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## **Growing sheep can be quite easy and remunerative.**

### **Sheep are common for their milk, meat and wool.**

Here some simple rules to follow if you want [to start or increase your breeding stock](#):

1. **Study the market:** To breed one sheep and support it for one year, you need to provide between 1.000 m<sup>2</sup> and 2.000 m<sup>2</sup> of good grass, between 200 Kg and 400 Kg of hay, and about 50 Kg of wheat. As a farmer you should then focus on the size of your breeding stock and consider that one ram is enough for 10/15 sheep.
2. **Check their health status:** It is better to buy ewes with one or two pairs of permanent teeth. This means they are mature enough to be over their childhood diseases, but still young enough to have a number of productive breeding seasons left.
3. **Cull unproductive animals:** Keep only the best lambs from mothers that are good nurses. Sell or slaughter the poor producers and eliminate the older females.
4. **Pay attention to reproduction:** Ewes begin their heat period, usually, between August and December in the northern hemisphere, but, around the world, [the breeding season vary according to daylight](#). Ewes don't show any external signs of heat, but, over this period, it is advisable to provide some extra food. Lambs are generally born 140 to 150 days after the conception and they reach maturity in 6 to 7 months.
5. **Keep good records:** You cannot improve your herd if you do not keep accurate records. " [You need to know the first day your ram was put in with the ewes, for instance, so you can be ready for the birth of](#)

*[the flock's first lambs](#). It's best, also, to keep a separate chart for each ewe: include her yearly wool and lamb yields, her offspring's weaning weight, and how long each youngster took to reach selling weight. In addition, you should keep track of all veterinary cares given to your flock in order to know when to give follow-up dewormings and vaccinations.” (**Farm4Trade** is specifically designed for this purpose)*

6. **Provide good shelter:** The shelter must include a shed or a barn at least 5 by 5 meters large, to allow animals to move comfortably. If you do not have a place to convert into a barn, you can set up a canopy at least 1.5 meters above the ground (using wooden planks). This must be closed on three sides to keep animals protected. The floor must be covered with at least 10 cm of straw that must be replaced frequently to ensure the sheep a warm, dry environment. If sheep may be attacked by wild animals, a strong protection fence is needed. You may think to build a [double-stranded electric fence](#) (run the bottom line 20 to 40 cm above the ground and the second wire 30 cm above the first one).
7. **Feed them properly:** Sheep, like any other animals, need carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals. They can get all the nutrients they need from simple things: fresh hay and grasses. This is a cheap resources for farmers that are just starting. Extra protein are only needed during breeding and winter season. Extra feed may be helpful if hay and grasses are not rich enough.
8. **Keep your animal healthy:** First of all remember to keep your sheep worm-free. External parasites as lice, ticks, mange mites, fleas, and screw-worms can be quite dangerous for your animals. Do not hesitate to contact a veterinarian for specific vaccinations, especially for lambs.