its Rump (1)
- Identifying Your Project Animal (1)
- Making a Rope Halter (1)
- Identifying Project Equipment (1)
- Setting Goals for Profitable Sheep Production (2)
- Calendarizing Livestock Management Practices (3)
- Testing for Pregnancy in Sheep (3)
- Fencing Your Sheep (3)

Lambing Time Skills

- Preparing the Ewe for Lambing (1)
- Caring for the Ewe at Lambing (1)
- Caring for the Newborn Lamb (1)
- Saving the Weak Newborn Lamb (2)
- Grafting an Orphan Lamb (2)
- Castrating a Lamb (2)
- Docking a Lamb’s Tail (2)
- Preventing Mastitis in Ewes (2)
- Guarding Against Pneumonia in Lambs (2)
- Delivering a Lamb (2)
- Treating Eye Problems of the Lamb (2)
- Treating Scours in Lambs (3)
- Preventing Enteroximia in Lambs (3)
- Preventing White Muscle Disease in Lambs (3)
- Treating Prolapses in Ewes (3)
- Raising an Orphan Lamb (3)
Flock Health Practices

- Recognizing Jaw Abnormalities of Sheep (1)
- Treating Foot Rot of Sheep (2)
- Recognizing a Healthy Animal (2)
- Taking a Sheep's Temperature, Pulse, and Breathing Rate (2)
- Identifying Flock Health Supplies (2)
- Stocking the Medicine Cabinet (2)
- Examining a Fecal Sample for Parasites (2)
- Controlling External Parasites (2)
- Controlling Internal Parasites (2)
- Administering Medication to Sheep (3)
- Outlining a Flock Health Program (3)
- Treating Minor Wounds (3)
- Tracing a Roundworm's Life Cycle (3)
- Recognizing Common Animal Health Problems (3)

Records and Recognition

- Receiving Recognition Through 4-H (1)
- Understanding 4-H Livestock Records (1)
- Advancing Through Your 4-H Project (1)
- Keeping Feed Records (1)
- Keeping Your Animal Records (1)
- Registering Your Animal (2)
- Culling Animals Through Records (3)
- Selecting Sires on Production Records (3)

Feeds and Feeding

- Identifying and Classifying Feed Ingredients (1)
- Selecting and Judging Hay (1)
- Feeding Your Market Lamb (2)
- Feeding Your Producing Ewe (1)
- Feeding a Creep Ration to Lambs (2)
- Understanding a Feed Tag (2)
- Feeding Your Project Animal (2)
- Recognizing Mineral Deficiencies in Sheep (3)
- Sampling Livestock Forage (3)
- Understanding Animal Nutrient Requirements (3)
- Formulating a Ration (3)
- Balancing a Ration (3)
- Roaming Through the Rumen (3)
- Following Feed Through Farm Animal's Digestive System (3)
- Improving Forage Production (3)

Fitting and Showing

- Outlining Steps to Successful Sheep Fitting (1)
- Washing a Sheep (1)
- Making a Sheep Blanket (1)
- Carding a Sheep (1)
- Trimming a Sheep (1)
- Trimming a Sheep's Hooves (1)

- Showing the Judge Your Sheep's Teeth (1)
- Showing Your Project Animal (1)
- Packing Your Show Box for Fair (1)
- Sharpening a Sheep Shears (3)

Careers

- Identifying Products from Farm Animals (1)
- Exploring Animal Science Careers (2)

Reproduction and Genetics

- Inseminating Sheep Artificially (3)
- Understanding Systems of Breeding (3)
- Tracing the Development of the Unborn (3)
- Understanding the Sheep's Heat Cycle (3)

Marketing

- Subscribing to National Sheep Magazines (1)
- Advertising Your Sheep (2)
- Establishing a Credit Rating (3)
- Reading the Livestock Market Report (3)
- Outlining Livestock Marketing Alternatives (3)

Wool Related Skills

- Tagging a Sheep (1)
- Preparing a Fleece for Show (1)
- Tying a Fleece (1)
- Bagging a Fleece (1)
- Identifying the Grades of Wool (1)
- Judging Wool (2)
- Shearing a Sheep (2)
- Setting a Shears (2)
- Sharpening Cutters and Combs (3)
- Identifying Shearing Equipment (3)
- Grading Wool (3)
- Spinning Wool (3)
- Tanning a Sheep's Pelt (3)

Other Project Activities

- Giving a 4-H Presentation (1)
- Attending a Livestock Show (1)
- Conducting a 4-H Project Bowl (2)
- Evaluating Your 4-H Project Meeting (2)
- Conducting Tours and Field Trips (3)


Published by

THE NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

North Carolina State University at Raleigh, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University at Greensboro, and the United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperating. State University Station, Raleigh, N.C., Chester D. Black, Director. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. The North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, or national origin, and is an equal opportunity employer.
IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Understanding how to tell the age of sheep is an important aspect in the management of a flock. This ability is very important when buying or selling sheep. The price usually reflects the age of the animal. If a ewe is without teeth the additional feed and care she will require will be indicated in the purchase price.

WHAT YOUR 4-H’ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By involving them in learn-by-doing activities your 4-H’ers should be able to:
1. Develop the life skills of comparing items, making decisions, and demonstrating in front of a group.
2. Determine the age of a sheep, at least through four years of age.
3. Demonstrate what happens to a sheep’s teeth from birth to approximately ten years of age.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

In order to be ready for your 4-H’ers when they come through the door you will want to review the activities in this guide and collect the materials and training aids needed.

Supplies: Ewes of different ages or plaster or wood jaws with removable teeth. Paper for the 4-H’ers to draw and cut out large and small teeth. An actual skull makes an excellent teaching model.

Reference: Basic Sheep Handling, NCAES slide set 01502.

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

As the leader, your challenge is to let your members learn-by-doing without actually showing them “how it should be done.” Make suggestions, but let them make the decisions and do the tasks. In this way the solutions will be theirs and their interest and understanding will increase.

The first step is to motivate your 4-H’ers to want to explore the topic. Often just asking a question such as “How old are each of these ewes?” will help them jump into the activity. Adding a realistic situation, a task to do, and materials will quickly involve your peers in a learn-by-doing activity. Here is an example:

SITUATION: A sale is scheduled for next week. You have been asked to be a member of the sale committee. The committee has found that the best prices can be obtained by selling the large flock of ewes grouped by ages.

TASK: Demonstrate how you will determine the ages of the various ewes. After your members have discussed the problem and their task to do let them work together to solve the task in teams of two or three.

At this point stand back and let them prepare their presentation. Be patient. They may make mistakes, but they will learn from these. After they give their presentation or become “stuck” ask them questions to stimulate further thought and discussion.
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Mouthing Off—Divide the group into teams. Provide each team with both sizes of teeth cut from colored paper (let your members make them). Call out a sheep’s age and let each team see if they can put together a “mouth” close to the age.

2. Project Bowl—With the group divided into two teams ask them questions about the teeth of sheep and other topics they have explored. Possible questions are included in this guide.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What kind of teeth do lambs have?
A. Lambs have eight temporary or milk teeth on the bottom jaw in front as well as molars in the back on both top and bottom.

Q. How does a sheep’s teeth change when it becomes about one year old, two years old, three years old, and four years old?
A. A new pair of permanent incisor teeth replace the milk teeth each year.

Q. What happens after the sheep is four years old?
A. Depending on the type of soil and how closely the pasture is grazed the permanent incisors will wear down.

Q. What is a full mouthed ewe?
A. She has all her permanent teeth and has not lost any.

Q. What is a gummer?
A. A sheep that has lost or worn down the teeth to the point where grass is difficult to cut off.

Q. How does the condition of the teeth affect the overall ability of sheep to produce meat and wool?
A. When on pasture, broken mouth or gummer sheep have more difficulty obtaining sufficient nutrients for adequate production. These animals require more grain which increases the cost of production.

