

HOUSING YOUR FLOCK

T. J. BREVIK

Sheep do not require elaborate housing, but facilities should provide:

1. Protection from cold, rainy weather.
2. Shade in the summer.
3. Well-drained lots to insure dry yard conditions.
4. Security from dogs and predators.
5. Storage for feed, bedding, and equipment.
6. Convenient working area for shearing at lambing time and for sick animals.

Before building new or remodeling an existing structure, make a thorough study of your housing and equipment needs. One of the best ways to get good ideas is to visit with operators of outstanding installations and learn from their experiences. Your Extension Service, agricultural instructors, builders and equipment suppliers can also be valuable sources of good planning information. The final plan should take advantage of good ideas for housing and handling equipment to fit the flock owner's needs and preferences.

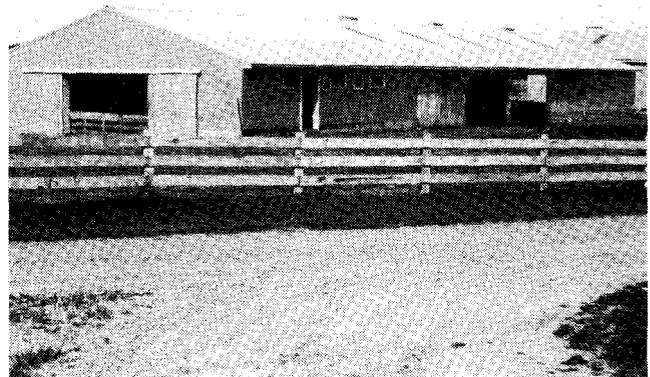
SITE

A preferred site is one that offers protection from north and west wintery blasts, and is well-drained with a southerly slope. South or east sloping yards dry out faster and are easier to maintain. Consider grading and earth moving to create a desirable site for the barn and sheep yards next to the buildings.

Plan for convenient year-round access to the yard and buildings. Allow for the possibility of expansion and the flexibility needed for the various stages involved in raising sheep.

You will need to consider the relationship of other nearby structures to your sheep enterprise and how feed and bedding are to be handled. Handling equipment for sorting, weighing, and treatment are an important part of any sheep facility.

Locate the sheep housing downwind from the house—north-east, east, or southeast are preferred directions. Buildings and yards should be at least 150 feet from the house.



The sheep barn should provide protection without over-confinement.

CONSTRUCTION

A typical barn provides protection for the ewes and should be built so it can be used for shearing, lambing, and growing out the feeder lambs. Plan for storage of feed and bedding. It should be possible to easily move feeding and handling equipment about and to bed and clean the barn conveniently using tractor mounted equipment. Clear span construction is recommended. Barns 30 to 40 ft. wide work well for sheep.

Headroom of 9 to 10 ft. should be provided. Leave most of the south side open except at lambing time in extremely cold weather when closing doors, panels, or a canvas drop may be necessary. Design buildings for natural ventilation. To control moisture when the building is closed, plan for an open ridge with openings under the eaves. Wet conditions can contribute to animal health problems as well as hasten deterioration of the building.

A service alley along the back will provide convenient access to all pen areas for ease in feeding and handling animals and equipment. A 4 to 5 foot alley is adequate for moving animals and feed carts. One 8 to 10 foot wide alley will allow a tractor and wagon to pass through.

Consider roof insulation in an extreme climate to reduce condensation problems. Insulation should be protected against damage—mechanical, birds, and rodents.

The floor may be packed earth, gravel, crushed rock, or concrete. Concrete is desirable in the lambing and shearing area but is not necessary in the open pen areas of the barn.

Doors should be at least 8 ft. wide and 9 ft. high. Wider doors are preferred to allow generous clearance for tractors and their equipment.

Windows are not necessary but do allow natural lighting during daylight hours. Fiberglass sidewall panels work well in steel clad pole buildings. Window areas equal to 5 percent of the floor area will give adequate natural light. Artificial lighting is necessary on dark days and for doing night chores. A 100-watt lamp for 400 to 500 sq. ft. of floor area is suggested. Provide electrical outlets for heat lamps, lambing pens, heating and ventilating equipment, heated waterers, and shearing. Yard lights which turn on automatically are essential for safety and to ward off predators.

Some flock owners prefer a warm area for shearing, lambing, hospital pens and for the shepherd's room. This portion of the sheep barn should be well-insulated and fitted with a mechanical ventilation system. Walls should have an "R" value of 15 or more, while the ceiling should have an "R" value of 20 or more to cut down on heat loss and to reduce the possibility of surface condensation on the walls and ceiling. The mechanical ventilation system should be designed to provide at least 100 cfm for each 1000 lbs. of livestock anticipated in the barn. Of this total, 25 cfm for each 1000 lbs. of livestock should operate continuously. Design fresh air inlets to allow fresh air to enter uniformly throughout the insulated portion of the sheep barn.

