



Advice on Lambing and Orienteering

Sheep farming is a vital component of the Scottish farming industry, with the lambing period being critical to sheep farmers. The following advice gives the general picture across Scotland.

The bulk of lambing in Scotland takes place between the beginning of March and the end of May. The higher the altitude / the poorer the land / the poorer the weather, the later the start of lambing.

A farmer near the coast in Ayrshire is liable to start lambing at the beginning of March, a farmer in the Borders might start at the beginning of April, in the Border hills lambing usually starts in mid April, and the Highlands will probably start lambing at the end of April.

Lambing is usually spread over a 35 day period, although a farm with a mixture of low ground and hill could be spread over 52 days.

There are exceptions to this as some pedigree breeds can be lambing from Christmas onwards, although this would take place indoors at that time of year.

Everybody recognises extreme disturbance (sheep worrying) is dangerous with the risk of injury to the sheep and straying.

However around lambing time even minor disturbance may have serious consequences. In the month prior to lambing when ewes are working hard to nourish their unborn lambs, minor disturbance, especially if repeated, can move sheep away from preferred pasture and out of shelter, putting their health at risk.

During the lambing episode moving ewes out of shelter may threaten lamb survival, or break the development of maternal bonding vital to the lambs' survival.

Once established, young lambs are robust but totally dependant on their mother's milk for a period of around 1 month. Separation can be fatal, especially in poor weather.

It is advisable to contact farmers for access to their land well in advance of the lambing period and be aware that they might not be able to provide access for orienteering during this period. Try and plan your events round this time.

Also be aware that farmers will be extremely busy at this time of year and not always available to answer enquiries or accommodate access requests for orienteering events.

For further advice contact:

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