Q. Why can sheep eat grass closer to the ground than other farm animals?
A. The front teeth are gouge-shaped: concave without and convex within. Also, the narrow flexible muzzle is divided by a vertical cleft.

Q. Can false teeth be made for gummer or broken mouth ewes?
A. Yes, in Britain and France teeth are reported to be available, contributing to an extra four to five years of productivity.

SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

Ask your members to tell what they have learned so everyone can see if the objectives for the meeting have been accomplished. Praise their efforts. Now is a good time to decide on what related topics the members might be interested in exploring.

Supporting Activities

Handling sheep
Evaluating ewes for culling
Selecting breeding ewes and rams


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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC
When your members work with sheep, the management practices of shearing and hoof trimming are essential. Being able to catch and set up a sheep on its rump can make these procedures much easier and less time consuming. The chance of causing injury to both the animal and the 4-H'ers will also be decreased.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH
1. Further develop the important life skills of self-confidence and speaking before a group.
2. Demonstrate how to catch an animal.
3. Demonstrate how to place the sheep in the proper position for shearing or hoof trimming.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING
Very little preparation is required for this activity. Reviewing the project meeting guide ("Steps in 4-H Program Planning," 4H 0-1-90) and deciding how to involve your members is about all that is required. If sheep are not available or if you want your members to practice first without sheep, you may want to use a model lamb such as one made from the 4-H Lamb Pattern. Additional supplies may include panels to corral the sheep for catching, a stool, and the Basic Sheep Handling slide set.

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY
As the leader, your challenge is to allow your 4-H'ers to discover for themselves how to do the activity instead of showing them how you believe it should be done. Make suggestions by asking questions and let the members make the decisions and actually do the tasks. By doing what some leaders call "sitting on their hands" you'll learn right along with your 4-H'ers. You will discover ways of setting a sheep up you've never seen before.

Several methods may be used to challenge your 4-H'ers and get them involved. One way is to simply ask them a direct question such as "How would you catch a lamb and set it up to trim its hooves?" Another method which is very effective, particularly when access to sheep is inconvenient, is to give your group a realistic situation, some supplies and a task to do. Here is an example:

SITUATION: The sheep are in a large shed. Your shearer has asked that you catch and set up the sheep for her so the job can be done more quickly.

TASK: Demonstrate how you would catch a sheep and set it up.

After your members (and parents) discuss the problem and determine what steps of the task (if not the entire task) they want to demonstrate, divide them into teams of two to four if the group is large, or let them all work together if the group is small. This is the place where you will want to step back and let them wrestle with both the task and possibly the sheep too. Be patient. The teachable moment is usually not too far away.

Safety is usually not a problem if they use ragdoll lambs or each other to demonstrate their technique. However, you may want to match up smaller sheep
with smaller 4-H'ers if you are using the real thing. When your 4-H'ers reach a point in the demonstration preparation where they need a little boost, ask them questions which will help them move a little closer to solving the task. Also answer their questions with questions so you keep the focus on them.

Questions to Ask

Q. How would you catch a sheep in a large area?
A. Make the area smaller with sturdy pens or hinged panels. Then crowd a small group of ewes together or cut yours out with a sorting chute or simply catch it under the jaw.

Q. When catching a sheep why shouldn’t the wool be grabbed?
A. Wool may be pulled from the lamb and bruises will show up on the carcass.

Q. Why is it important to keep the nose up when catching a sheep?
A. Sheep stop best and are easier to control when the nose is up.

Q. Why is having a sheep on its rump a good way to work on it?

A. With none of the feet touching the ground the animal won’t struggle. This also allows all feet to be accessible for hoof trimming.

Q. What are some ways to set a sheep on its rump?
A. With your hand under the nose, bend the sheep’s head sharply over its right shoulder; as you press your hand down on its right hip swing the sheep toward you.

Stand behind the sheep. Hold it under its front legs and raise it up to your knees. Let it down on its rump.

Reach across under the sheep and pull the opposite rear leg toward you. Bring the sheep to a sitting position.

Hook your right elbow under the sheep’s right front leg and roll the sheep over your left knee to a sitting position.

Q. Instead of holding the sheep against your legs to trim the feet, what else might you do?
A. Put two bales of straw in a V-shape and lean the ewe against them. Put the ewes in a metal or plywood sheep chair. Use a mechanical squeeze which holds the sheep on its side for easy access to the feet.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Hit the Spot—Put a sack or other marker on the floor and challenge the teams to set the sheep on the sack.

2. Catch the Sheep—See how smoothly and quickly a team can catch a sheep in a large area.

SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

The demonstrations the 4-H’ers give will usually provide a summary. You may also want to ask the members to name one thing they learned during the meeting. This is usually a good evaluation to see if the members accomplished what they set out to do.

Supporting Activities

Meeting topics supported by this activity include:
Shearing sheep
Handling sheep
Trimming hooves

Resources

Basic Sheep Handling, NCAES slide set 01502.
Ewe and Lamb Management, NCAES slide set 01508.


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IMPORTANT OF THE TOPIC

Losing a lamb means 12 months of ewe costs wasted. If a 4-H'er realizes what is happening and knows what to do when a ewe shows signs of distress during lambing, a higher percentage of both ewes and lambs can be saved.

Learning how to deliver lambs in a learn-by-doing way will also contribute to developing many important life skills such as reacting calmly to a crisis situation, gaining self-confidence, making decisions, and problem solving.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By the end of the project meeting your members will be able to do the following:
1. Develop the life skills of problem solving, utilizing knowledge, and thinking creatively.
2. Demonstrate the position of the lamb during a normal birth.
3. Identify the position of an unborn lamb by feel only.
4. Demonstrate the steps necessary to deliver a lamb in any one of five different positions in the uterus or birth canal.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Taking time to review the resource material, to collect the supplies required, and most importantly to involve others in the planning will often mean the difference between a meeting which your 4-H’ers may describe as boring and one which they find really exciting.

Supplies: A bean bag lamb made using the 4-H Lamb Pattern works very well; three 4’ lengths of strong white cord; bottle labeled soap suds for lubrication; lamb delivery tongs; simulated or real bale of straw; towels; hypodermic syringe and needle; bottle labeled antibiotic; and a lamb delivery box with a coffee can to provide additional realism.

The box can be made as follows:
1. Set longer box on end with hole in bottom facing up.
2. Insert can in hole using inside flaps to support can.
3. Set smaller box inside longer box so that cut end is inserted between lower flap of larger box and can to form a slanted platform.
4. Fasten a sheet to box with Velcro; drape sheet over smaller box to enclose “uterus” or fold back on top of box to view “delivery.”

FACILITATE THE MEETING

In order for the 4-H’ers to develop the understanding and knowledge necessary to actually be able to deliver a lamb you will want to allow your 4-H’ers to learn-by-doing before being told or shown how. Your challenge is to help the members discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity.
LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITIES

1. Determining the Normal Position

SITUATION: At an Extension meeting of sheep producers in your county, your 4-H sheep project group has been asked to show those present what a normal delivery position of a lamb is.

TASK: Demonstrate a normal presentation of a lamb during parturition (lambing).

2. Identifying the Position of an Unborn Lamb

SITUATION: You have just come home from school. No one else is at home. After eating a snack you go down to the barn to check on the ewes. Sure enough your 4-H show ewe is trying to deliver her lamb(s). The water bag has broken and there is no sign of the lambs. After waiting another 15 minutes you decide to see what position the lamb is in.

TASK: Using the coffee can in a box and a bean bag lamb determine what position the lamb is in.