The following recommendations on space requirements should be useful in planning a new or remodeled sheep barn:

Space Requirements

Pen Space— (not including feeders, alleys, etc.)

- Ewes—10 to 14 sq. ft./hd.
- Rams—10 to 14 sq. ft./hd.
- Ewes with lambs—12 to 16 sq. ft./ewe
- Weaned lambs—8 to 10 sq. ft./hd.
- Lambing pens—16 sq. ft./pen
 - 1 pen for 6 ewes for flocks under 100
 - 1 pen for 8 ewes for flocks over 100
- Yard area (unsurfaced)—25 to 40 sq. ft./hd.

Feeder Space

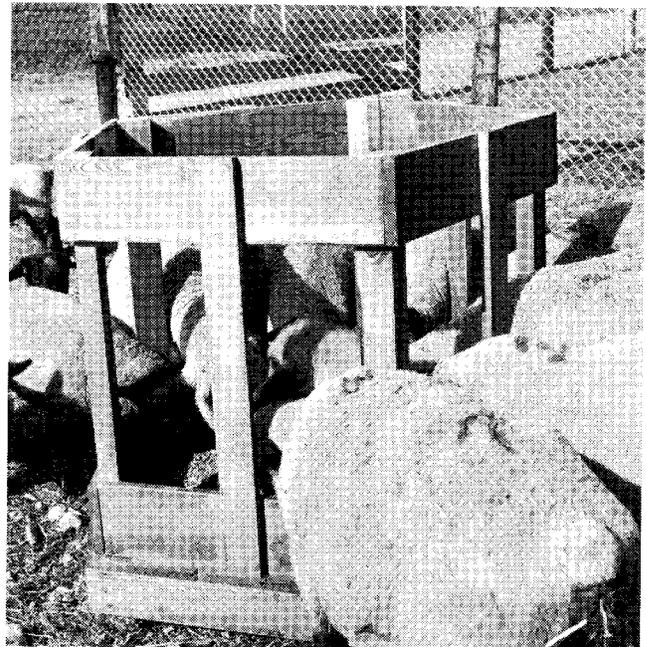
	Ewe	Feeder Lamb
Self feed	10" to 12"	3" to 4"
Group feed	16" to 20"	9" to 12"
Waterer—8 to 10 head per foot or 25 head per automatic waterer		

Storage Requirements (February lambing—where all three feeds are used)

	Hay	Silage	Grain	Bedding
Ewe	600 lbs.	200 lbs.	150 lbs.	200 lbs.
Lamb	50 lbs.	---	250 lbs.	50 lbs.
Bedding—350 cu. ft./ton				
Hay—350 cu. ft./ton				
Silage—2 to 3 ton replaces 1 ton of hay				
Grain—1.25 cu. ft./bu.				



These hay and grain feeders are light weight, rugged and easily moved.



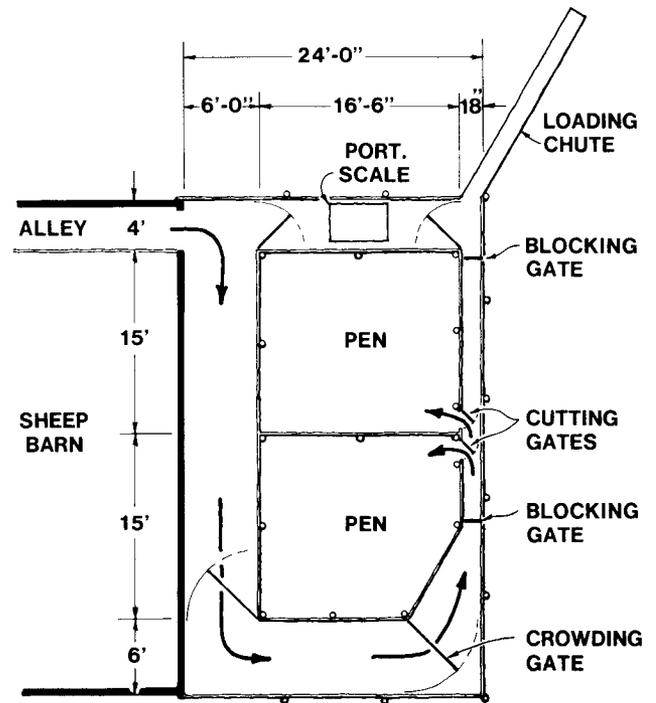
A five-sided feeder.

