

LAMB'S KORNER

by Mary Lis

Welcome to LAMB'S CORNER!

Lamb's Korner is a new column in *The Minnesota Weaver* geared to answering questions and supplying information for Guild members about all aspects of the Sheep Industry.

Why should we have such a column?

I guess you can say the reason is similar to why should we spin our own wool or weave our own cloth? There is a matter of pride and satisfaction that goes into being able to do things from scratch. So, one more step beyond buying the wool is owning the sheep. And like spinning and weaving, it is easier to learn the knack of it from someone than from a book. Hence, the purpose of *Lamb's Korner*.

The format will consist of a series of articles following the events of a typical sheep flock during its first year of existence and of the answers to questions from readers.

SO, YOU WANT TO OWN THOSE WOOLIES!

Well, before we go on that shopping trip, first there is some planning and preparing to do about housing, feeding and manure handling.

Sheep like any other animal require shelter from hot and cold weather. However, housing can vary from an urban garage to a rural slotted-floor confinement barn. All are acceptable as long as they provide a healthy environment. In choosing a suitable facility use the following as a guide:

1) *Are the site and construction appropriate?*

The facility should be down wind from the house and located in a place protected from winter winds and storms and can benefit from winter sunlight. An open-fronted building with a lot or large doors should face south.

The structure should be sound and sturdy providing 8'-10' of headroom and 15 square feet per ewe (female sheep). Floors may be packed earth, gravel, sand, crushed rock or concrete. Less straw bedding is used with dirt floors than with concrete floors. A concrete floor is suggested for heavy traffic areas where mud causes problems, but is not necessary in pens.

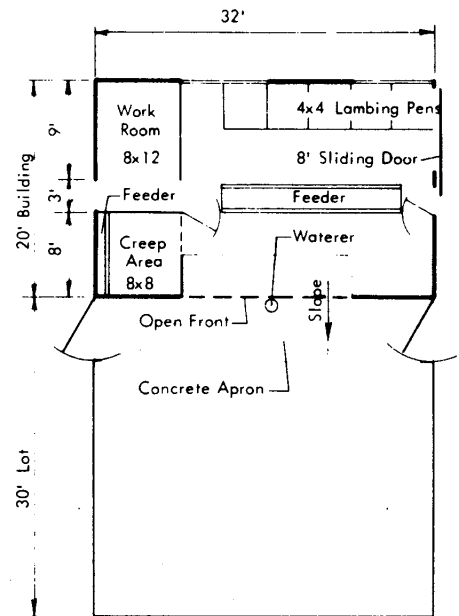
Insulation is needed to control condensation and frost formation on inside wall and roof surfaces and to reduce heat flow into and out of the building.

The water source should be frost-free and handy. Stock tanks can water 15-25 ewes per foot of tank perimeter, while automatic waterers can water 50-100 ewes.

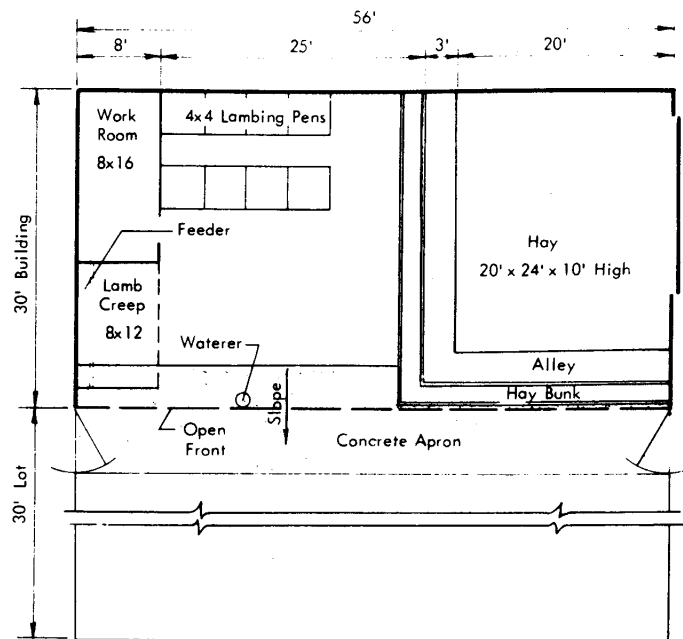
2) *Is there ample light and ventilation?*

There should be enough light to see the sheep clearly during the day and night. Handy electrical sockets should be in reach for heat lamps and shearing.

Ventilation should be a continuous process to remove moisture from the inside of the building, to provide



30 ewes, inside feeding.