(Note: This activity works well if one team will put the lamb in a particular position while the other team determines the position by only using their hands.)

Q: How can you tell if there is a front or rear leg?  
A: The front and rear legs bend in opposite directions—front legs backward, back legs forward.

3. Given a Position, Deliver the Lamb

SITUATION: You determine from observation or feel that the lamb is in one of the six positions which most frequently cause problems.

TASK: Demonstrate how you would deliver a lamb found to be in one of the abnormal positions.

(Note: Put the lamb in the delivery box in one of the following six positions, let the 4-H’er decide which position the lamb is in and then demonstrate how to deliver it. Suggested techniques are included for each position.)

A. The Big Lamb—Normal Presentation

Procedure: Because of the lamb’s size or the tightness of the ewe, the lamb may be in danger. After preparing yourself and the ewe draw one of the two legs of the lamb present to an extended position. Then while pulling lightly on this leg with the left hand, work the ewe’s vulva skin back over the crown (forehead) of the lamb’s head with the right hand. A gentle nudge behind the crown from the ewe’s rectum also works to move the head forward. Next hold the neck with the right hand and draw the lamb forward an inch or two, still pulling the foreleg with the left hand. Now extend the second leg.

Complete the delivery by gently pulling both legs and neck either to the left or right of a straight pull to allow the shoulder to enter and pass through the pelvic girdle more easily.

B. Head and One Leg Outside

Procedure: Place the ewe on her side and apply gentle pressure on the lamb, assisting the ewe when she strains. About 8 out of 10 lambs can be delivered with one leg back. If the lamb won’t come using gentle pressure, prepare the ewe as to position, cleanliness, and lubrication. Gently replace the lamb into the uterus between the ewe’s strains and bring the second leg forward. The use of cords on one leg and lamb loop on the head is helpful to bring the lamb into position.

C. Head Turned Back

Procedure: First secure the lamb’s forelegs with an antibiotic cream-coated white cord. Then very gently and using lots of soap flakes and warm water, push the lamb—between the ewe’s strains—back into the womb. Grasp the head, turn it and with finger and thumb in the eye sockets or the use of lamb loop (lamb puller) ease it forward into the vagina. Now bring the legs forward one at a time so the lamb is presented correctly and can be delivered routinely.

D. Head Only Out

Procedure: After washing your hands and providing ample lubrication around the vulva and birth canal, gently feel for the legs. If one or both legs are doubled back at the knee hook them with a finger and flip them forward so the lamb is in the normal position to be delivered. When no legs are felt, both are usually doubled back at the shoulder. If the head is of normal size, push it back through the bones. Slip the fingers along the neck and over the shoulder. Hook the leg and draw it forward. Now straighten the leg at the knee joint through the pelvic bones. Now that the head is out, draw the leg and proceed.

E. Hind Feet First

Procedure: Gently pull the hind legs. Swing them side to side while pulling. After the lamb’s ribs are exposed the lamb will come easily; clear fluid quickly from the lamb’s nose to avoid getting fluid in the lamb’s lungs.

F. Tail Only Showing

Procedure: Push the lamb back through the pelvic bones until you feel the hock joint of the hind leg. Hook your fingers over the leg and straighten it with your thumb. Bring one leg up through the pelvic bones. Do the same with the other leg. Proceed as with both hind legs coming.

Supporting Activities

Other meeting activities which support this activity include:

- Preparing the Ewe for Lambing
- Caring for Newborn Lambs
- Saving Weak Newborn Lambs
- Identifying Lambs
- Castrating Lambs
- Docking Lambs
- Conducting a Project Bowl


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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The 4-H'er who is able to properly care for a lamb during the first few days of its life will be well on the way to a successful experience with a breeding sheep project and other livestock projects as well. The most critical time in a sheep operation is during the first 24 hours of a lamb's life. This activity will concentrate on a normal situation. Other project meeting guides (listed in the section Supporting Activities) will help your 4-H group explore additional aspects of lambing.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By performing the learn-by-doing activities, the 4-H'ers (and parents) will be able to do the following by the end of the project meeting:
1. Develop important life skills of solving a problem, speaking before others, and answering questions.
2. Demonstrate 5-7 steps used in caring for a normal lamb during the first 30 minutes following birth.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

The ideal time for this project meeting is before the first lamb arrives. Because baby lambs will not be available you will want to substitute a model lamb such as one made from the 4-H Lamb Pattern. Other helpful materials are listed below. Simply putting labels on items will be fine if you or your members do not have the actual equipment.

Supplies: Towels and water bucket; needle and syringe; 7% iodine bottle (simply label a bottle); Bo-Se (selenium bottle); Vitamin A bottle; Colostridium perfringens type C and D toxoid bottle.

Take some time to check through the project meeting guide and other resource material and decide what you feel will be the best way to involve your project group in a learn-by-doing activity before they are told or shown how. Some hints are included in the next section.

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

As the leader of the 4-H sheep project, your challenge is to help the members discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity instead of telling or showing them what you think they should know. Yes, this is a challenge but the benefit to the members and their overall understanding of the subject will be much higher as this saying indicates:
I Hear: I Forget
I See: I Remember
I Do: I Understand

One way of being a helper instead of an “up front” teacher is to utilize an experimental or discovery approach.

You may want to present each team with the same or different tasks. Often the situation you give them will lend itself to many separate tasks or perhaps for your more advanced members an all encompassing task will provide the most challenge for them. The activities which follow outline several tasks for a given situation. Some leaders find that simply giving a situation, asking the members what tasks need to be done, and then letting them choose one of the tasks is even a better method than giving them tasks directly.

LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITY

Caring for the Newborn Lamb.

SITUATION: After laboring for 45 minutes, your favorite ewe has just given birth to a large single lamb.

Overall task to do:
1. Demonstrate or put on a skit on what you would do during the next hour to help your new lamb get off to a good start.
Specific tasks to do:
2. Demonstrate what you would do to be sure it was breathing.
3. Demonstrate what you do to be sure the lamb received colostrum.
4. Demonstrate how you would do to reduce the chance of infection in the lamb.
5. Demonstrate how you would get the lamb and the ewe to the barn from the far end of a field.
6. Demonstrate how you would identify the lamb.
7. Demonstrate what injections you would give to the newborn lamb.

A. Soak the navel in 7% iodine solution; wash the udder of the ewe; provide a clean lambing area; be sure the ewe is sheared a week to three weeks prior to lambing.
Q. What can you do to be sure the lamb nurses?
A. Check the ewe for milk and any udder problems. Strip the plug from the teats of the ewe; check to be sure the lamb has a sucking response (finger in mouth); if necessary help it find the teat. A wiggling tail and feeling the milk being drawn from the udder are two good indications the lamb is nursing.
Q. Why should the lamb receive its first milk as soon after birth as possible?
A. The first milk is called colostrum which is high in nutrients as well as being a good source of protein antibodies which will protect the lamb from diseases. The concentration of antibodies decreases very rapidly in the milk after lambing. In addition, the ability of the lamb’s system to absorb the antibodies is lost a short time after birth. Overall, a little warm milk will increase its strength and stamina.
Q. If a lamb is not breathing, what can you do?
A. Clean fluid out of nostrils and mouth; tickle the inside of its nostril with a piece of straw; swing the lamb several times in an arc (gently) holding its hind legs above the hocks; slap and rub the lamb vigorously; or use artificial respiration (litttle puffs only) to inflate the lungs. Don’t forget to pinch off the throat to prevent air from entering the stomach.
Q. What are some ways you can think of to help get an ewe and her newborn lamb in from the field?
A. Carrying the lamb so the ewe can see and smell it; manually moving the ewe; or putting the lamb in a “lambulance”, a small cart with a long tongue and a small woven wire cage on a platform. The lambs are put in the cage and pulled to the shed by the shepherd. Normally, the ewes will follow without difficulty.