REMODELING

Existing buildings can often be remodeled satisfactorily for sheep. Be sure the building is worth remodeling, that it is on a well-drained site, and that a convenient plan can be effectively worked out. Keep in mind the standards for a new plan when considering remodeling.

EQUIPMENT

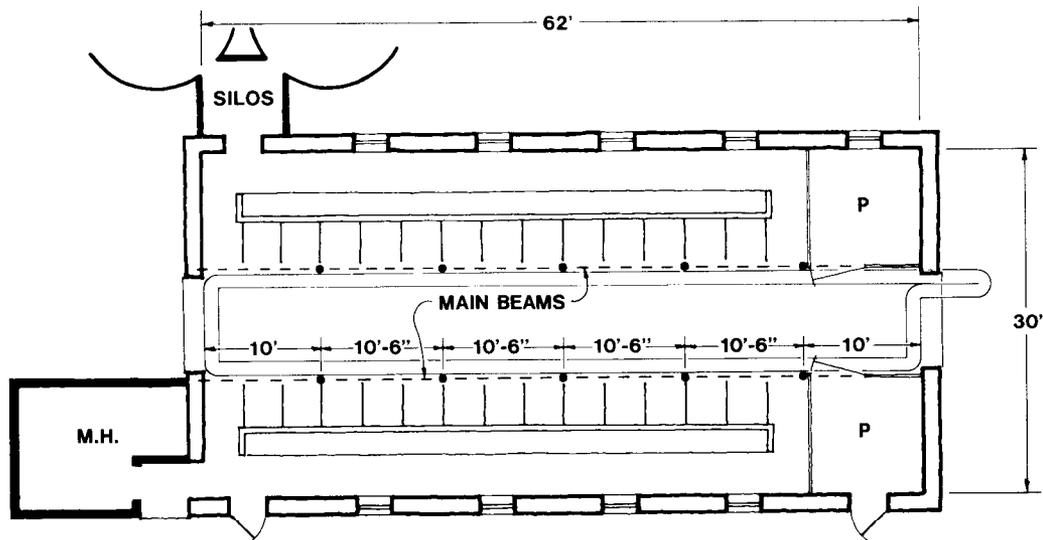
Most equipment for sheep is homemade. Build equipment rugged yet light enough for ease in moving to fit the flexibility needed for ewes prior to lambing, during lambing, after lambing, and lambs following weaning. Each stage requires different arrangements and space needs. Rugged lightweight portable equipment can help provide this flexibility. The Midwest Plan Service Sheep Handbook, MWPS-3, available from your county Extension Service is an excellent reference for equipment plans.



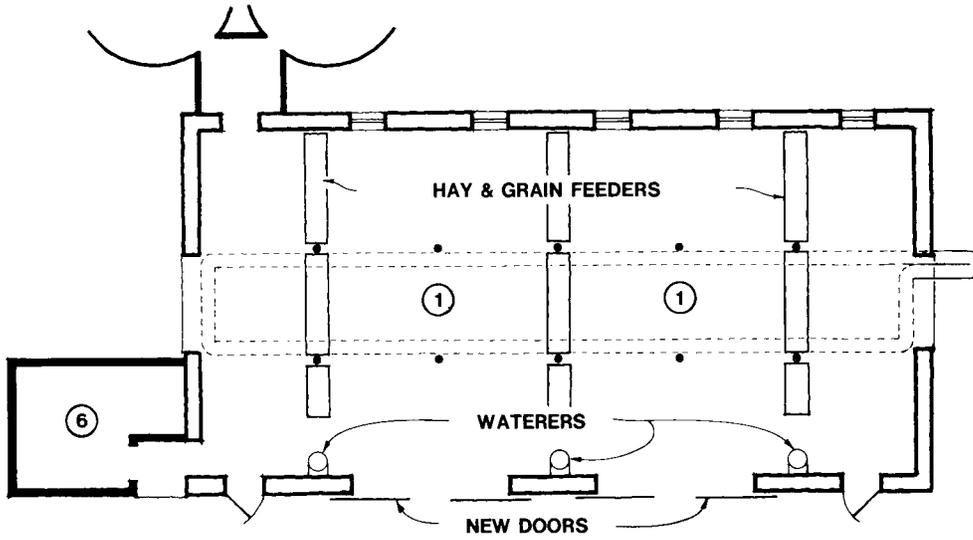
SHEEP CORRAL

This legend applies to the next ten figures:

