


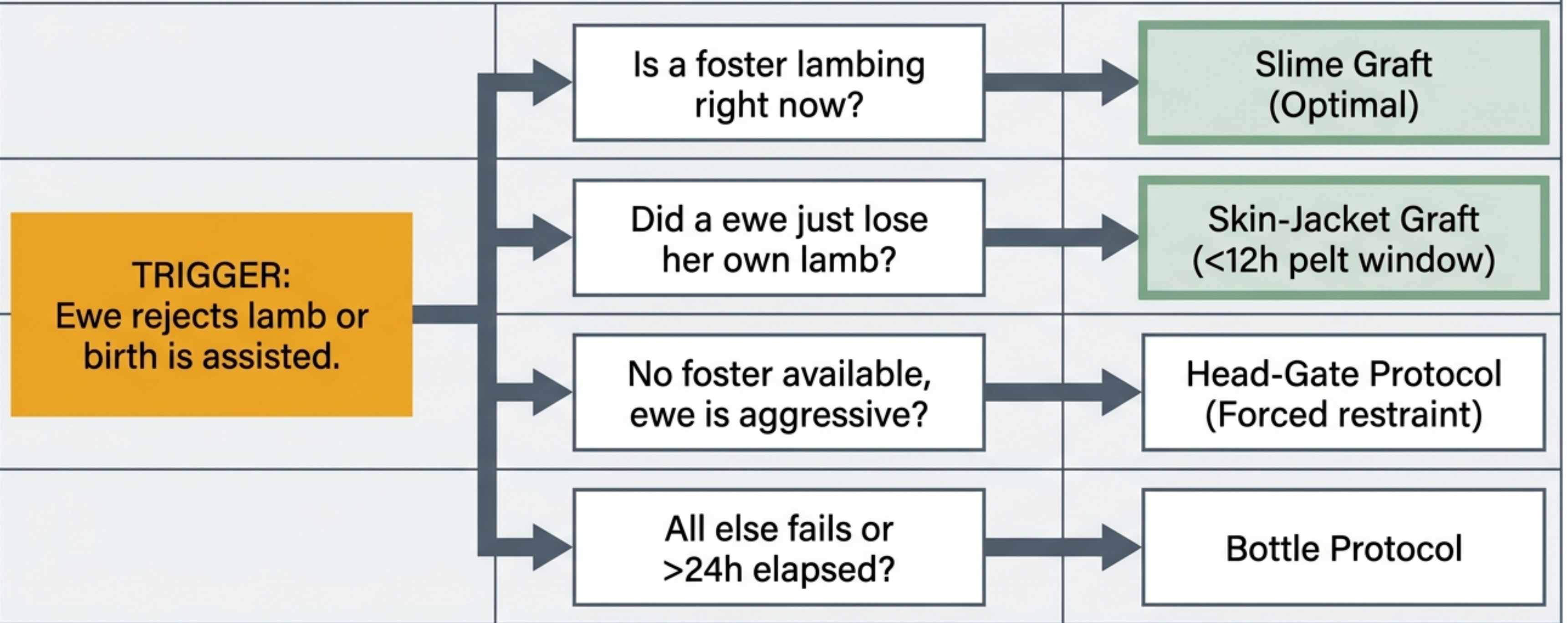
T-MINUS 00:00:00 

# Neonatal Lamb Triage and Rejection Protocols

An evidence-based field guide for emergency bonding, grafting interventions, and bottle-lamb management.

# The 60-Minute Triage Decision Tree

**T-MINUS: 00:00:00**



**The 24-Hour Rule: Indecision kills the lamb and closes the graft window simultaneously. Commit to a path.**

# Early Detection Requires Recognizing Behavioral Red Flags

**T-MINUS: <1 Hour**

Ewe Behavior	Operational Meaning
Circling away when lamb approaches teat	<b>Active rejection</b> (abnormal behavior).
Headbutting or horn-pushing	<b>Active rejection</b> ; severe injury risk.
Vocalization mismatch (calling only to siblings)	<b>Partial twin-rejection</b> ; second lamb will starve.
Accepts firstborn, ignores second	<b>Classic twin-rejection</b> pattern.
Failure to clean or eat placenta	<b>Disrupted bonding</b> cascade.

