

CFAES

Lambing & Dystocia

Jacci Smith

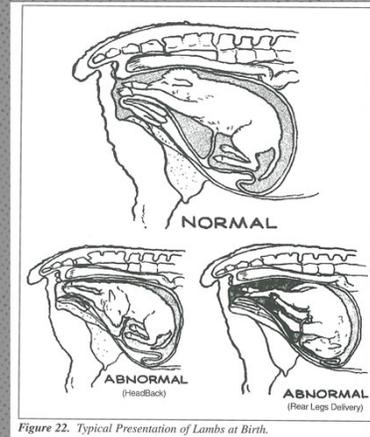


Figure 22. Typical Presentation of Lambs at Birth.

(ASI, 2003)

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Lambing Process

- The lambs need to come out one way or another...
 - For the health of the lambs and the ewe, get lambs out while they are alive
 - if the lambs die, get them out before the decaying process starts
- In order to increase success on a sheep farm you must:
 - Recognize stages of labor
 - Understand a normal birth position
 - Recognize abnormal birth positions and other birthing complications
 - Correct birthing complications
 - Deliver live lambs from a live ewe



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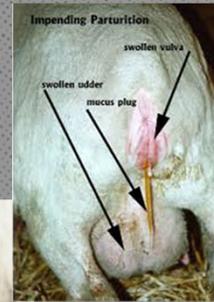
(ASI, 2003; Hasheider, 2009)

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Stages of labor

- The cervix mucus seal is released when the cervix is expanded
- A water bag becomes visible
- The lamb moves into the birth canal
- Contractions lead to lamb delivery position
- Lamb delivery
- Expulsion of the placenta and fetal membranes



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(ASI, 2003; Michalak,2017)

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How do I know if this ewe needs help?

- When her contractions and her pushing has exceeded 30 min without any visibility of the lamb or progress
 - Keep watching as best you can
- When a water bag is visible and the ewe is not pushing
 - If the presentation is not normal it could possibly cause the absence of contractions/ pushing
- These should be examined as soon as possible



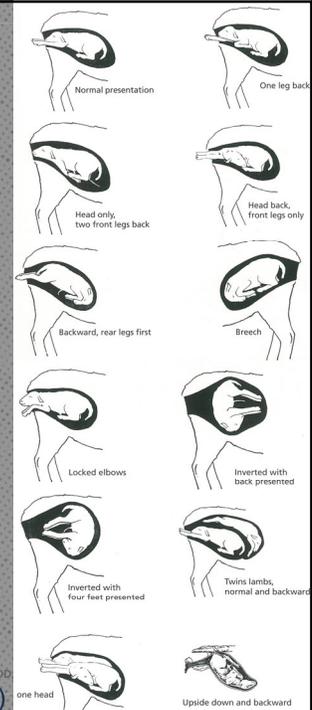
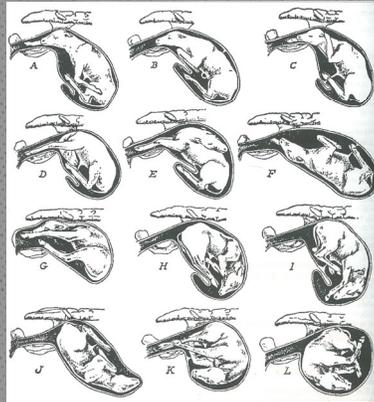
(ASI, 2003; Hasheider, 2009; Dr. Michalak,2017)

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Potential Situations

- Deformed- Cache Valley Virus
- Ringwomb- non dilated cervix
- 1. Breech
- 2. Head back
- 3. Legs back
- 4. Twin legs
- 5. Locked elbows
- 6. Upside down
- 7. Others
 - One leg back
 - Rear legs
 - Inverted feet present
 - Inverted back present
 - Twins normal and backward
 - All feet presented



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(ASI, 2003; Hasheider, 2009)

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What do I do? Diagnose then solve

- Ringwomb
 - If not dilated completely and a lamb is pulled could cause uterine tearing
 - Solution
 - Using 2-3 fingers stretch the cervix without tearing the fetal membranes
 - Call the vet and preform a C-section
- Malpresentation
 - If not presented normally lamb could possibly not come out at all
 - Solution:
 - Recognize the malpresentation through feeling
 - Correct the malpresentation to a deliverable point and pull the lamb



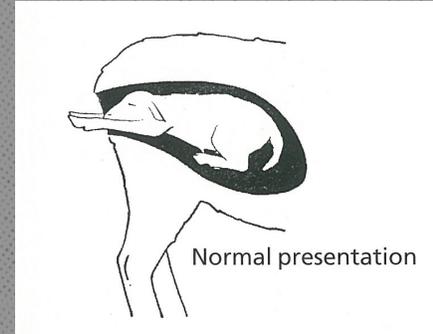
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(ASI, 2003; Hasheider, 2009; Dr. Michalak, 2017)

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Normal Birth Presentation

- To understand what a malpresentation is you must first know what a normal presentation is
- Head and both front feet coming first
 - With the head in the center of the two legs
 - The limbs should be pointed directionally down toward the ewes feet
- You should feel the nose of the head and the front legs