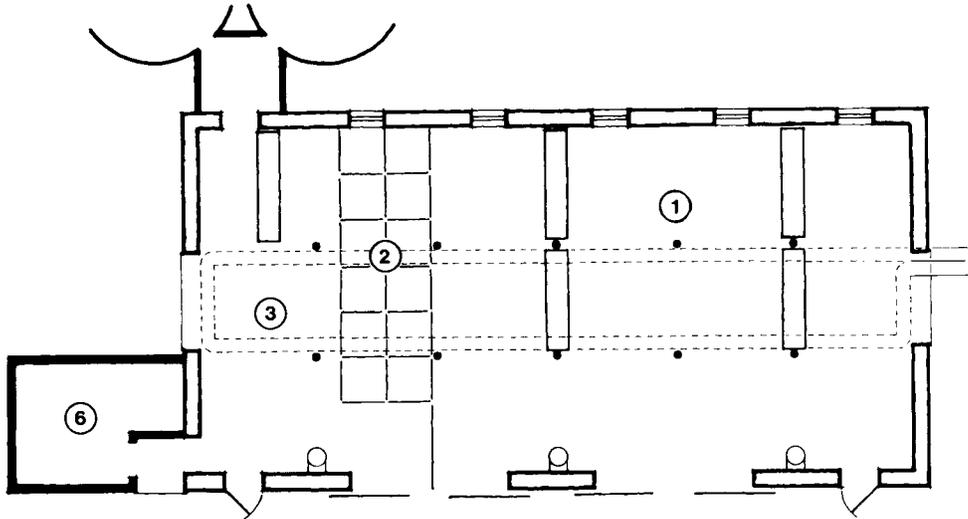
- 1- Ewes before lambing
- 2- 4 x 4 ft. lambing pens
- 3- Ewes with 3 to 10 day old lambs
- 4- Ewes with older lambs
- 5- Lamb creep
- 6- Shepherd's cabinet
- 7- Weaned lambs
- 8- Shearing area



