



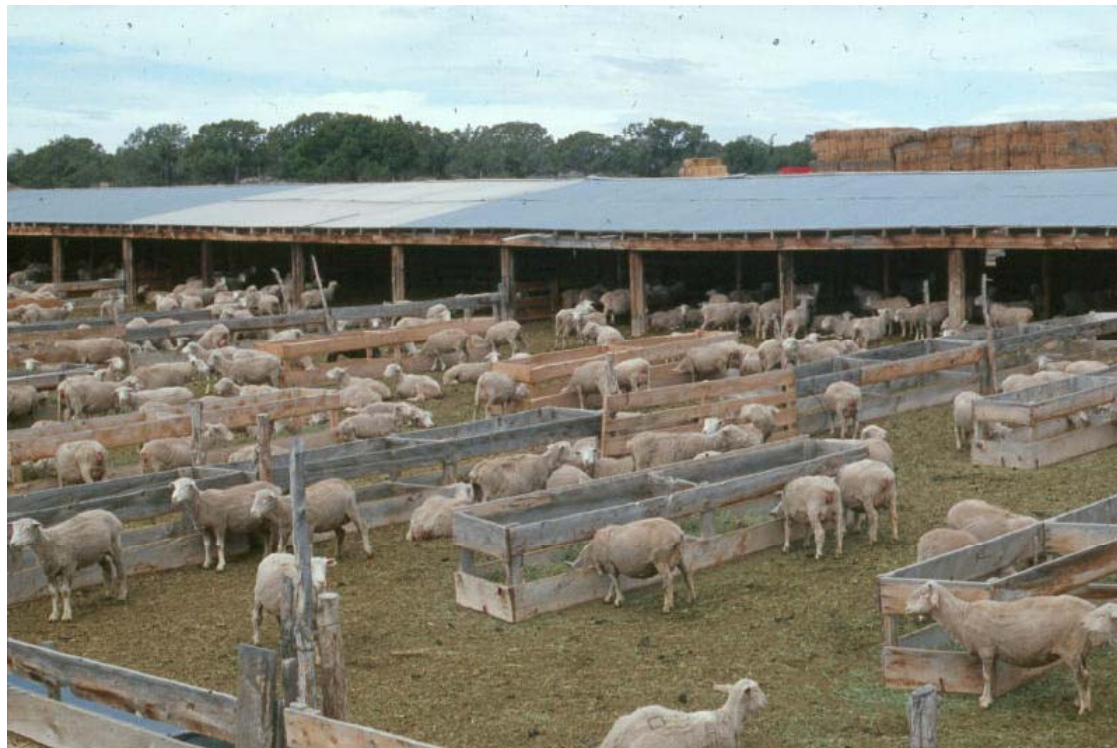
# Assisting Ewes with Lambing

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# An Important / Critical Time

- Frequent observation
- Extra help (with training provided)



# When should I help?

- Uneasy 2-3 hrs but not active straining
- Abdominal straining  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 hr with little progress
- Water sac / membranes evident  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 hr with little progress





# Examination: Capture and Restraint

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- Don't disrupt other ewes and newborn lambs
- Quietly haze to catch-pen or use long sheep hook
- Lay ewe down on her side which favors use of your preferred right or left hand



# Vaginal Examination

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- Wash ewe's rectal-vaginal area and your hands and arms
- Use mild soap or shortening as lubricant
- Keep fingers and hand in cone shape
- Examine for presence of lamb or dilation of cervix. If not dilated, allow more time.
- If dilated, consider relative size of lamb



