

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
Cornell Sheep Flock

MASTITIS

Signs

- The ewe may be off feed or hang back from the feeder.
- The lambs may be hungry.
- The ewe may show a hind limb lameness, because of a painful udder.
- Initially a fever >104.5_F is common; the temperature may be normal or even below normal, especially in gangrenous mastitis.
- The infected udder half is swollen, tender, and sometimes reddened acutely.
- A sore mouth lesion on the teat end may have lead to mastitis.
- Pitting edema may be present over the udder or even forward over the abdominal wall.
- Skin may slough off these areas if the ewe survives.
- In the most severe, gangrenous form, the udder appears blue and feels cold.
- The milk may contain flakes or clots (examine on a black surface).
- In severe cases the milk is watery and yellow, brown, or red.
- Firm abscesses may form in the udder with time (chronic mastitis).

Treatment

First, consider if the ewe should be culled in the near future

If one side of the udder has been destroyed by gangrenous mastitis or replaced by abscesses, the ewe should not be kept for rebreeding. If the lambs have been weaned already or are old enough to wean and the ewe is giving no milk, immediate culling may be preferable to treatment and the subsequent waiting period before slaughter.

Second, if the mastitic half is still warm and the ewe might be saved for another lactation, or if the ewe is too sick to be slaughtered for meat, treat with systemic antibiotics. Choose one

- Penicillin (procaine pen G) 4 to 6 ml/day IM or SC - meat withdrawal 14 days if IM, 28 days if SC. Treat daily for 3 to 5 days.
- Oxytetracycline (Biomycin 200) 5 ml/100 pounds SC - meat withdrawal 30 days - repeat daily for 3 days.
- Tilmicosin (Micotil) 1.5 ml/100 pounds SC only, by permanent employees only, repeat once after 3 days if needed - meat withdrawal 28 days.

Third, if lambs are not nursing and the ewe has not been treated with Micotil, wash your hands, strip as much secretion out of the gland as possible, clean the teat end with alcohol, and infuse with Cefalax® = Today® (5 day meat withdrawal). Repeat stripping and treating daily for several days if more secretion collects in the udder half.

If the ewe is not eating, give 60 ml calcium gluconate SC, divided into 4 sites. Supplement the lambs with milk replacer or move to artificial rearing if needed. If the ewe was penned separately, rebed the jug before the next ewe enters.

If the ewe remains off feed or is unable to get up the next morning, either call for veterinary treatments such as oral or intravenous fluids, Banamine, or infusion of a gangrenous udder with formalin to stop toxin absorption, or euthanize.