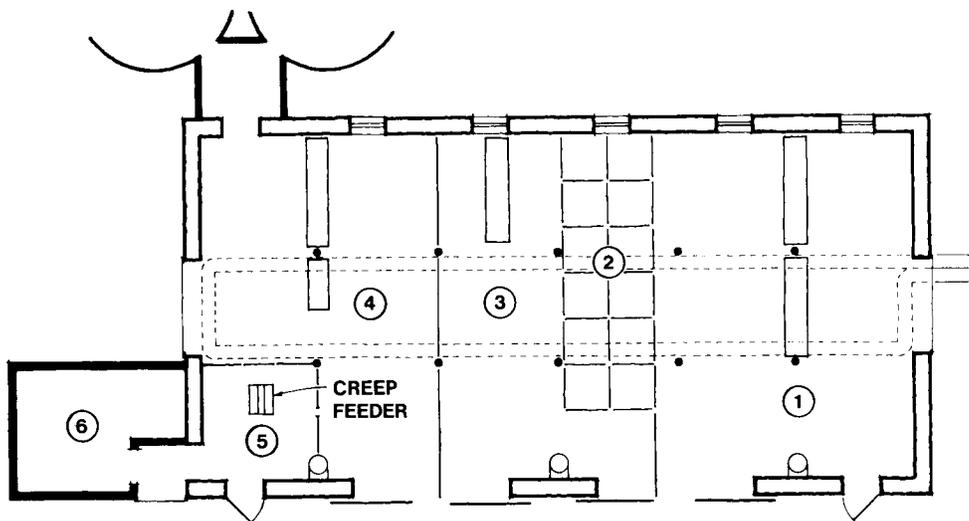
BARN BEFORE REMODELING



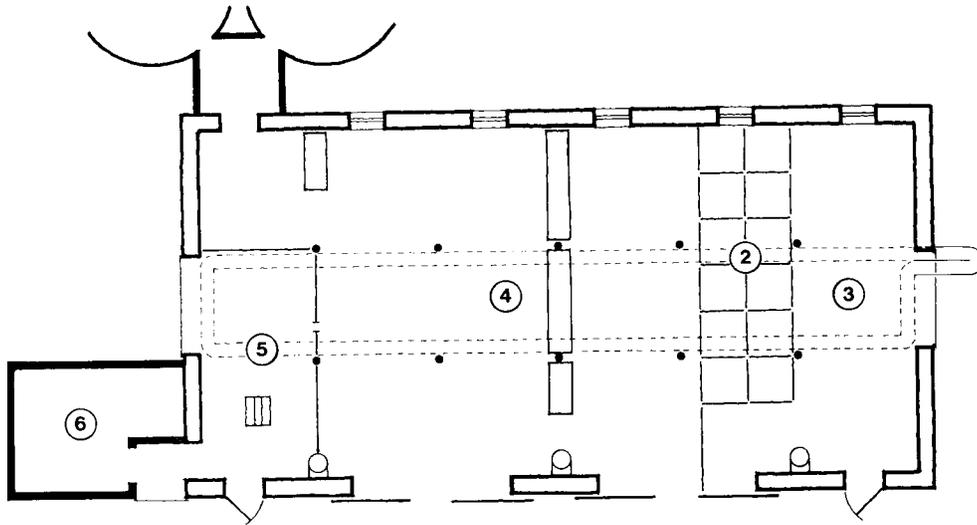
STAGE 1: 100 EWES BEFORE LAMBING



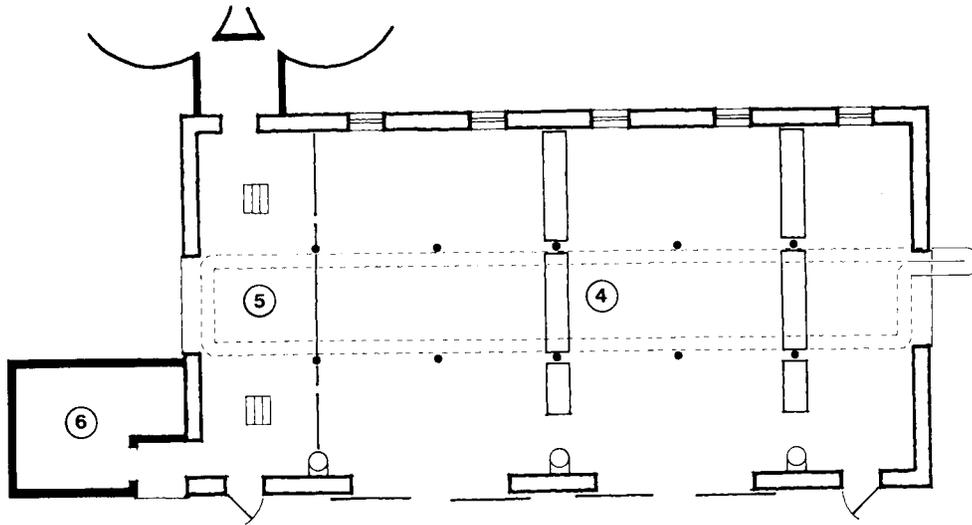
STAGE II: 25 EWES LAMBING



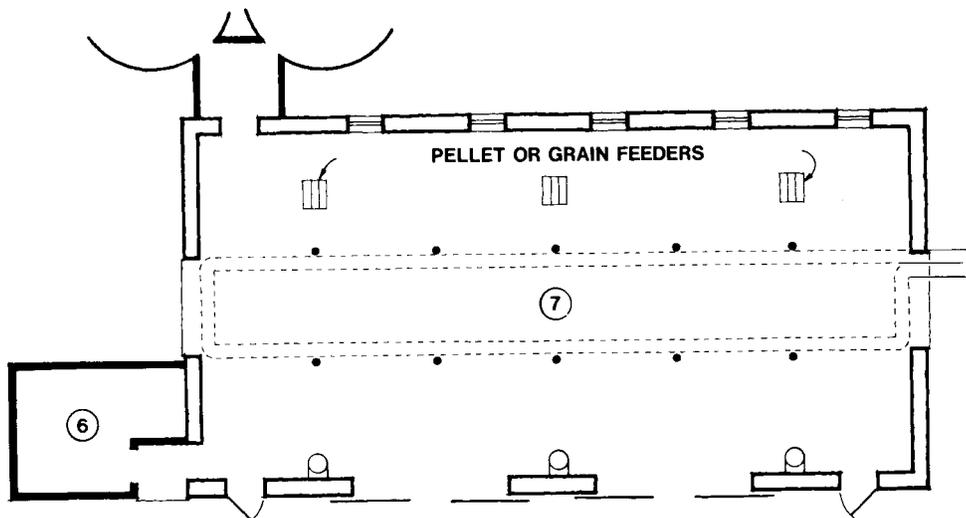
STAGE III: 50 EWES LAMBING



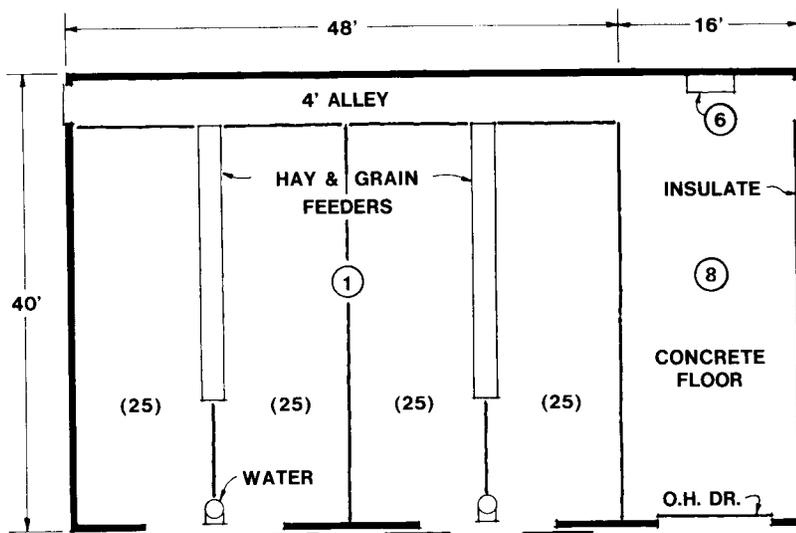
STAGE IV: 100 EWES LAMBED



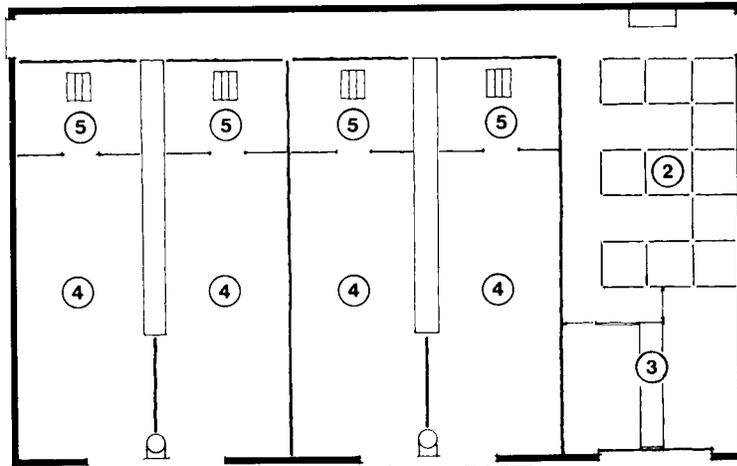
STAGE V: EWES WITH LAMBS



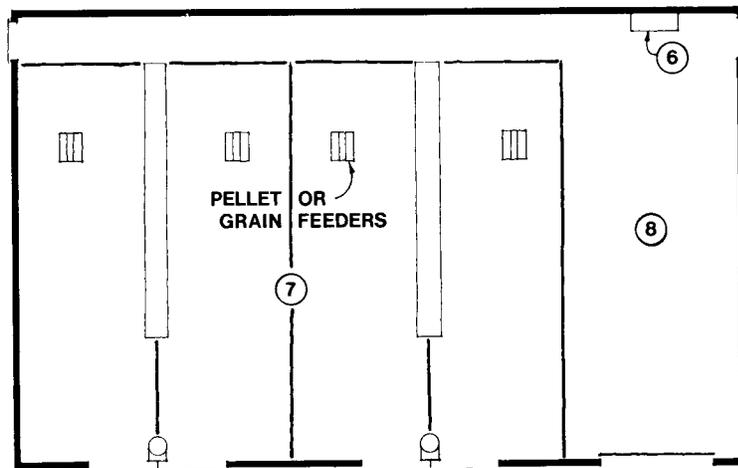
STAGE VI: WEANED LAMBS



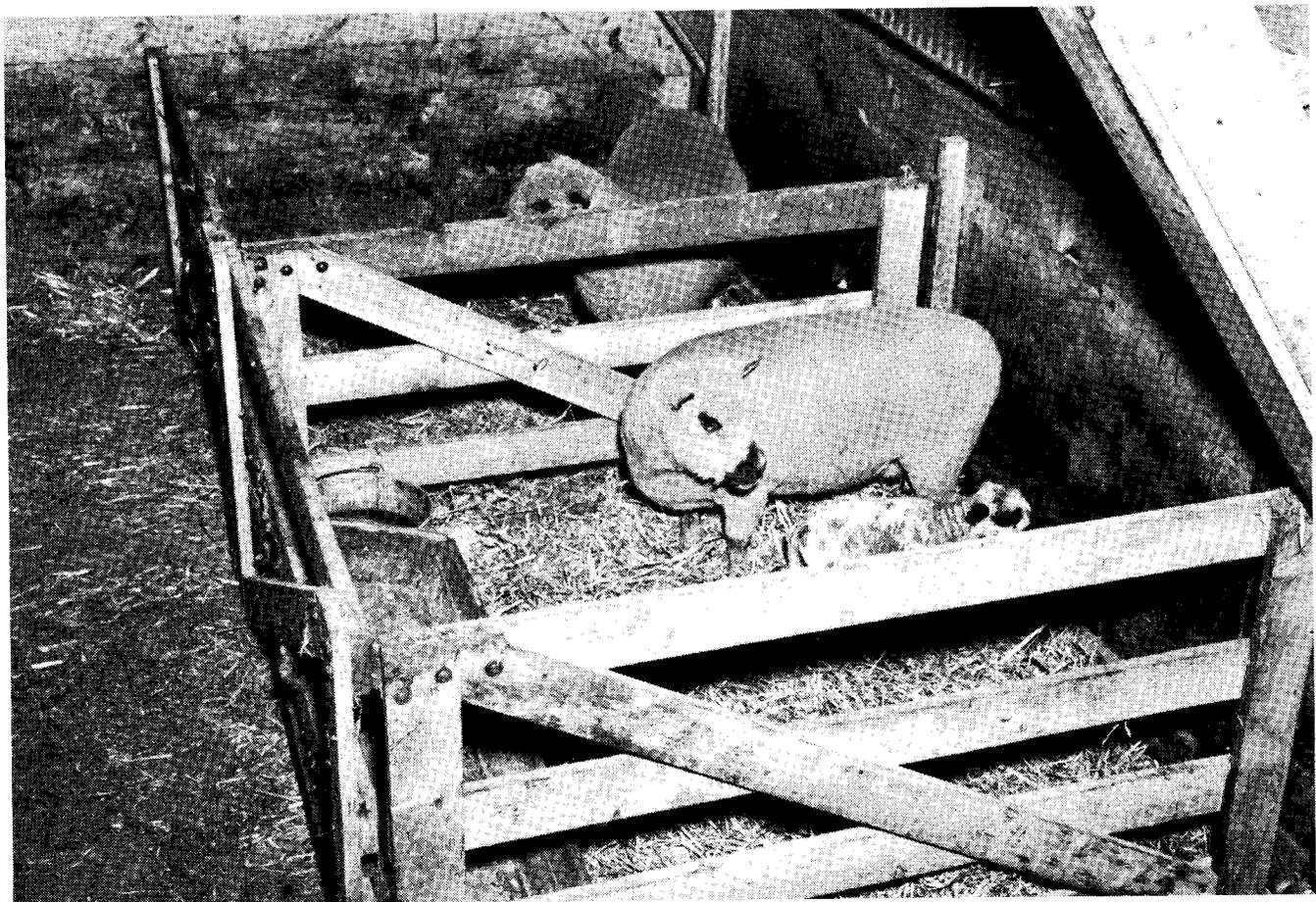
BARN FOR 100 EWES BEFORE LAMBING



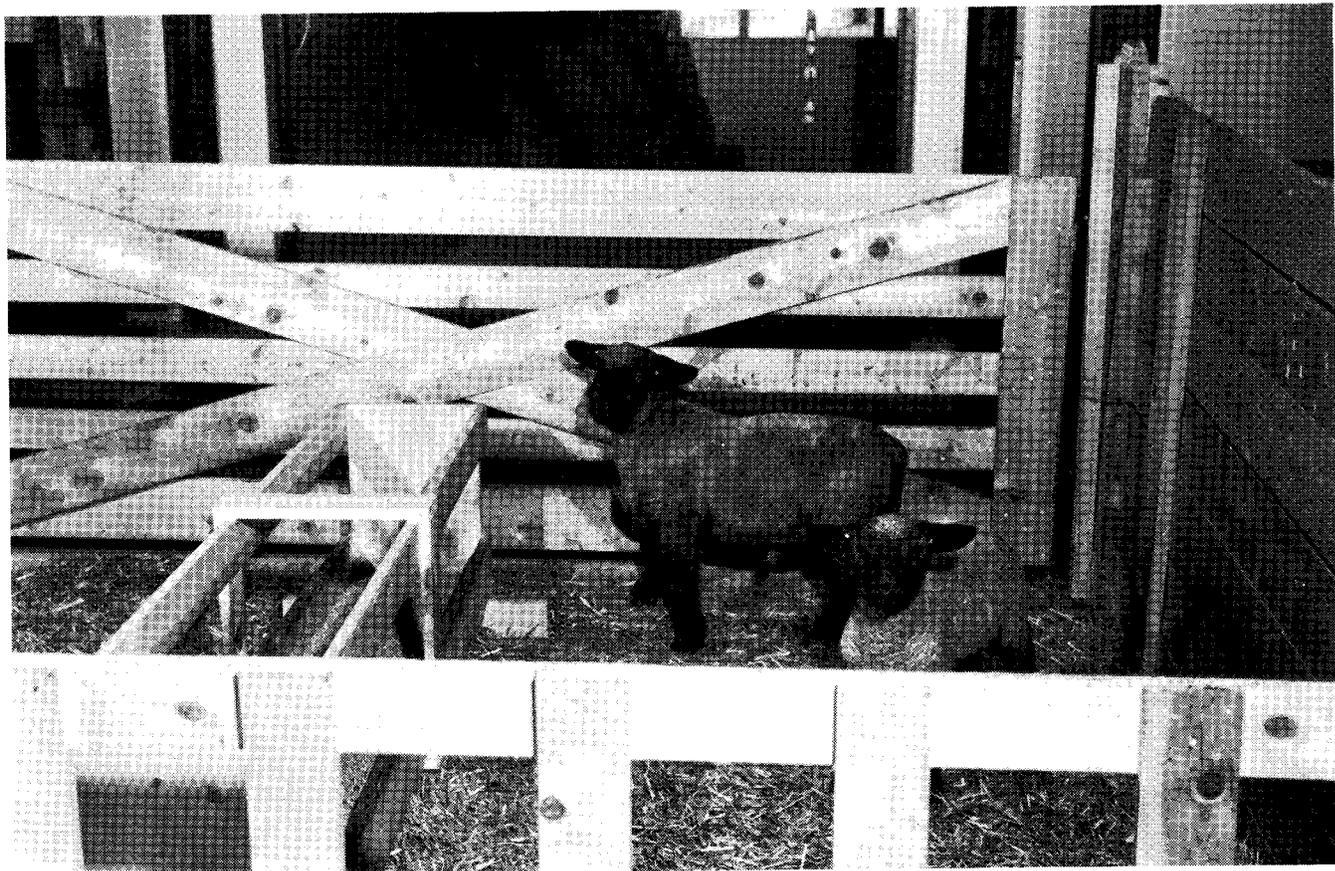
DURING LAMBING



LAMBS WEANED