## Elevated Risk Profiles



Primiparous ewes (first-time mothers)



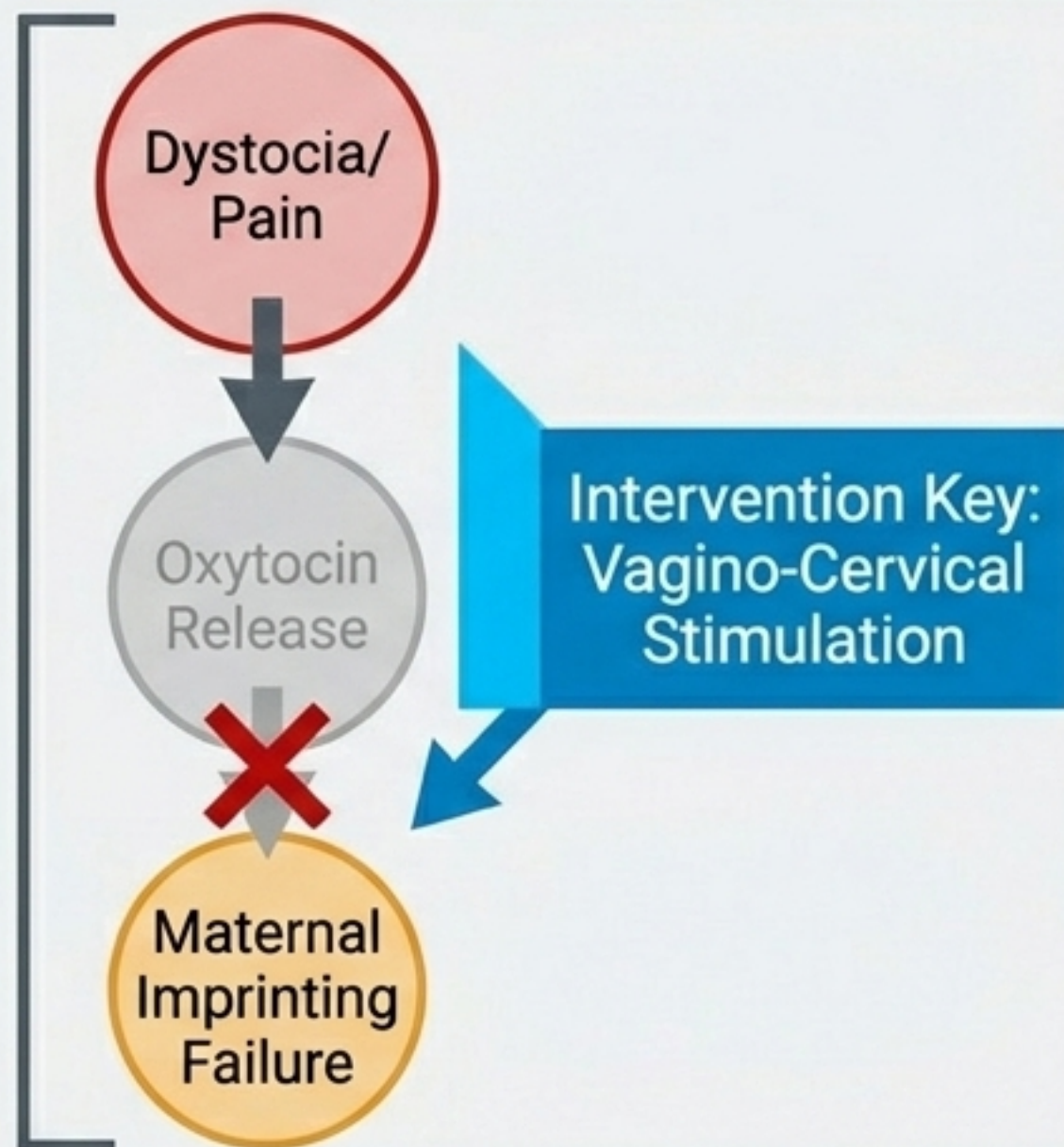
Post-dystocia ewes (assisted births)