Here is how 4-H leaders have successfully used the method:

Questions to Ask

After the teams have had an opportunity to figure out what they need to know in order to solve the task, a few questions to help them build on what they already know is a useful technique.

Q. What are some important procedures to follow from the time of delivery until the lamb is put in a small pen?
A. Clear the mucus from the nose and mouth; make sure it is breathing; let the ewe lick the lamb; clip the navel two inches from the body and dip in iodine; check the ewe’s udder; strip the teats; see that the lamb receives colostrum; give any injections necessary; and identify the lamb (especially if not penned with dam).

Q. What injections should be given to the lamb?
A. This will depend if the ewe received the necessary shots or supplements prior to lambing. One way or the other the lamb should receive selenium (Se-B) to protect from white muscle disease, overeating or enterotoxemia (Clostridium perfringens Type C and D); and vitamins A and D.
Q. How would you prevent the lamb from getting infectious parasites and germs?


SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY
Give each team a chance to show the entire group how they solved their task. Encourage everyone to ask questions. If a slide set or other visual is available this is the time to introduce it to further build on what was learned about caring for the newborn lamb.

Supporting Activities
Additional project meeting guides are available for use:
Preparing the Ewe for Lambing
Delivering Lambs
Saving the Weak Newborn Lamb
Grafting Orphan Lambs
Identifying Lambs
Administering Medication to Animals
Docking a Lamb’s Tail
Castrating a Lamb

Published by
THE NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
SHEEP
SAVING WEAK NEWBORN LAMBS

IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Having the ability to save a weak newborn lamb may mean the difference between a successful 4-H sheep project and one which ends in disappointment. Since most lambs die during the first two days, this critical time deserves the special attention of each sheep raiser.

WHAT YOUR 4-H’ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in this project meeting, the 4-H’ers will be able to:
1. Develop the life skills of making decisions, learning how to work as members of a group, solving a problem, and feeling good about themselves.
2. Demonstrate how to warm a weak, chilled newborn lamb both internally and externally.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A little time spent planning the meeting, reviewing the resource materials, collecting the supplies required, and involving others in each of these steps often will mean the difference between a very hectic meeting and a very exciting one for both you and your members. If the supplies are not available simply tape the name on the substitution.

Supplies needed: 4-H lamb; 16” catheter tube; 50 cc syringe; bucket; towels; needle and syringe; 7% iodine bottle; Bo-Se (Selenium); combiotic; 5% dextrose solution; vitamins A and D; Clostridium perfringens types C and D toxoid.

FACILITATE THE MEETING

A very tempting way to teach this activity is to simply set your members down and have them listen to and watch you or a resource person demonstrate the skill. The 4-H’ers may remember some of what they see and hear but will they be learning in a way which will not only help them save newborn lambs on their own, but also provide them with a learn-by-doing 4-H experience with which to develop their life skills?

Your challenge as the leader of the group is to help the members discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity before they are told or shown how.

The following sequence outlines one successful method leaders have used to involve their members in learn-by-doing experiences. These nine steps provide a basis for the activities which follow.

1. Divide the 4-H’ers into teams of 3 to 8 members.
2. Miss Supplies Available
3. Provide the 4-H’ers with a realistic situation and task to respond to.
4. Step back and allow the members time to discover their own solution.
5. Respond to 4-H’er questions with questions so the answers are their own.
6. Listen to the members’ presentation.
7. Accept their solutions.
8. Ask questions to help them build on what they presented.
9. Reinforce their efforts with praise.
One general situation may lead to several different tasks which could be divided among the terms or given to each team in order. Some project groups find that they enjoy outlining and dividing up the tasks themselves rather than being given the tasks directly. Be sure to involve the parents present. The activities which follow are stated in the form of a situation and a series of tasks to assist you.

**LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITIES**

**SITUATION:** Your parents have gone out to dinner. You’re to check the ewes to see if any have lambed. When you arrive at the barn you find that your 4-H project ewe has recently given birth to twins. One is up nursing but the second is lying on the straw almost motionless. The temperature is 10 degrees F.

**YOUR TASK:** Demonstrate what you would do to save the weak, chilled lamb.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK**

When a team seems to have exhausted its resources move it a little closer to solving the task by asking thought stimulating questions and answering questions with questions. Help them figure out the answers for themselves. Reinforce their answers with praise.

Q. How can you tell if a lamb has a sucking reflex?
A. Put your finger in its mouth and see if the lamb will suck and swallow.

Q. What happens if a lamb with a sucking reflex is bottle fed?
A. The milk may flow to the lungs causing death.

Q. If the lamb is not breathing, what can you do?
A. Clean the fluid out of its nostrils and mouth; tickle the inside of its nostrils with a piece of straw; hold the lamb’s hind legs above the hocks and swing the lamb several times in an arc; rub the lamb vigorously; dip it into a bucket of water; or pinch off the throat and blow very small puffs of air into the mouth to inflate the lungs.

Q. How can you tell if a lamb is cold?
A. Placing your finger in its mouth will tell you.

Q. How do you warm up the outside of a cold lamb?
A. Put the lamb in warm water up to its neck—as you massage the lamb move its legs back and forth. Dry thoroughly. Use a heat lamp sparingly after the lamb is first warmed up. A heat pad can be used but remember to turn the lamb often for needed circulation.

Q. How do you warm up the inside of a cold lamb that has no sucking reflex?
A. A popular method is to give a lamb 2 oz. of colostrum using a 16” x 1/2” catheter tube attached to a 50 mm syringe. Insert the tube down the throat of the lamb into the stomach and release the colostrum. Provide 4-6 oz. at 6 hour intervals if additional feedings are necessary. The second method of putting colostrum into the stomach is to use a baby lamb probe. This instrument consists of a stainless steel ball probe attached to a 50 cc pistol grip syringe or a 2 oz. dose syringe. The lamb is placed on its right side with its head and neck extended. As you insert the probe place one hand around the lamb’s neck so the probe can be felt sliding down the esophagus on the left side of the throat.

Five percent dextrose solution may also be injected under the skin. The dosage is from 50-100 cc according to the size of the lamb. Make two injections for large doses. This provides needed energy and fluid to the lamb.

Q. How can you be sure the tube does not go into the lungs instead of the stomach?
A. Put the large end of the catheter tube into liquid to see if any bubbles are present. A stream of bubbles indicates the tube is in the lung cavity and will have to be inserted again before attaching it to the syringe containing the colostrum.

Q. If a supply of ewe or cow colostrum has been frozen in an ice cube tray in the freezer how should it be thawed before giving to the lamb?
A. Never thaw it over a burner since this will kill the antibodies present. Place it in a container of warm water instead.

Q. What shots should be given to the lamb on the first day?
A. If the ewe received selenium and vitamin A and D injections prior to lambing the immediate need for these shots is not so great. If not, the lamb should receive all three following birth with an overeating (clostridium perfringes type C and D) and selenium booster at 4-5 weeks. Tetanus antitoxin booster is given if tetanus has been a problem. A weak cold lamb should also be given antibodies to fight disease and pneumonia.

**SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY**

Because of all the ways available to save a weak, chilled lamb the activity can either be summarized by each team presenting a demonstration on how they solved their task or the whole group could put together a skit or play on saving a lamb. Finding props is usually no problem with a group of active 4-H’ers.

**Supporting Activities**

The following project meeting guides are also available:

- Preparing the Ewe for Lambing
- Delivering Lambs
- Caring for the Newborn Lamb


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Importance of the Topic

The 4-H'er who is able to find a new mother for a lamb that has been orphaned will save more lambs as well as many hours of feeding that lamb. During the past few years, sheep raisers have been successfully utilizing new techniques for grafting lambs onto new mothers.

