

Tips for bottle feeding lambs/kids



- 1) Ensure a good intake of colostrum (first milk): at least 10% of body weight in first 18-24 hours (e.g., 12.8 oz for an 8-lb. lamb/kid). At least one feeding in the first 12 hours. Tube or bottle feed, if necessary. Split into 4-6 feedings. Feed milk at body temperature.
- 2) If “real” colostrum is not available, feed a colostrum replacer (not supplement). Cow colostrum is another option, though there is some risk to feeding it.
- 3) After 24 hours, switch to a high-quality milk replacer, specifically-formulated for lambs or kids. Best not to feed a calf or multi-species milk replacer. “Waste” milk from treated cows and store-bought cow’s milk have been fed successfully to lambs and kids. Cow and goat milk should be fortified with fat or oil for lambs.
- 4) Follow instructions on bag for mixing milk and feeding to lambs or kids.
- 5) Be fussy about hygiene. Clean bottles after every feed.
- 6) After lambs/kids are about a week old, feed milk cool or at room temperature.
- 7) Be careful not to overfeed.
- 8) Make sure hole in teat is not too large.
- 9) Rear lambs/kids in a clean, dry, well-ventilated, draft-free environment.
- 11) Offer dry (creep) feed as soon as possible (18-20% protein, with coccidiostat). The fermentable carbohydrates in grain help to develop the rumen.



- 12) Always provide plenty of fresh, clean water.
- 13) Early weaning is usually best: 30-42 days for lambs. Later for kids, especially dairy. A good rule of thumb is at least 2.5 x birth weight. When to wean also depends upon whether lambs/kids are eating solid foods and drinking water.
- 14) It is usually best to wean abruptly rather than to dilute the milk replacer.
- 15) Vaccinate several times against clostridial diseases (CDT).
- 16) Always closely monitor orphans for problems or signs of disease, even after weaning.