**The Golden Hour: Do not disturb a normal birth, but watch the first 3 hours closely if any red flags appear.**

# Overriding Post-Dystocia Rejection via Mechanical Stimulation

**T-MINUS: <2 Hours**

## Feedback Loop



## Intervention Sequence

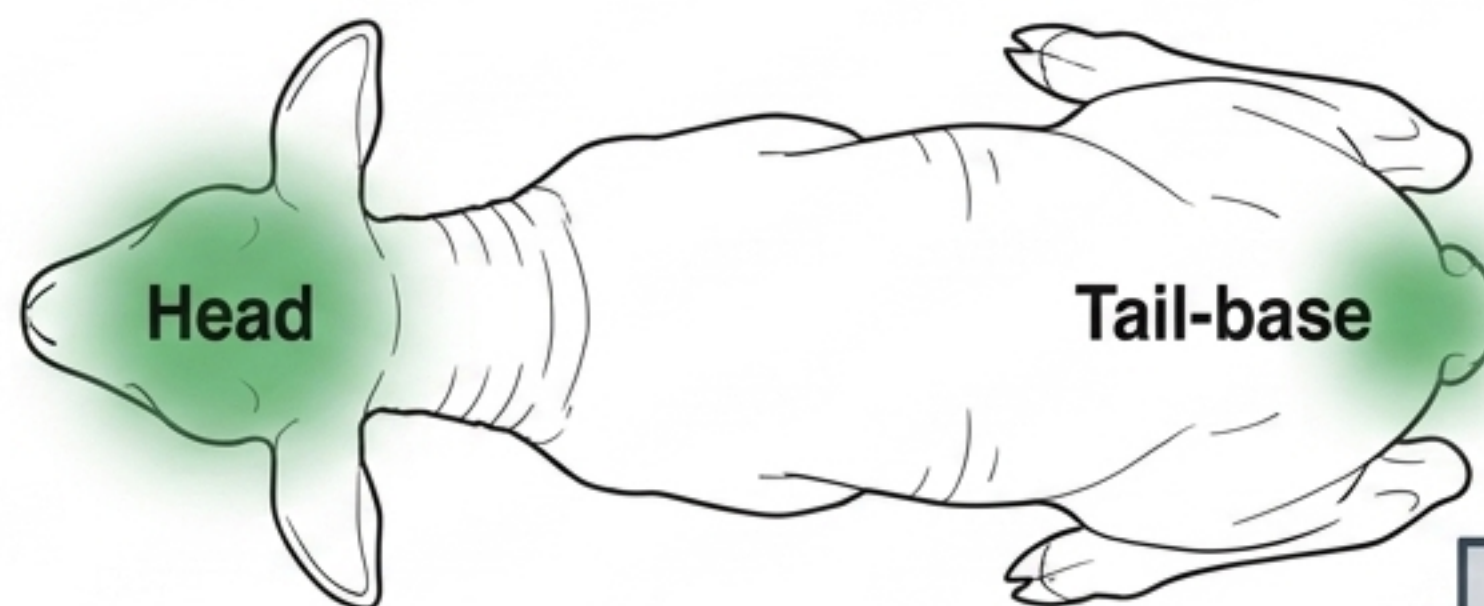
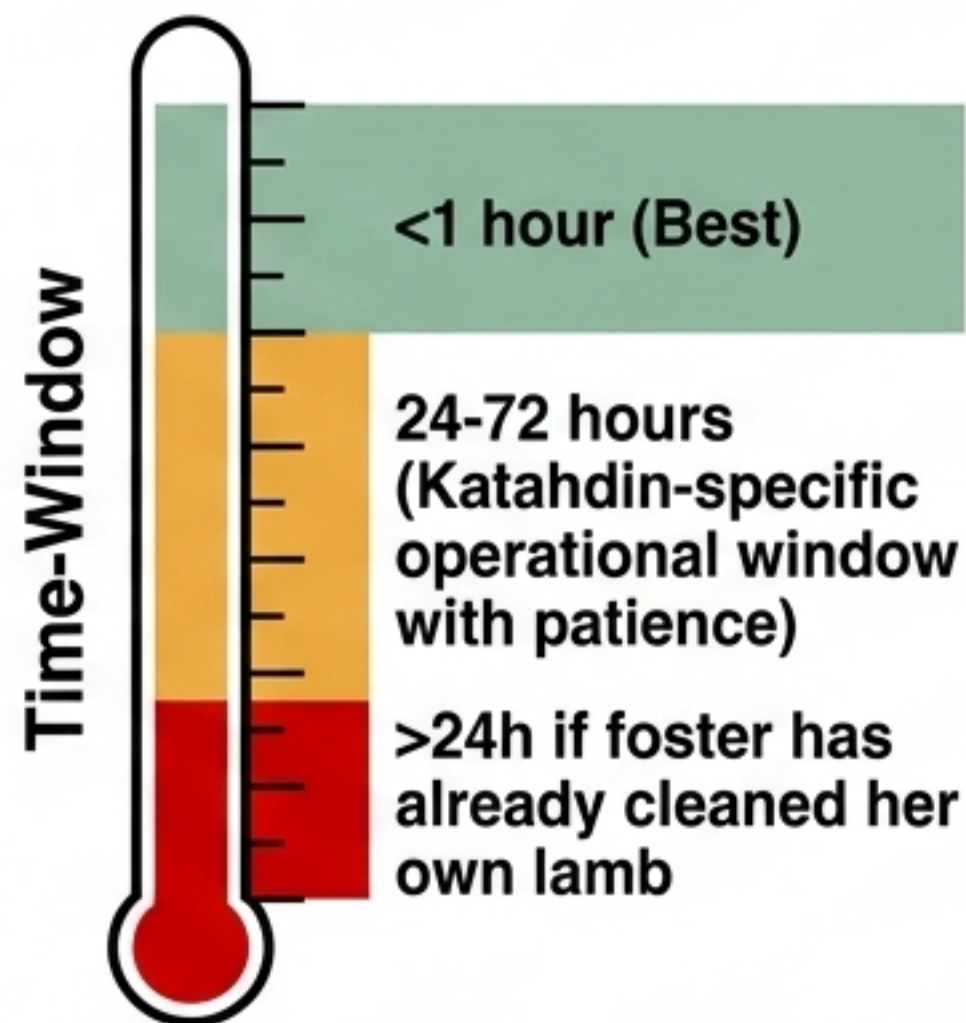
- 1.** Do not assume bonding will settle. Intervene in the first hour.
- 2.** Place hand in the foster ewe's birth canal and make a fist.
- 3.** Hold for 30-60 seconds to simulate birth stretching and reopen the hormonal bonding window. Present lamb at udder.