What Your 4-H'ers Will Accomplish

By participating in this activity, 4-H'ers will be able to:
1. Develop the life skills of making decisions, working together, and speaking in front of a group.
2. Demonstrate two methods for grafting lambs.

Prepare for the Meeting

A few minutes spent preparing for the meeting will allow both you and your members to experience much more. You'll want to review this guide, gather the necessary materials (or ask your members to bring items to the meeting), and plan your strategy for getting everyone involved in the action.

Materials and references suggested: Cardboard or lumber to make a ewe stanchion; a model or simulated lamb and ewe. The 4-H Lamb Pattern is an excellent pattern to use; Sheepman’s Production Handbook if available in County Extension Office.

Facilitate the Activity

Simply telling or showing the members how to graft a lamb would be one way to provide information. However, if you are also striving to increase their understanding as well as help them develop important life skills, then you'll want to create a situation where they can figure out for themselves how they'll do a task before they are shown how. The following short teaching maxim sums up learning-by-doing:

I Hear: I Forget
I See: I Remember
I Do: I Understand

Often simply dividing your group into teams of two or three, giving them a situation and a task to do, along with materials to use, will get them immediately involved in a learn-by-doing activity. When this type of production is followed with silent patience and then questions, an excellent educational and personal experience often results. Here are two activities utilizing the situation, task, and question approach.

Learn-by-doing Activities

1. Grafting a Lamb on a New Mother.

Situation: Earlier this afternoon your ewe gave birth to twins. When you checked the ewe’s udder you discovered that the ewe had milk only on one side. Another ewe is starting to lamb. Judging from her size and past lambing history, she will probably have a single.

Task: Demonstrate what steps you would take to graft one of the twin lambs on the ewe that is now lambing.
The following schematic outlines one popular method used by leaders to help their members learn-by-doing.

**TASK:** Demonstrate a method you would use to successfully transfer the lamb to a new mother.

**QUESTIONS TO ASK**

Q. If you simply put the lamb in a small pen with the ewe what would most likely happen?
A. The ewe would probably bunt the strange lamb and hurt it.

Q. What could you do or make to keep the ewe from hurting the lamb?
A. The most popular method is a ewe stanchion which keeps the ewe from hurting the lamb. (Note: cardboard can be used by the 4-H'ers to make a model stanchion.)

Q. How long would a ewe have to be kept in the stanchion?
A. Usually from 3-6 days or until she accepts the lamb.

Q. Why would the ewe accept the lamb after being in the stanchion a few days when she wouldn’t in the first place?
A. If the pen is not cleaned, the odor of her urine and feces on the new lamb is thought to make her accept it as her own.

**SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY**

Be sure that each team is given the opportunity to tell the others how they solved the situations and tasks presented. Encourage everyone to ask questions. Some groups enjoy putting on a skit or play to show what they’ve learned. By providing a blanket, towel, and chairs you can sit back and enjoy what you’ve helped them learn about (the grafting of lambs) and about themselves.

**Supporting Activities**

Meeting topics which support this activity include:
- Preparing the Ewe for Lambing.
- Delivering Lambs.
- Saving a Weak Newborn Lamb.
- Caring for a Newborn Lamb.
- Docking a Lamb’s Tail.
- Castrating a Lamb.


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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC
A 4-H member who raises sheep is faced with the situation of castrating the ram lambs that are to be used as market lambs for the 4-H sheep project.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH
As a result of this activity your 4-H'ers will be able to:
1. Develop the important life skills of self-confidence, decision making, and learning-by-doing.
2. Demonstrate how to castrate a lamb.
3. Tell others one reason to and one reason not to castrate a lamb.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING
Materials: A rag doll such as the one made from the 4-H Lamb Pattern works well. Something else could also be used to simulate a ram lamb. In the absence of these, any object that can be made to appear like a scrotum with testes will work.

Equipment: Elastrator with rings, burdizzo, emasculator, knife, or scalpel. Ask your members to bring to the meeting what they use to castrate lambs.

Time: 30-40 minutes

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY
In order for the members to learn both project and life skills you will want to provide guidance to the members and allow them to discover for themselves how to do the activity.

Set as one of your goals to fully involve your 4-H'ers in a learn-by-doing activity instead of having them listen to a lecture or watch a demonstration. The importance of this may be summed up as follows:
1 Hear: I Forget
1 See: I Remember
1 Do: I Understand

LEARN-BY-DOING ACTIVITY
Questions and realistic situations posed to members will often focus their attention on the subject. Simply have the members divide up into teams of 2 to 3 depending on the project group size and then present them with a realistic situation and a task to do. You will quickly have them involved in a learn-by-doing activity.

SITUATION: A neighbor found out that you (and your friend) are in a 4-H sheep project. Since this is your neighbor's first year with sheep, he's asked you to come over tomorrow and castrate his lambs. You accept the challenge.

TASK: Demonstrate how you'll castrate your neighbor's lambs.

STEP BACK AND OBSERVE
After you have given the teams the task to do, and made available materials and equipment, a very effective method is for you to leave the room for a few minutes or somehow separate yourself from them so they'll have to work together to solve the task on their own. Let them make mistakes as well as reinforce each other's efforts. Leaders often refer to this method as "sitting on their hands".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
As the teams reach a point where they have exhausted all the ideas generated, help them discover new approaches by asking them questions and answering their questions with questions. Help them figure out the answers for themselves. Be sure to reinforce their
answers with praise. Here are some possible questions:

Q. Why do you castrate a ram lamb?
A. Ram lambs need to be castrated so that they do not get coarse-necked, raw-boned and lose their baby fat. Lambs that reach 60-70 pounds on the range of the farm and are going to someone else's feedlot for finishing must be castrated. If not, they may get to 8-12 months of age and appear masculine with lots of weight in the neck and head and make a very undesirable slaughter lamb. The pelts may also come off with more difficulty than on those which are castrated.

Q. When is the best time to castrate a lamb?
A. Castration can be done quite early — usually as soon as the testicles have dropped into the scrotum. Most lambs are castrated between 1-2 weeks old.

Q. If tetanus is a problem on the farm which method is not recommended and why?
A. The elastrator which uses the rubber rings is not recommended because it will leave a wound which may allow the organism to enter the body and thereby may increase the incidence of tetanus.

Q. How does an emasculator work?
A. The emasculator is recommended for warm weather because no opening is left to attract flies. The spermatic cord and arteries are crushed when they are clamped. There is no loss of blood and little interruption to the lamb's growth, plus no danger of infection. After checking to be sure both testicles are in the scrotum, clamp the emasculator onto the neck of the scrotum where it joins the body on each testicle tube separately. Thirty to 40 days are required for the testicles to atrophy.

Q. How would you use an elastrator?
A. This instrument is used when the lambs are about 10 days of age. A rubber ring is put on the elastrator, inserted over the scrotum and testicles, and applied around the neck of the scrotum where it attaches to the body. The blood supply is cut off and the testicles wither in 20-30 days. This method causes no internal hemorrhage and the risk of infection is slight. Some difficulties have been encountered if tetanus is a problem on the farm.

Q. If you decide to use a knife to castrate what procedure should you use?
A. Have someone hold the lamb with the rear legs in each hand above the hock and the front ones together with the rear ones. The lamb is then put on the holder's leg above the knee and the lamb's legs pushed downward to slightly flatten the lamb's backbone so the scrotum will protrude. Next, cut off the end of the scrotum — support the abdomen with a thumb and forefinger pressed against the abdomen on both sides of the scrotum and pull the testicles out with a steady pull with an instrument made for this operation.