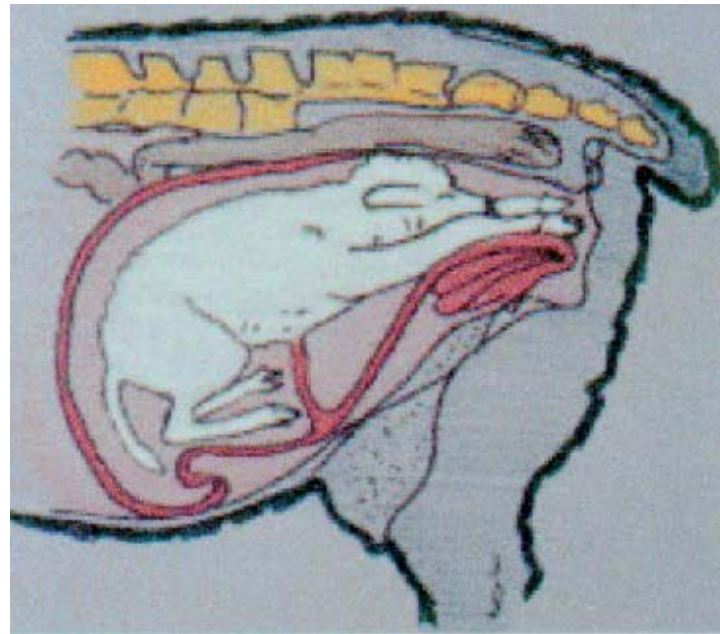
# Estimating Size and Determining if Alive

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- Main cause of difficult birth is oversize lamb for pelvic opening
- Important time for decision to assist or get professional veterinary help
- Check for life by movements, reflexes (toe pinch, sucking) or heart beat but not always evident

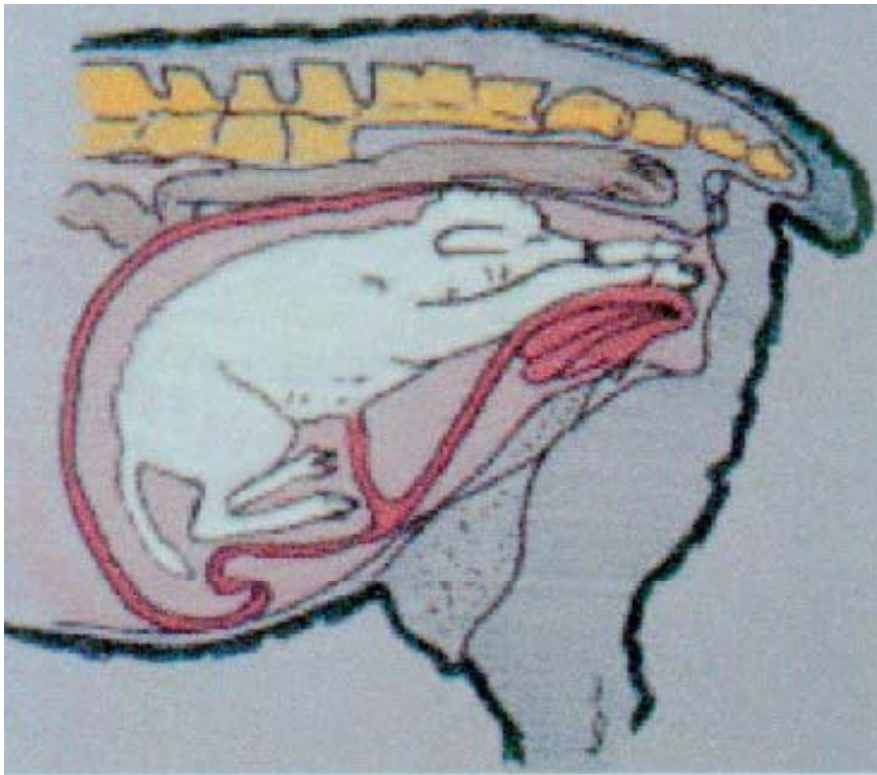
# Identify Presentation (coming forwards or backwards)

- Both are normal – don't turn around
- Identify front or rear legs by comparing joints of lamb and observing dam's