**Escalation Path:** If active rejection continues, restrain the ewe, hand-milk 150-200 mL colostrum, and tube/bottle feed the lamb immediately.

# The Slime Graft Targets Specific Odor Receptors

T-MINUS: 01:00:00



Ewes identify lambs  
by smelling the  
tail-base before  
allowing nursing.

**1** Collect birth fluids  
from the new foster.

**2** Coat the orphan  
prioritizing head/tail.

**3** Present alongside the  
foster's own newborn before  
she finishes licking.

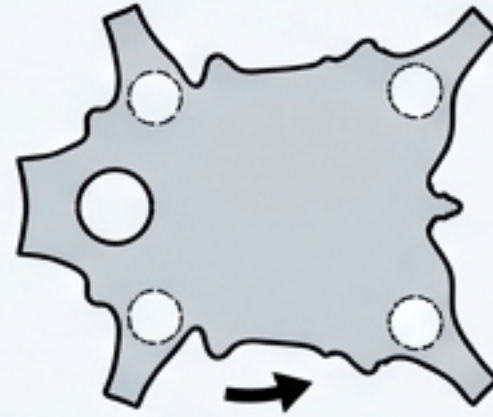
# Skin-Jacket Transfers Require Strict Time Constraints

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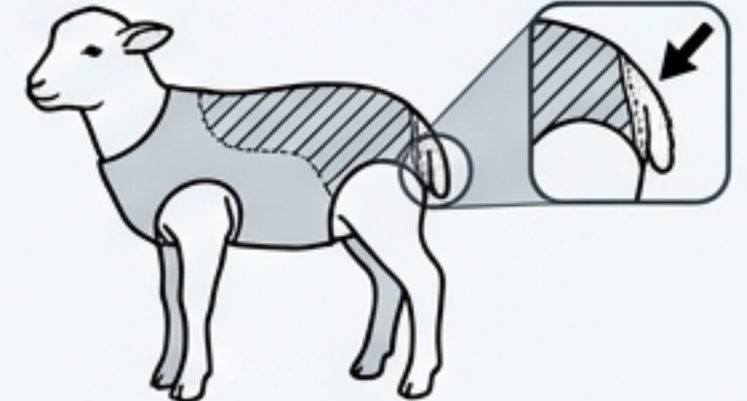
1. Skin the dead lamb  
(within 12 hours of death).



2. Cut neck and leg holes  
into the pelt.



3. Fit over orphan.  
⚠️ Crucial: Must cover the  
back and tail-base.



## 48-Hour Warning Limit

**>=24 hours:** Minimum duration for scent transfer

**48 Hours**

### Alternative Method: Textile-Coat Protocol

Place a stockinette on the dead lamb for 24h to absorb scent, then transfer to the orphan.

**Maximum limit:** Remove by 48 hours in warm weather to prevent pelt degradation and maggot infestation.

# Head-Gate Restraint Demands a 3-to-5 Day Commitment

T-MINUS: Day 01

**Setup:** Ewe can stand, eat, and drink freely, but the stanchion physically prevents her from turning to butt the lamb.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

**<60% Long-Term Acceptance Rate.  
Have a bottle-feeding fallback plan ready.**

## Release Checklist

**All must be checked before removing head-gate:**

- Ewe stands quietly for the lamb to nurse.
- Ewe actively sniffs and vocalizes to the lamb.
- Ewe does not step away when the lamb approaches.

