**Lambing and Kidding**

Courtesy of:

**Cotati Large Animal Hospital**

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**Stages of Labor**

**Stage 1: Cervical Dilation** (1-2 days prior to delivery)

* The dam separates herself from the flock and may appear uncomfortable
* Quiet uterine contractions begin, pushing the fetus up against the cervix
* Cervix begins to relax and the thick cervical mucous plug is passed (24 hrs. prior)

**Stage 2: Delivery of the Fetus** (1-2 hours)

* Visible abdominal straining begins and the water breaks
* The amniotic sac which surrounds the fetus appears at the vulva and may break
  + The lamb/kid appears shortly after: two front feet and a nose

**Stage 3: Passage of the Placenta**

* Up to 12 hours after delivery of last lamb/kid
* Less intense uterine contractions continue after the lamb/kid is born
* Retained placenta-call veterinarian if placenta does not pass
  + **If no placenta-may mean there are more lambs/kids coming**

**When to be concerned:**

* If 30 minutes after the onset of abdominal straining or breaking of the fetal membranes and no lambs/kids are visible, then clean the vulva and your arm and apply lubrication and check the cervix
  + **If no kid/lamb or in abnormal presentation-call veterinarian ASAP for advice**
* Prolapse: monitor for vaginal (before birth) or uterine (after birth) prolapse-call veterinarian ASAP if either seen

**Additional Info:**

* *Meconium* is the “first poop”, a dark orange fecal material passed by the newborn. A lamb/kid which becomes stressed during delivery may pass this prior to birth, resulting in orange staining of the coat.
* *Lochia* is brown/red discharge from the vulva of the ewe/doe. The discharge can last for up to three weeks after delivery. This is the normal process of the uterus involuting (returning to a non-pregnant state). If the discharge has an odor or is white in color, this could be a sign of a uterine infection.
* *Colostrum* is the first milk that is produced by the mother. It contains antibodies and white blood cells that are absorbed through the lamb/kid’s intestine during the **first 24 hours of life.** This passively gives the baby its ability to fight off infection for the first few months of life. After 24 hours the baby’s intestines lose the ability to absorb the colostrum. If they do not get this from the mother (i.e. are rejected) it is very important that they ingest some form of colostrum in the **first 12-24 hours of life.**
* *Umbilicus*-dip in dilute iodine (light tea color) or chlorhexidine (sky blue color) after birth to prevent infection.

**Supplies to have on hand**:

Betadine scrub, 2% iodine/chlorhexidine, towels, OB lube, gloves (arm length and regular), bulb syringe (suction for nose/mouth), bucket with warm water, small pen with clean straw, umbilical tape, Nutri-drench (oral energy), (Extra)-Epinephrine/Dopram (to revive weak kids/lambs- consult veterinarian).