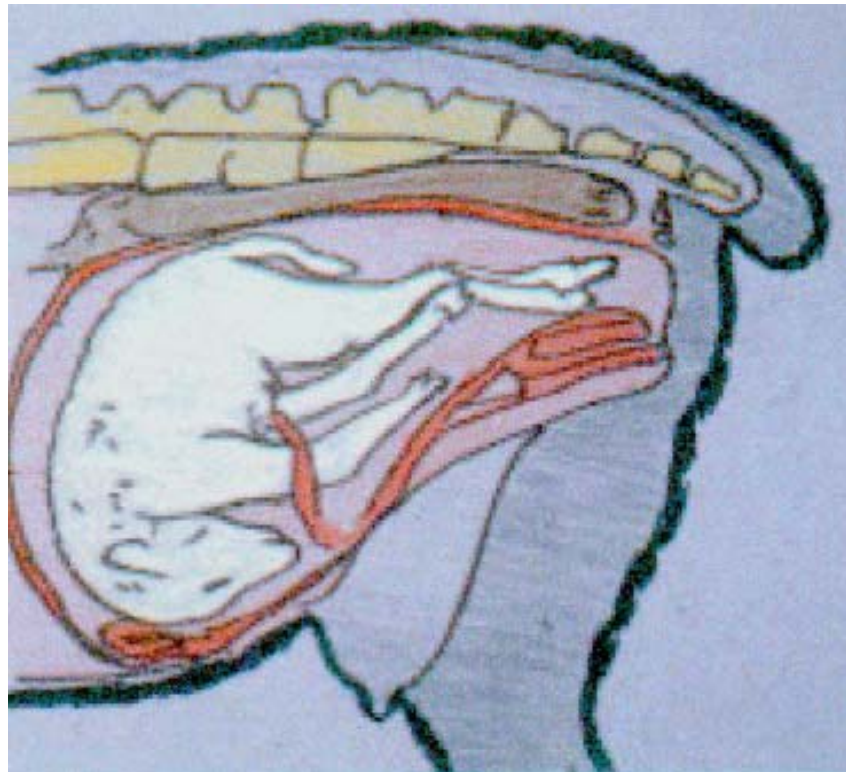
# Identify Posture (placement of feet and head)

- Normal front = head and feet in diving position



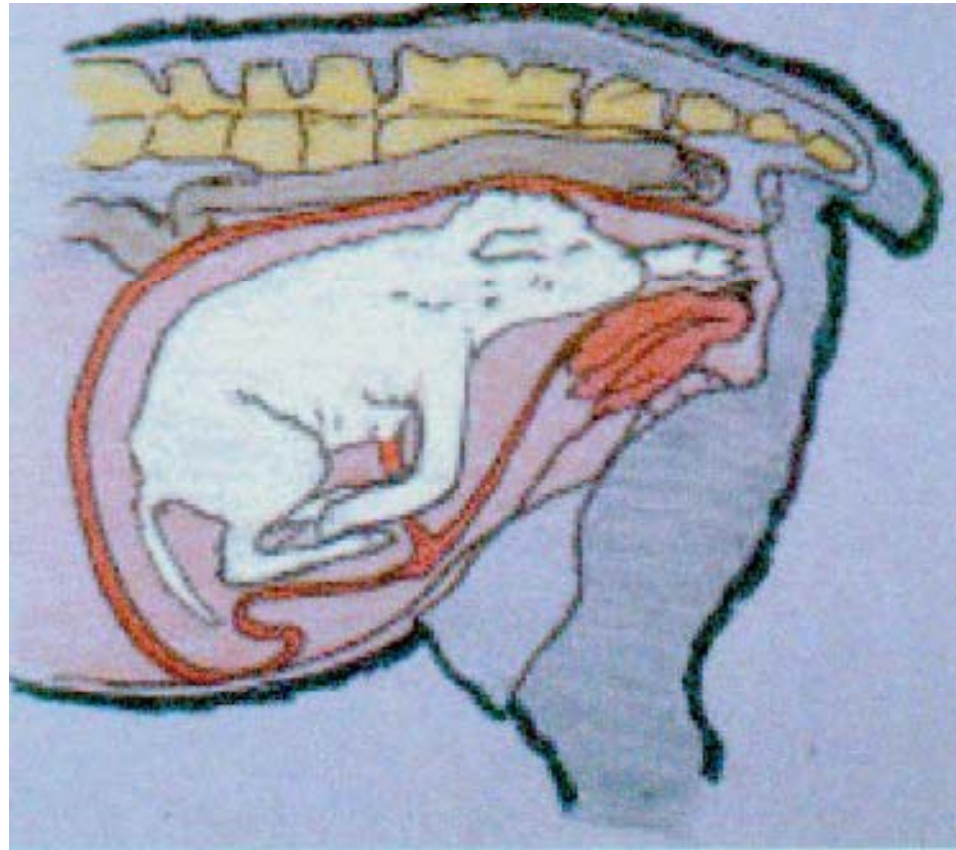
# Backward Presentation / Posture

- Normal, if both hind feet coming together and up into vagina (“rearward diving”)