Lambing pens help reduce lambing-time losses. Feeders hook on front panel.



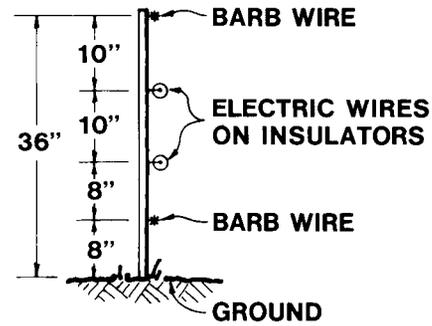
Lamb creep.

ELECTRIC FENCES FOR SHEEP

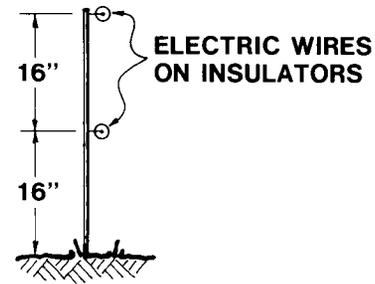
Properly constructed electric fences are useful and economical for sheep lots and pasture. A two-wire fence has been popular, but the combination fence has been gaining in popularity and has been found more effective by some sheep growers. A No. 18 galvanized smooth wire is often used for the electric fence. Since smooth wire of this size is hard to see, hang aluminum foil flags at 6-foot intervals. This not only lets people know there is a fence there, but sheep soon learn of the electric shock associated with the fence.

There are several steps necessary for construction of a safe, effective electric fence:

1. Use a controller approved by the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin or Underwriter's Lab.
2. Use clean fence wire. A clean wire will produce a sharper jolt than dirty or rusty wire with the same amount of current.
3. Keep your fence clean. Weeds and grass coming in contact with the wire will cause leaks. Spray or mow under the fences. **DON'T USE UNAPPROVED WEED CHOPPER CONTROLLERS.**
4. Use good insulators and posts. Cracked or dirty insulators may allow leaks to develop. Since the available current is limited, even small leaks will reduce the effectiveness of the fence. Broken or bent posts may permit fence wire to sag and touch the ground—thus "grounding out."
5. Provide a good ground at the controller. The ground is half of the fence current. If the connection to the ground is poor, the fence will not operate properly.
6. Use a lightning arrestor to protect the controller from damage due to lightning. Some controllers have built-in arrestors.



COMBINATION: BARB & ELECTRIC



TWO WIRE ELECTRIC

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