Q. What is a castrated male called?
A. A wether.

Q. When should a fly repellent be used?
A. In warm weather when the chance of a fly strike is present.

SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY
Give your members a chance to show everyone the method they used and to explain why. Encourage questions to be asked so the demonstrators have the experience of answering them. A skit often works well and is a lot of fun. If you have the slide set on castrating to show this is the time to do it, after the activity instead of before.

Pat on the Back
You deserve a pat on the back for allowing your members to discover for themselves what they needed to know to do the activity before you told them or showed them how. By doing this not only did you help them gain new understanding of a skill but you also helped them further develop important life skills such as learning how to learn, interacting with others, and problem solving.

Other Meeting Activities
Tour of a sheep operation at lambing time.
Roll call on different ways to castrate.

Supporting Activities
Docking a Lamb.
Inoculating a Lamb.
Delivering a Lamb.
Treating Entropin and Pink Eye.
Identifying Lambs.

Reference:
SID Sheep Production Handbook.

Resource:
Sheep Castration, NCAES slide set 01521.


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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Every 4-H member with a breeding sheep project is faced with the task of docking lambs’ tails. By learning proper docking techniques, stress to the animal as well as the 4-H’ers will be minimal.

WHAT YOUR 4-H’ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

As a result of this activity, 4-H’ers will be able to:
1. Develop the life skills of self-confidence, demonstrating to others, working together as a team, solving problems, and organizing ideas.
2. Demonstrate how to dock a lamb.
3. Tell others why a lamb is docked.
4. Tell how to avoid losses from tetanus.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A little time spent preparing for the meeting, reviewing the resource material, and collecting any supplies required will often make the educational experience much more satisfying for both you and your members. One way to obtain the equipment is to ask your 4-H’ers to bring to the meeting what they or their neighbors use to dock tails.

Materials: Real or rag doll lamb with tail; burdizzo emasculator; elastrator; knife; hot iron; blood stopper.

If you would visually like to review some methods for docking tails, a slide-tape set is available through your County Extension Office (Docking Sheep, NCAES slide set 1507). If you plan to show the set to the members, the educational value will be much higher if they see it after they have had a chance to practice on a rag doll lamb or piece of cloth.

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

Your challenge as the leader of the sheep project is to help your members discover for themselves what they need to know to be able to successfully dock a tail on their own. Instead of someone who is telling or showing them how to do the operation, you become the helper who supports them through a learn-by-doing experience.

As a leader you may want to set as an additional goal to fully involve your 4-H’ers in a learn-by-doing activity instead of having them listen to a lecture or watch a demonstration. The importance of this may be summed up as follows:

I Hear: I Forget
I See: I Remember
I Do: I Understand

Simply asking the members at the beginning of the meeting to tell what docking methods they know about will get their attention focused on the subject. Next, you might want to divide them into teams of 2-3, give them a realistic situation, and a task to do. Here’s an example:

SITUATION: Your favorite 4-H ewe gave birth to two healthy lambs last Friday. The person who normally docks the tails has an injured hand. You have been asked to do it.

TASK: Demonstrate how you would dock these lambs. Or demonstrate how you would dock the lambs with a (choose a method).
STEP BACK AND OBSERVE

At this point give the teams time to discover what they need to know to do the task. Be patient. Let them learn from each other and from other resources available. Sometimes physically leaving the room will let them know you really expect them to do the task and that you will accept their solution.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When a team reaches a point when it is really “stuck”, a few thought stimulating questions from the leader or other members will often get them started. Using the technique of responding to their questions with questions instead of answers will help you not take the task (ball) away from the team. Here are the type of questions which might be helpful:

Q. Why do we dock a lamb’s tail?
A. The tail serves no real function. After the tail is removed we have a cleaner situation with the lamb, and with the adult animal later.

Q. If the tail was not removed what difficulties might arise?
A. The tail may become dirty from the lamb’s feces and urine creating an ideal situation for maggots. Long tails may also cause a mechanical difficulty during breeding, lambing, and shearing.

Q. How short should the tail be docked?
A. Most commercial sheep producers leave one to one and one-half inches.

Q. What happens if we dock too closely?
A. This interferes with nerve endings that are located in that part of the animal’s anatomy. The lamb may lose some of the control of the sphincter muscles around his rectum possibly contributing to a rectal prolapse.

Q. What is the most appropriate time to dock a lamb?
A. Two to four days of age is recommended. The tail grows quite rapidly in diameter during the first few days of the lamb’s life. Early docking reduces the shock to the lamb.

Q. What methods and tools are available to dock a lamb?
A. a) Burning the tail off with a hot iron applied after the tail is pulled through a hole in a one inch plywood; b) crushing the tail with a burdizzo and cutting it off with a knife on the side away from the animal; c) crushing and cutting the tail off with an emasculator d) simply cutting the tail off with a sharp knife (this often results in excessive blood loss unless the severed artery is pinched or pressure applied to encourage blood clotting); and e) applying a special strong rubber band using an elastrator to cut off the circulation. After 7-14 days the tail will fall off if it is not cut off on the body side of the band 2-3 days after applying. Cutting off the tail reduces the risk of tetanus. A fly repellent should be applied if docking during warm weather.

Q. What if tetanus is a problem on your farm?
A. Administer a tetanus antitoxin at the time of docking. Many sheep raisers give tetanus vaccine to the ewes which will protect the lambs for up to six weeks after birth.

SUMMARIZE THE ACTIVITY

Help your members understand what they have learned. Encourage each team to demonstrate what they have learned. Encourage each team to demonstrate to the entire group how they solved their task. Questions from the group will expand the learning experience.

This is a good point to ask others present to show another method.

Pat On The Back

Give yourself a pat on the back. Your ability to sit on your hands and let your members learn-by-doing before they are told how to do the activity will pay greater dividends for everyone involved with each learning activity.

Other Meeting Activities

Other ways in which members may reinforce their ability to understand tail docking include:

- Touring a sheep operation during lambing time.
- Making a lamb out of material using the 4-H Lamb Pattern.
- Giving a demonstration on docking lambs to the 4-H club.
- Presenting a skit on docking lambs to the 4-H club.

Supporting Activities

Meeting topics which support this activity include:

- Caring for the Newborn Lamb
- Saving the Weak, Cold Lamb
- Castrating a Lamb
- Delivering Lambs
- Grafting Orphan Lambs


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IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Understanding how to tie a fleece is an important step in the effective marketing and exhibiting of wool. Since wool is purchased to a large extent on the basis of visual appraisal, presenting the wool most advantageously is very important.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By involving your members in learn-by-doing activities, they will be able to:

1. Develop the important life skills of relating to others, planning and carrying out a task, and developing a positive self-concept.
2. Demonstrate how to prepare the fleece prior to rolling it together.
3. Demonstrate how to roll the fleece into a tight bundle that will show the fleece to best advantage.
4. Demonstrate how to tie a fleece so it will remain intact throughout the bagging, unbagging, appraisal, and grading.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A little time spent gathering materials, becoming familiar with this project meeting guide, and perhaps practicing tying a fleece before your project group arrives, will make the meeting more enjoyable for both you and your members. You may want to ask your members to bring these supplies to the meeting:

- Supplies—actual fleece or other material to be used as a fleece; paper twine; baling wire; hay twine; string; tape; scissors; pliers; and pocket knife.

FACILITATE THE ACTIVITY

Learning to tie fleeces is an excellent learn-by-doing activity. Your challenge will be to stand back and let the members see how much they can do before they are told or shown how. Leaders have found that the facilitator or helper role instead of the upfront teacher, helps 4-H’ers understand the activity better, as well as helping them develop their life skills.