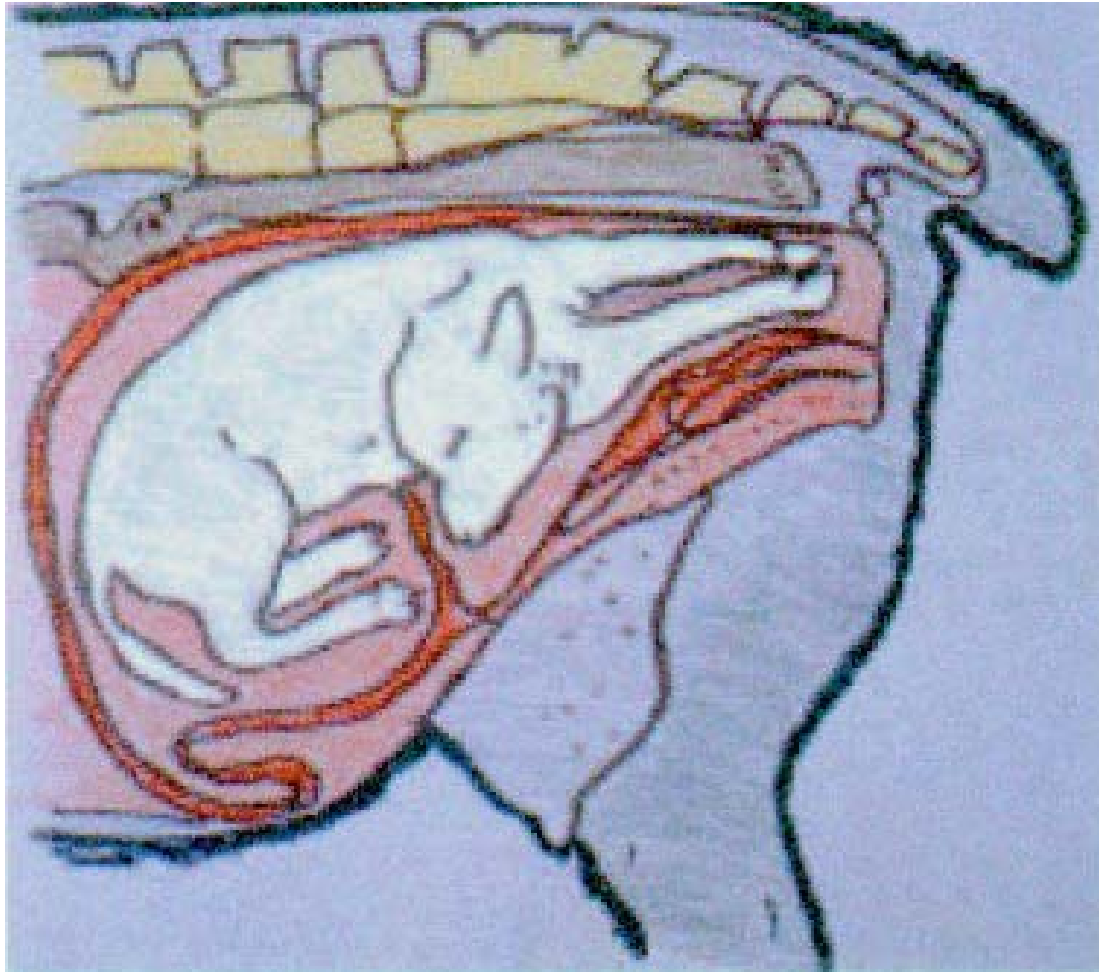


# Abnormal Posture (correct before trying to pull)

- Front leg(s) back

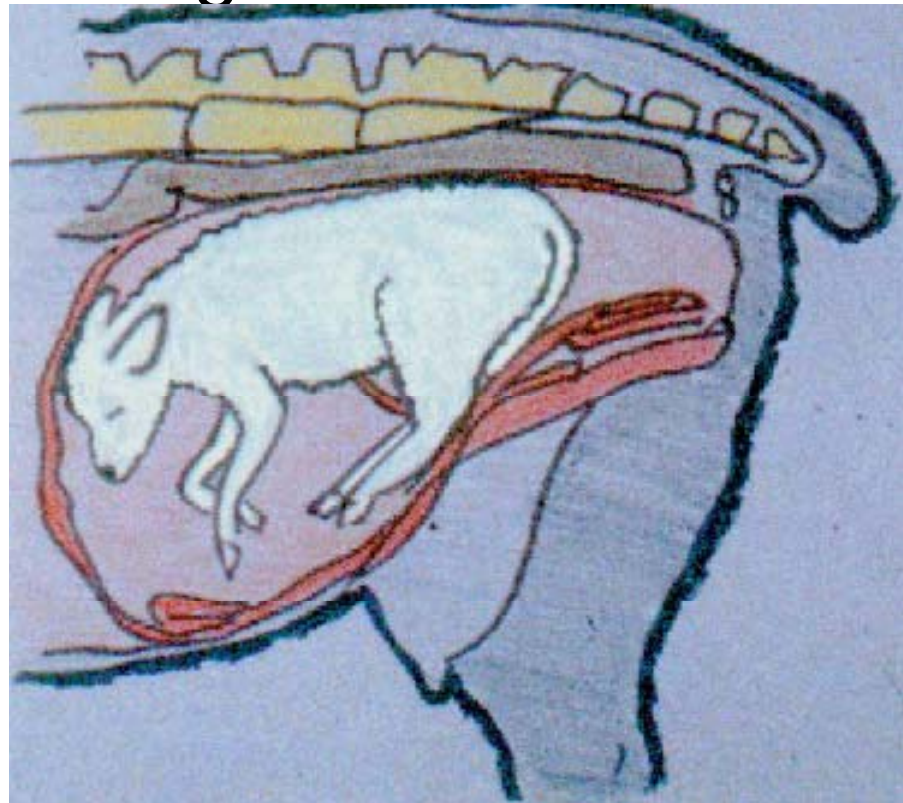


Head turned to side or down



# Breech (backward and feet forward under lamb)

- Ewe may not show strong labor; may be prolonged and the lamb dead



# Abnormal Lambs

- A variety of abnormalities can occur and may require veterinary assistance





# Correcting Posture

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- Repel the lamb back into uterus
  - Slow, steady push, especially between contractions
  - Caution not to tear uterus or stick finger through it
  - Cover teeth or hoof with hand, so it doesn't cause damage
- Ewe stand or elevate rear quarters



# Correcting Posture (aids)

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- Attach a snare, small rope or o.b. chain to a leg or head that is back
  - Head – behind ears and inside mouth
  - Legs – on each leg, not both together
- Breech
  - Pushed forward
  - One leg at a time
  - Small rope on; straighten



# Traction / Pulling the Lamb

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- Pull slow and steady, with contractions as much as possible
- If very tight, pull on one body part at a time, with the attached rope, etc.
- With hard pull, place your foot under the vulva and push against ewe's pelvis while applying traction
  - Caution – don't break lamb's leg



## Other Assistance

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- O.B. lubricant, mild soap or shortening applied to the lamb to reduce resistance
- When the head is at the vulva, stretch the lips of the vulva back over the head of the lamb
- When the head is out, clean off the face and nostrils with a towel to enable breathing when delivered

# After Delivery

- Be sure to check for another lamb
- Clip navel and apply iodine
- Squirt small strip of milk from each teat
- Assist ewe to stand; leave quietly



# Later

- Recheck to be sure ewe and lamb are okay
- Be sure lamb has nursed and received colostrum within 2 hours