50 ewes, inside feeding.

sheep facility layouts from the "SHEEP HANDBOOK"

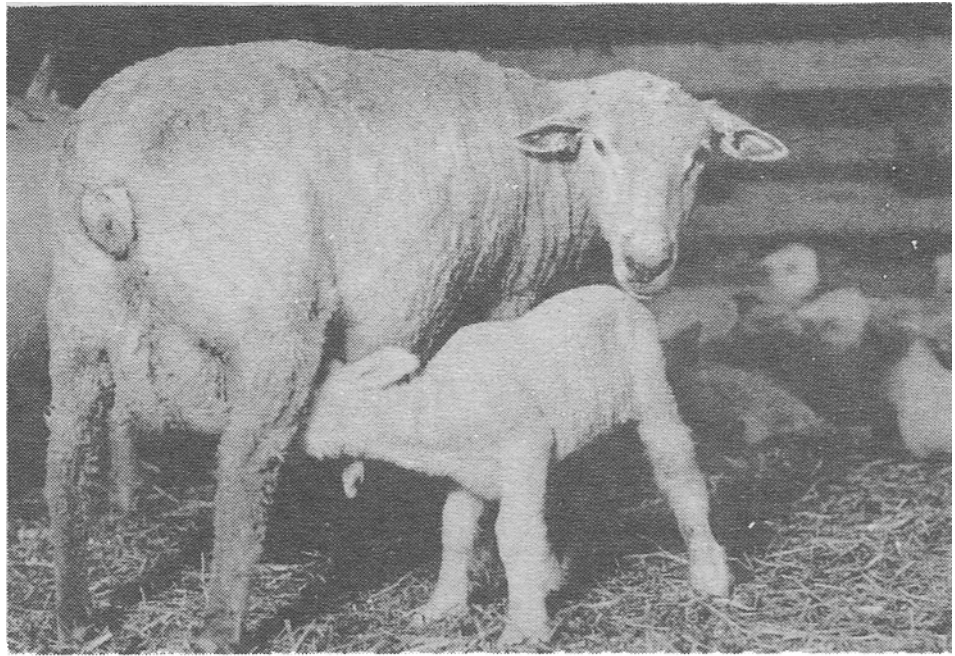
fresh air for the animals, to remove excess heat in hot weather, and to remove odors and gases from animal waste. This can be accomplished by natural air movements using eaves and ridge slots or wall and ceiling fans.

3) *Is it draft-free?*

4) *Is there a warm or protected area that individual lambing pens (4'x4'x30") could be set up and if needed additional heat supplied (heat lamps or heater)?*

5) *Are there good traffic lanes for handling feed and animals?*

Alleys should measure 30 inches, unless tractors or large carts are used. With wide alleys sheep have a tendency to run by and be more difficult to catch.



6) *Will it be easy to clean and handle manure?*

Doors wide enough for wheelbarrows, tractors, or front end loaders.

For more detailed information on planning and constructing buildings and equipment for sheep write to:

The Extension Agricultural Engineer
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN 55108

for the "Sheep Handbook/Housing and Equipment," published by The Midwest Plan Service; cost: \$2.50. It is a must booklet for all sheep owners, especially beginners. Plans and detailed diagrams are given for every possible piece of equipment.

Manure handling should be made easy by making areas accessible to cleaning. In large flocks (where sheep spend the summer on pasture), barns are usually cleaned 2 or 3 times a year. During the winter, the animals benefit from the warmth of dry manure and

straw packs, so cleaning is delayed until the first thaw of spring. This does not mean that cleaning should not be done if conditions are that sheep are walking out of their pens. Good housing, sanitation, and dedicated management should always be the rule and not the exception.

What you feed your sheep will depend on what you have available. Sheep are basically grazing animals and do very well on good growing grass. During the summer mature ewes (2 years and over) can be fed pasture alone. However, during breeding, late gestation and lactation they require an additional supplement--high in protein and energy. If your backyard isn't large enough to sustain a sheep, hay can be substituted. A 150 pound ewe will need 3-4 pounds of hay per day depending on her condition (the amount of fat she's carrying on her back and ribs), plus access to a source of salt-mineral mix. Feeding will be covered in more detail in a later article.

SPECIAL EVENTS

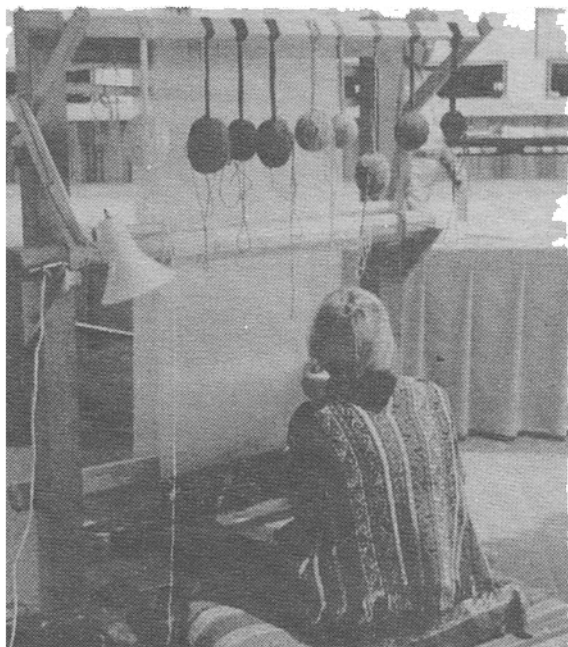
SATURDAY TEXTILE SEMINARS 1980-81

Co-Sponsored by Minneapolis Institute of Arts and WGM

Seminars meet from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Room 211, MIA. Tuition is \$15 for MSFA and WGM members and \$20 for nonmembers. Lunch at the Link Restaurant is included.

Saturday, November 15, 1980
"Oriental Rugs," Charlotte Jirousek Miller, instructor

This seminar will be a survey of the history, technique, dyes, and designs of pile carpets. The characteristics of different types of carpets will be discussed through a slide lecture and direct examination of carpets in the MIA's Textile collection.



Char Miller at her loom during a demonstration.