1. Hear: I Forget
1. See: I Remember
1. Do: I Understand

One way to quickly get the members thinking about the topic and involved in an activity is to give them a realistic situation, materials to choose from, and possibly a task to do. Here is an example:

**SITUATION:** You are having your sheep sheared and the shearer has asked that you take care of the fleeces after the sheep are sheared.

After presenting the situation allow the 4-H’ers time to discuss the situation and determine what steps they feel are necessary to solve the problem. These steps could then be presented as tasks to do for teams of 2-3 4-H’ers to work together to solve. For example:

**OVERALL TASKS TO DO:** Demonstrate how you would handle the fleece from the sheep until it is packed in a box for exhibit or a wool bag for marketing.
SPECIFIC TASKS TO DO:
Demonstrate how you would clean foreign material from the fleece.
Demonstrate how you would roll the fleece.
Demonstrate how you would tie the fleece.

QUESTIONS TO ASK
Thought provoking questions asked at teachable moments will further help your members to understand the concept and make decisions.

Q. Before rolling the fleece what should be done with it?
A. Remove any manure tags, burrs, second cuts, solid black areas.

Q. Should the fleece be rolled shorn-side in or shorn-side out? Why?
A. Shorn-side out to present the fleece to its best advantage so the buyer can more readily determine crimp and cleanliness of the wool and check for second cuts.

Q. How should the fleece be rolled?
A. Spread it out with the flesh side down, fold in from the sides and ends, then roll from tail to neck. This brings the best parts of the fleece on the outside.

Q. What type of material should the fleece be tied with and why?
A. Paper twine should be used because unlike other materials such as baling twine, and string, it leaves no extraneous fibers in the fleece.

Q. How should the fleece be tied?
A. Tie each fleece separately. Use only enough twine to tie the fleece securely; about 8½ feet is usually enough. The twine should go from corner to corner, be crossed, and go around the opposite corners.

Q. Should all fleeces be tied?
A. Fleeces with only 4-5 months growth don’t need to be tied but all others should be. These should be bagged separately.

SUMMARIZING THE ACTIVITY
Help your members realize what they learned to do during the meeting. One way is to simply ask what they learned. Another way is to have them write down on a piece of paper one thing they learned, throw all the notes together, select one and read it to the group. This only takes a couple of minutes but the effect is long lasting.

Pat on the Back
You deserve a pat on the back for sharing your time and talents with your project members. They will be thanking you over and over in the years ahead for the opportunities you gave them by learning in a fun way.

Supporting Activities
Meeting topics which support this activity include:
Tagging a Sheep
Shearing a Sheep
Preparing a Fleece for Show


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WHAT IS A 4-H SKILLATHON?

A skillathon is an excellent method of involving your 4-H'ers and their parents in challenging, noncompetitive, learn-by-doing activities. This method of helping 4-H'ers develop both their life skills and project skills is designed as a series of mini-learning stations with a facilitator at each one (see illustration below). The participants rotate from station to station, attempting to perform the specific tasks given at each station. The station facilitator allows all team members to test their own knowledge and abilities before giving them any hints. This technique is referred to in 4-H as experiential learning or learning by doing before being told or shown how.

1. Given a situation and a task, they will be able to evaluate their abilities to solve the challenge presented and discover for themselves what they need to know to do the activity.
2. They will learn to work as members of a team.
3. They will practice making decisions and speaking before others.
4. They will receive recognition and praise for their efforts.

CHECKLIST FOR THE SKILLATHON COMMITTEE

- Decide on the stations wanted, considering time and resources available.
- Make up a realistic situation and task for each station.
- Decide who will be in charge of each station.
- Decide on the equipment or supplies needed at each station.
- Delegate responsibility for gathering supplies.
- Depending on the size of the group and the number of station, group the members into teams of two to four, assigning each team to a station and moving them to the next station every 10 minutes or so.

A skillathon works well not only during project meetings, but also at the 4-H community club. It is an excellent way to involve several project groups in the program at once. By asking various project groups to set up one or two learn-by-doing stations, the entire club can be actively involved at once. In addition, you can use a skillathon to give recognition to the project groups and their leaders.

The skillathon approach has also been successfully used to strengthen the educational value of county and state fairs. Both adults and youths enjoy the challenge posed by each situation and task.

This project meeting guide briefly outlines how to set up and conduct a 4-H sheep skillathon. Included are a checklist for the planning committee, advice for the facilitator, and suggested supplies, situations, and tasks for each station.

WHAT YOUR 4-H'ERS WILL ACCOMPLISH

By participating in a skillathon your 4-H'ers will accomplish the following:
After all teams have rotated through the stations, have each team select a station and give a short presentation to the entire group on how the team solved the task at that particular station. Let teams choose which station they want to present.

Praise everyone’s efforts.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATION FACILITATOR

You will find it challenging and rewarding to be a helper at one of the stations. The extent to which the participants develop project skills and life skills depends largely on how successfully you relate to them. Here are suggested steps to follow:

- Familiarize yourself with the topic and any available project meeting guides, supplies, and training aids.
- Compile a list of questions to ask each team.
- Set up your station to include a stand-up situation and task sign and necessary supplies.
- Allow the team members to discover for themselves how to accomplish the task, instead of first telling or showing them how.
- Facilitate the learning situation for each team in the following manner:

   1. Divide the 4-H'ers into teams of 2 to 5 members.
   2. Make supplies available.
   3. Provide the 4-H'ers with a realistic situation and task to respond to.
   4. Step back and allow the members time to discover their own solution.
   5. Respond to 4-H'er questions with questions so the answers are their own.
   6. Listen to the members’ presentation.
   7. Accept their solutions.
   8. Ask questions to help them build on what they presented.
   9. Reinforce their efforts with praise.

STATION INFORMATION

Below are some possible topics and suggestions for presenting each topic at individual stations. Station topics are limited only by your imagination and interest. The model lamb made from the 4-H Lamb Pattern can be a useful training aid for several of the suggested topics. At all stations, try displaying the situation and task on an 8 x 11” stand-up so that the teams can start solving the task immediately.

You will need the following supplies for each station described: project meeting kit containing the project meeting guide “Conducting a 4-H Skillathon,” a stand-up situation and task sign as previously described, the project meeting guide about the topic, and a station sign.

1. Identifying Parts of a Sheep

SUPPLIES: Sheep Parts Chart, parts T-pins, sponge for pins, cardboard for chart.

DIRECTIONS: Let the teams make their own decisions and check their own answers. Follow up with questions.

SITUATION: You have been asked to help the younger 4-H'ers in your 4-H sheep project group learn to identify the parts of a sheep.

TASK: Pin the names of the parts on the chart. Check your answers against the chart.

2. Delivering a Lamb #1

SUPPLIES: 4-H model lamb, lamb delivering box, K-4 jelly, ivory flakes, bar of soap, hand shears.

DIRECTIONS: Let team members demonstrate what they would do to prepare both themselves and the ewe when assistance is required, plus what they understand to be a normal delivery position.

SITUATION: Your 4-H sheep group has been asked by the local sheep association to show how to prepare for delivering a lamb and explain a normal delivery position.

TASK: Prepare and give a demonstration to the association.

3. Delivering a Lamb #2

SUPPLIES: 4-H model lamb, lamb delivering box, 3'-4' lengths of strong white cord, bottle labeled soap suds, lamb delivery equipment, miniature bale of straw.

DIRECTIONS: Allow one-half of the team to place the
lamb in one of six positions mentioned in the project meeting guide “Delivering Lambs” while the other half of the team practices delivering the lamb.

**SITUATION:** Your 4-H project ewe has been in labor a long time. You decide to help.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to deliver the lamb(s).

