



Advice to Pregnant Women During the Lambing Season - A Reminder

Pregnant women who come into close contact with sheep during lambing may risk their own health, and that of their unborn child, from infections that can occur in some ewes. Such infections include chlamydiosis (caused by *Chlamydia abortus*), toxoplasmosis and listeriosis, each of which is a common cause of abortion in ewes. Q fever may also be transmitted from birthing animals.

Although the number of reports of these infections and human miscarriages resulting from contact with sheep is extremely small, pregnant women should be aware of the risks and ready to take appropriate precautions.

To avoid the possible risk of infection, pregnant women are advised that they should:

- not help to lamb or milk ewes;
- avoid contact with aborted or new-born lambs, or with the afterbirth, birthing fluids or materials (eg bedding) contaminated by such birth products; and
- avoid handling clothing, boots, etc, which have come into contact with ewes or lambs.

Pregnant women should seek medical advice if they experience fever or influenza-like symptoms, or if concerned that they could have acquired infection from a farm environment.

More information and advice is available in the Lambing section of the HPA website <http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1191942128199?p=1191942128199>

Short URL - <http://tinyurl.com/dnymav>

Reference

1. HPA. Defra press release, 7 January 2009 - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2009/090107b.htm>
Short URL – <http://tinyurl.com/bakuuv>
2. Source: Health Protection Report, Vol 3, No 3 - <http://www.hpa.org.uk/hpr/archives/2009/news0309.htm#lamb>
Short URL - <http://tinyurl.com/cqyejs>

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