



MEET THE LAMBS ONLINE

22-26 APRIL 2024

Questions and answers from 'Meet the lambs' at Millburn Farm on Orkney

Does the sheep with 4 lambs still have enough milk? If a ewe has more than 2 lambs we would keep a very close eye on them to see if she is producing enough milk, and if not then we prefer to take the extra lambs away and feed them ourselves so that the mum has plenty for the two she is left with.

Do you have any black sheep? Yes, we do. We have a Zwartbles folk of 12 ewes and 6 hogs.

Do the lambs have names? We only name the Zwartbles - Evie, Bertha, Dot, Cindy and Barbie!

How often do the lambs get fed? Lambs with their mum's are fed as many times as they want throughout the day, the pet lambs get fed 4 times for the first couple of days and then we move them onto a shepherdess bucket so they can help themselves throughout the day as well.

How old are lambs when they don't need to be beside their Mum? 4 to 5 months old.

Why are some of the sheep brown? The ones that are brown are actually black but the fleeces go lighter in the sun. The fleece is dark due to the type of sheep it is.

How many lambs do you have in total? We have 288 lambs at the moment and one ewe expecting twin lambs.

How much milk do sheep need to feed twins? Sheep are designed to feed twins, this is the perfect number for them so they don't have a problem with producing enough milk. More native breeds than one lamb is enough for them. Shetland Cheviots are well suited for 95% are twins. Zwartbles are well designed for twins too.

How much do lambs usually weigh? When they are born they usually weigh 3 to 4kg, at weaning lambs usually weigh up to 30kg.

How many hours per day do the lambs feed? Lambs with their mum's are fed as many times as they want throughout the day, the pet lambs get fed 4 times for the first couple of days and then we move them onto a shepherdess bucket so they can help themselves throughout the day as well.

How old are the mummy and daddy sheep? Mummy sheep on our farm are first lambs at 2 years old, oldest ewes are 7 years old. The daddy sheep on our farm are all the same age which is 5 years old.

How many lambs do you think you will have by the end of lambing season? 290 lambs

How many white lambs do you have and how many black lambs? We have 27 black lambs and the rest are white.

How many types of lambs are there? On our farm our lambs are all Texels and Zwartbles

Do the lambs always stay next to the mums? No not always, but most of the time.

We have seen lambs with plastic on them in the fields. Why is this? This to protect them from the wet and cold. We don't use them on our farm.

What breed are the lambs you have? Mostly Texels and Zwartbles.

We have a question here asking how long are the ewes pregnant for before they give birth? 5-months

How long have you been a sheep farmer? Around 8-years

How do the lambs stay warm? They are born with a fleece which keeps them cosy and warm, also their mum walks around the field grazing throughout the day and the lambs have to walk and sometimes run to keep up with them, this also keeps them warm. Lambs can also be good at finding shelter behind long grass or stone walls to shelter from the weather. They also shelter beside their mum's to keep cosy.

How long will the sheep live for please? Ewes can live on our farm for 8-years.

How long does it take for a lamb to stand up after it is born? Almost immediately.

Do you keep any other animals apart from sheep? Yes, we also have cattle - cows, bulls and calves.

What is the Lambs favourite food? Milk!

Why do the white lambs had numbers on them but the black ones didn't? The black ones do but it's not so easy to see. The numbers help to identify them with their siblings and mummy.

Do the lambs have any teeth when they are born? When born, a lamb usually has no teeth. But as soon as a week after birth, milk teeth or baby teeth start to appear in the front lower jaw. Within two months the lamb will have 8 baby teeth.

Do you have any other animals on your farm? Yes, we also have cattle - cows, bulls and calves.

How long will the sheep coat will grow before it needs sheared and how many different kinds of animals live on the farm? Sheep fleeces are shorn when the sheep is one year old, and once a year thereafter. As well as sheep, we also have cattle on our farm and they are cows, bulls and calves.

What age do you say a lamb has grown up? Up to a year old.

Do you have a favourite lamb? I don't have a favourite lamb but I do have favourite ewes.

What age do lambs stop drinking milk and only drink water? Around 4 to 5 months

How big will the sheep hooves grow? Depends on the size of the sheep. The average size is around the size of a satsuma.

Do lambs get vaccinations? Yes they do. Just like when humans are toddlers and we get our first vaccinations, so do sheep.

Do sheep bite? Yes they do bite, not like a dog or cat but they do bite.

How fast are sheep? Very fast! They can easily outrun a human when they are only a week old (depending on the speed of the human of course!)

Do you have any rare sheep? Not on our farm, although Zwartbles are not very common.

Do lambs have teeth when they are born? When born, a lamb usually has no teeth. But as soon as a week after birth, milk teeth or baby teeth start to appear in the front lower jaw. Within two months the lamb will have 8 baby teeth.

Do the lambs have somewhere to sleep? Yes, with their mother's either inside when they are first born or outside when they are stronger.

Do the sheep stay in the field all day or do they come in at night? Lambs are born inside and then once they are strong enough they live outside all the time.

We learned that dogs and foxes sometimes chase sheep. Do sheep have any way to protect or defend themselves? Sheep are very protective of their lambs and will try their best to chase off any animals that may be distressing them or their lambs. Some sheep have horns, and if no horns then a strong head for headbutting if needed!

Have any of your lambs refused to eat and what do you do to help? It's not really often that a lamb would refuse to drink milk.