**4. Caring for the Newborn Lamb**

**SUPPLIES:** 4-H model lamb, towel, syringe and needle, bottles labeled BO-SE, vitamin A, colostrum, perfringens type C + D toxoid, 7% iodine.

**DIRECTIONS:** Make the supplies available and let the team demonstrate how to solve the task. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** Your 4-H ewe just gave birth to an eight-pound ram lamb.

**TASK:** Demonstrate what you would do in the 10 minutes following birth.

**5. Saving a Weak Newborn Lamb**

**SUPPLIES:** 4-H model lamb with esophageal tube, catheter tube, 50cc syringe, towels, combiotic bottle.

**DIRECTIONS:** Place the lamb in the position described in the situation and allow the 4-H’ers to demonstrate what they would do. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** On the way to the barn you find a ewe with two newborn lambs. One is up nursing, but the other is lying on the snow almost motionless.

**TASK:** Demonstrate what you would do to save the weak, cold lamb.

**6. Castrating a Lamb**

**SUPPLIES:** 4-H model lamb, castrator with rings, burdizzo, emasculator, knife, scalpel, 7% iodine solution.

**DIRECTIONS:** Make the supplies available and allow the 4-H’ers to choose and demonstrate a castration method. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** You need to castrate your ram lamb to have a market lamb for the fair.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to castrate the lamb.

**7. Docking a Lamb’s Tail**

**SUPPLIES:** 4-H model lamb, castrator with rings, burdizzo, emasculator, knife, blood stopper.

**DIRECTIONS:** Make the supplies available and allow the 4-H’ers to select and demonstrate the method(s) they choose. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** Your neighbor has asked you to come over and dock his new lamb’s tail.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how you will dock the lamb’s tail.

**8. Making a Rope Halter**

**SUPPLIES:** Nylon or manila three-strand rope, hog rings and pliers, lamb puppet head.

**DIRECTIONS:** Provide copies of “Making a Rope Halter” to the members if they need them, and let them make a halter. Have them put the halter on the lamb puppet head before leaving the station.

**SITUATION:** You decide to make a rope halter so that you can lead your new ram around more easily.

**TASK:** Make a rope halter.

**9. Preparing and Tying a Fleece**

**SUPPLIES:** Fake fleece with detachable “dirt” spot (made of straw, wool material, etc.) attached by velcro, paper twine, baling wire, hay twine, string, tape, real wool.

**DIRECTIONS:** Make the supplies available, and let the team solve its task. Follow up with questions.

**SITUATION:** You decide to exhibit a fleece at the fair.

**TASK:** Demonstrate how to prepare and tie the fleece.

**10. Judging Hay**

**SUPPLIES:** Four samples of hay, notecards numbered 1-4, oral reason notecards, four flakes of different quality hay.

**DIRECTIONS:** Let the team members complete their task. Work with them as needed particularly to determine the cuts (degree of differences) between the pairs.

**SITUATION:** Your hay supplier brings over four samples of hay for you to evaluate.

**TASK:** Discuss what makes good hay, judge the samples as a class, and determine the cuts between the pairs.

**11. Giving Oral Reasons**

**SUPPLIES:** 50 oral reasons notecards, class of hay.

**DIRECTIONS:** Refer to information on the oral reasons notecard. Allow each member to give a complete set of oral reasons.

**SITUATION:** The parents and members of the 4-H sheep project group are interested in why you placed the class as you did.

**TASK:** Using the 4-H oral reasons notecard as a guide, present your reasons.

**12. Scoring a Judging Class**

**SUPPLIES:** Hormel computing slide, paper and pencils.

**DIRECTIONS:** Give the team a scorecard with different placings and have them study the project meeting guide to figure the class score. If they are still completely confused after a few minutes, walk them through an example using the six steps. Let them check their score using the Hormel computing slide.

**SITUATION:** One of the 4-H members placed the class of hay differently than you did.

**TASK:** Help the member figure his score on this class.
13. Catching and Setting a Sheep on Its Rump
SUPPLIES: Burlap bag or piece of canvas, sheep, pen of sheep.
DIRECTIONS: Make an x with tape on the canvas, or use a burlap bag, and place it on the ground. Have the 4-H’ers catch the sheep, lead it out, and see how close they can come to putting the sheep on the spot.
SITUATION: Your shearer has asked for your help.
TASK: Demonstrate how you catch and set a sheep on its rump.

14. Trimming a Sheep’s Feet
SUPPLIES: Hoof trimmers, formaldehyde bottle, knife, model hoof to trim, brush, two bales of straw or sheep chair, disinfectant bucket.
DIRECTIONS: Allow the members to catch and set up the sheep and do the task outlined.
SITUATION: You notice one of your ewes limping.
TASK: Demonstrate how to trim the feet of the ewe.

15. Telling a Sheep’s Age
SUPPLIES: Sheep’s jaw, teeth.
DIRECTIONS: Let the 4-H’ers accomplish their task and follow up with questions.
SITUATION: You have an opportunity to purchase 10 head out of a flock of 30 ewes.
TASK: Demonstrate how to recognize lambs, yearlings, and two-, three-, and four-year-old ewes.

16. Showing a Sheep
SUPPLIES: Chart showing muscle structure of sheep.
DIRECTIONS: Let one 4-H’er be the judge while the other team members take turns showing. Emphasize using fingers extended on the neck muscles to “pop” the loin eye muscle instead of using pressure on the brisket or jaw. Ask questions.
SITUATION: You are showing in a market lamb class.
TASK: Demonstrate how to “pop” the loin eye muscle and present your sheep to the judge.

17. Identifying Breeds of Sheep
SUPPLIES: Chips with breed names, sheep pictures, chips with production traits.
DIRECTIONS: Allow the 4-H’ers to identify the breeds, check their answers, and then place the strength chips on the pictures. Follow up with questions.
SITUATION: You are showing a new member of your 4-H project group the various breeds at the fair.

TASK: Identify the breeds and one or more strengths of each.

18. Identifying and Classifying Feed Ingredients
SUPPLIES: Packet of 9-12 feed ingredients, chips with ingredient names and name of human foods, paper plates with the words PROTEIN, ENERGY, WATER, VITAMINS, MINERALS, written on them.
DIRECTIONS: Let the teams match the chips to the ingredient. Then have them place all chips on the plate specifying its nutrient category. Ask questions and discuss.
SITUATION: Your local feed store manager has dropped off some feed ingredients for your project group’s use.
TASK: Identify the ingredients and divide them into nutrient categories of energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and water.

19. Tying Farm Knots
SUPPLIES: Eight 5-foot lengths of rope, board or other object to which to tie knots.
DIRECTIONS: Let the 4-H’ers try to tie the knots before asking any questions.
SITUATION: You want to brush up on your knot-tying skills before you begin training your project animal.
TASK: Demonstrate how to tie eight different knots, and tell when you would use each.

20. Identifying Lamb Meat Cuts
SUPPLIES: Pictures of meat cuts, chips with names of meat cuts, 4-H Sheep Parts Chart, Meat Board Chart for reference.
DIRECTIONS: Allow the teams to perform their task and check their answers. Follow up with questions.
SITUATION: You are interested in participating in your county’s meats judging contest and you want to find out how much you know.
TASK: Place the chips on the appropriate cut. Check your answers against the chart.

Resources
Fitting and Showing Sheep, NCAES slide set 01515.
Sheep Classes, NCAES slide set 01316.
Sheep Classes With Reasons, NCAES slide set 01314.

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Published by
THE NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
North Carolina State University at Raleigh, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University at Greensboro, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State University Station, Raleigh, N.C., Chester D. Black, Director. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 6 and June 30, 1914. The North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, or national origin, and is an equal opportunity employer.