## Myth vs. Fact

### Myth / Homesteader Lore

Vicks VapoRub on ewe's nose, cologne, molasses water, vanilla extract.

### Evidence-Based Alternatives

Own-lamb scent transfer via birth fluids (slime), pelts (jacket), or 24-hour textile coats.

## The Science

“Masking lamb odor with odoriferous substances is “not soundly based” and frequently fails in controlled settings.”

**Key Takeaway: Do not rely on masking agents as a primary strategy. Use only true scent-transfer methods.**

### Priority Pyramid

1. Dam's own colostrum (Best)

2. Frozen Ewe colostrum

3. Goat colostrum (Johne's-tested)

4. Commercial Replacer (NOT a supplement)

5. Cow colostrum (Worst)

### IgG Dial



The FAS Scotland standard for true passive transfer.

### Clinical Warnings

- **Johne's Disease:** Cow colostrum carries transmission risk and has insufficient fat.
- **Supplements vs. Replacers:** Supplements have <3g IgG. Must use a true REPLACER.

**Dose rule: 50 mL/kg in first 2 hours; 200-250 mL/kg in first 24 hours.**

# Volume Tapering and the 10-15% Bodyweight Rule

T-MINUS: Day 01 - Wk 06

**Core Operational Rule:** Lamb must consume **10-15%** of its body weight per day in milk volume.

**Feeding Schedule Table**

Age Window	Frequency Target
Days 1-3	<b>4-6 feeds/day</b> (Small, frequent).
Days 4-7	<b>4 feeds/day</b> (Introduce cold self-feeder option).
Weeks 2-3	Every <b>6 hours</b> .
Weeks 3-5	Every <b>8-12 hours</b> .

## Weaning Gate

Must meet **ALL** criteria to stop milk:

- >=30 Days Old**
- 2.5x Birth Weight Achieved**
- Reliably consuming creep feed/hay**

## Root-Cause Cascade

Calf Milk Replacer (High Lactose) +  
Large, Infrequent Feeds + Warm Milk

Lactose pooling in the abomasum

Rapid bacterial bloom  
(*Sarcina* & *C. perfringens*)

**Lethal Abomasal Bloat**

## Prevention Stack Checklist

1. [✓] Feed **Lamb MR ONLY** (never calf MR).
2. [✓] Enforce the **10-second pause rule** during feeding.
3. [✓] Use a **small teat hole** (milk should trickle, not flow).
4. [✓] Transition to a **cold-milk (<60°F)** free-choice **self-feeder** by **Day 7**.
5. [✓] **Small, frequent feeds**; never large twice-daily meals.
6. [✓] **Vaccinate** for **CDT**.

# The Economics of Triage: Grafting vs. Bottle Dependency



**T-MINUS: <24 Hours**

**Synthesis Insight:** A successful slime graft pays for itself in labor savings by Day 3. Timeboxing your intervention to the first 24 hours minimizes both financial drain and animal suffering.

<b>Bottle Economics</b>	<b>Graft Economics</b>
<p><b>\$50-80</b> cash cost per lamb. <b>~35-40 hours</b> total labor across 6 weeks.</p>	<p><b>High upfront</b> intense labor (first 24h). <b>Near-zero</b> long-term cost. <b>Zero</b> ongoing labor.</p>

## **Welfare Flag**

**Never leave a bottle lamb alone in a pen. They must be paired up or kept in sight/sound of the adult flock to prevent behavioral pathologies.**

# Readiness Checklist and Veterinary Triage Triggers



## FIELD PREPAREDNESS

### Lambing Kit Essentials

- [ ] Lamb-specific Milk Replacer (**25 lb**).
- [ ] Commercial Colostrum Replacer ( **$\geq 30$  g/L IgG**).
- [ ] Red rubber stomach tube & **60 mL** syringe.
- [ ] Iodine **7%** (Navel dip).
- [ ] Karo syrup (Sublingual hypoglycemia rescue).

### Veterinary Escalation Triggers (Call the Vet When):

1. Retained placenta **>24h** or uterine prolapse.
2. Watery mouth drooling in lamb **<12h** old (*E. coli* septicemia).
3. Rapid, sudden abdominal distension (**Bloat**).
4. Lamb cannot stand or swallow even after warming + tube feeding (**Euthanasia assessment**).