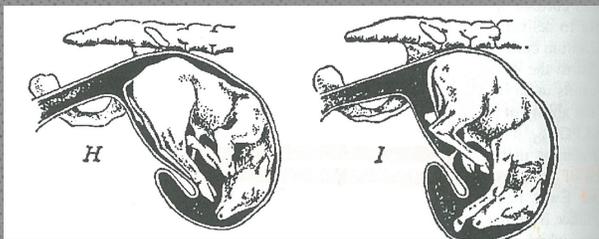
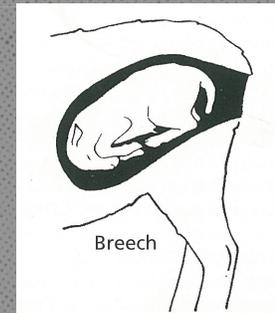
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Breech

- Presented as a tail visible only
- You should feel the rear of the back
- Solution:
 - Push lamb back in and retrieve the rear legs
 - Once both rear legs and the tail are felt you can pull
 - FAST! – once the umbilical cord is snapped the animal will start breathing
 - Could potentially breath in fluids



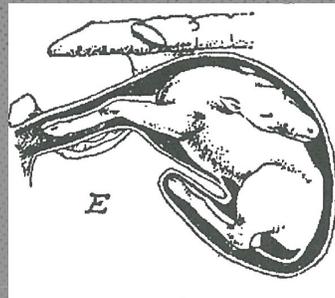
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Head Back

- Presented is two front legs only
- You can feel the legs come into the shoulders and the neck
- MUST find head BEFORE you pull
- Go in and bring the head around
 - Once you have a head and two front legs then pull the lamb out



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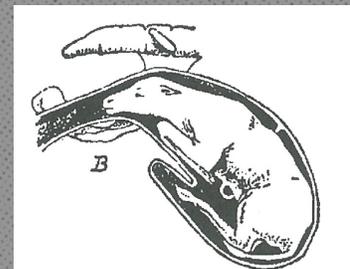
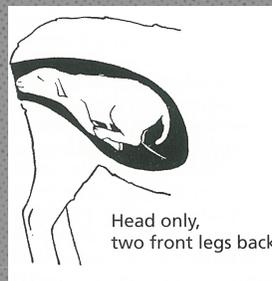
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Legs back

- Presenting is only a head without legs
- You should feel the neck coming into the body
- Solution
 - Slide your hand down from the head to the shoulders to find the front legs
 - The head may need pushed back in to retrieve the legs
 - Once you have a head and two legs pull the lamb



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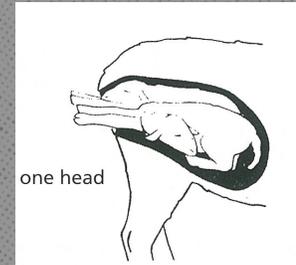
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Twin Legs- fairly common

- Presented is two front legs and possibly a head
- When multiples are clearly present it is imperative that all legs and heads that will be pulled belong together
- You will feel what seems to be normal presentation
- Solution:
 - Push back in the second lamb, pull the first lamb and then the second lamb



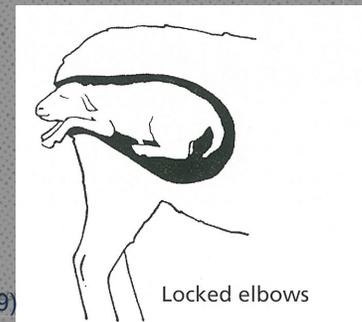
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Locked elbows

- Presenting the head and the toes
- You will feel the head neck in a rather tight canal
- Solution:
 - Push the lamb head back in and pull the legs until they pop forward
 - Once the legs are straightened and the head is back straight pull the lamb



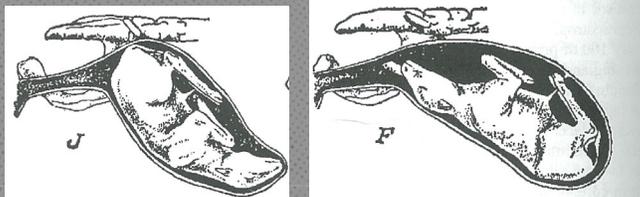
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Upside down

- Presenting no limbs, tail, or head or presenting any limbs are directionally pointing up towards the ewe's spine rather than down toward the ewe's feet.
- You may feel the front or rear of the animal but the spine will not be adjacent to the ewe's spine but rather adjacent to the ewe's underline
- Solution
 - Never pull a lamb upside-down
 - Must push back in and turn so that the feet point down
 - Pull and twist to orient the lamb so that it will be "right-side-up" when it comes out



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Summary

- Recognize stages of labor
- Understand a normal birth position
- Recognize abnormal birth positions and other birthing complications
- Correct birthing complications
- Deliver live lambs from a live ewe
- Practice-Practice-Practice



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Pulling Reminders

- Sleeve-up
- Lubricant
- Out then down
- Clean sleeve
- Prevent infection
- Front leg versus back leg?



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Activity

- Grab a partner and a set of worksheets
- There are lambing simulators set up in the back of the room
- Assume that the tote is the ewe's body
 - The lid is her spine and the bottom of the tote is her underline
- Pretend she has a water bag present and has been pushing for 35 minutes without any lamb sighting
- Use the sleeves and pretend to use lube (for the sake of cleanliness)
- the number on the tote corresponds with the number on your worksheet.
- I will be manning the activity station to reload the lambs after you diagnose and solve the problem. Be sure to try to deliver the lamb safely.



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References

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- Hasheider, P. (2009). How to raise sheep: everything you need to know. Minneapolis: Voyageur.
- Michalak, M. (2017, January 21). Sheep Obstetrics- Here They Come. Lecture presented at Lambing Clinic, New Bloomington, OH.