

MUNTANUI LAMBING DIARY 2013

Date	No. Lambs	Gender and Siblings	Weather	Notes	Total living lambs
Thu 26 Sept 2013	2	Twins: ewe and ram	Sunny, very mild	We knew "Pinkie" was ready to burst when Spidey the ram started trying to mount her yesterday afternoon. She was absolutely huge. Ram lamb strong; we think the ewe lamb was stillborn – still in the sac, curled up. Mortality rate 50% on our first day. We don't seem to have much luck with twins.	1
Sat 28 Sept 2013	3	Twins (2 ewes?) plus a single, (ram)	Heavy rain	Very heavy rain overnight. Little ram lamb still doing okay but looking chilled. Twins and a single born during a lull in the weather in the afternoon. One of the twins quite a bit weaker than the other, although both were feeding. Mum is attentive. The little single is having trouble feeding. The ewe has definitely bonded with it but seemed to be in pain, particularly on one side and was reluctant to let the lamb feed. We saw it get to a teat eventually but the little tail would only go for two or three seconds. Not sure if it's getting any milk. Don't want to risk the ewe rejecting it if we interfere, so we've decided to wait until morning and re-assess.	4
Sun 29 Sept 2013	2	Twins (ewe plus ram?)	Unsettled, showers, cloudy, patches of sun	Everyone survived the night. Little single from yesterday doing well. Another set of twins this morning! Hoping temperatures stay mild. Best thing we ever did was to move the sheep to that back paddock.	6

MUNTANUI LAMBING DIARY 2013

Tue 1 Oct 2013	1	Ewe?	Sunny, mild	Born in the late afternoon, mum very attentive, doing well. Everyone else going great guns as well.	7
Wed 2 Oct 2013	1	Unknown	Sunny, mild	Born in the morning, on the north-facing slope (a popular place). Mum very protective, so we couldn't get close enough to establish the gender. It's turning into a right little nursery in that back paddock – definitely the best paddock for the purpose.	8
Tues 8 Oct 2013	2	Twins (ram and ewe)	Icy rain, wind, snow forecast to 900m	Just typical – gorgeous weather for the last week and now a set of twins born in awful conditions. Their mum is attentive and they're hanging in there but temps are meant to go below freezing over the next 24 hours so I'm steeling myself for the worst. The other eight (four boys and four girls, we think) are doing well. UPDATE: Ewan went to check on the new arrivals after it got dark. The weather was atrocious. The little ram seemed a bit dopey, so Ewan guided it with sticks up to its mother and sibling. We're hoping it will survive the night.	10
Wed 9 Oct 2013			Gales, then fine and sunny	The little ram lamb didn't make it. The ewe lamb seems fine.	9
Thu 10 Oct 2013			Fine and cold, then rain	One of the two remaining pregnant ewes has been going off by herself a lot	9

MUNTANUI LAMBING DIARY 2013

				<p>over the last three days. Today, she headed off into the paddock behind the house and basically spent all day there, standing around and rocking slightly. She's carrying very low and her udder is very distended. We keep thinking she's about to have her lamb(s) but it still hasn't happened. Ewan has just gone out to check on her (8:30pm and dark). I think something's wrong but we don't know what. She's not straining and there's no fluid.</p> <p>We let the others into the front paddock today to give them some fresh grass. All very happy! They moved into the back paddock when the weather turned.</p> <p>UPDATE: The ewe was still there but she moved into the nursery paddock when Ewan tried to get a look at her hind quarters.</p>	
Fri 11 Oct 2013	2	Twins (rams)	Overcast	<p>Ewan went to check on the ewe while I went for a walk with Karen. By the time I got back, he was in the back paddock with her, obscured in a patch of manuka. He'd just delivered a lamb! He was very moved, said there was no way she could have delivered it herself – he'd seen the two front feet and a little nose but nothing was moving. The lamb was fine and everything seemed good but an hour later, Ewan went to check on her again and saw another pair of legs hanging out. The lamb was breech. He delivered it dead and has been kicking himself ever since. It's sad but if he hadn't intervened at all, the</p>	10

MUNTANUI LAMBING DIARY 2013

				three of them would've been dead by now. Weather isn't meant to be too good. We'll keep an eye on them both.	
Sat 12 Oct 2013	2	Twins (one of each)	Overcast, rain	"Dumpy" the ewe finally dropped her twins. They all seem well. The lamb from yesterday is doing okay but the ewe isn't moving much – she seems to be limping on one of her front legs. That's lambing officially over, although I'm not going to celebrate until this last lot have made 48 hours.	12
Sun 13 Oct 2013			Rain	There was a heavy rainstorm in the afternoon and the sheep and lambs crowded into the shelters in the yards. One of the lambs must've been stepped on and is now limping. The ewe in the back paddock continues to limp as well.	12
Thu 17 Oct 2013			Snow showers, windy	We've brought the ewe and her lamb into the yards and given her an antibiotic shot. We'll keep them there to see how she does. Everyone else fine.	12
Tue 22 Oct 2013			Heavy rain	We've returned the ewe and the lamb back to the flock. It's the first time we've nursed a sick animal that's actually recovered. Result!	12

MUNTANUI LAMBING DIARY 2013

SUMMARY

	2013	2012
Lambing period	Thu 26 Sept – Sat 12 Oct	Mon 3 Sept – Sun 16 Sept
Percentage of ewes pregnant	100% plus ewe lamb from last year	80%
Total lambs	15	10
Gender split (all lambs)	9 rams, 6 ewes	3 rams, 7 ewes
Sets of twins	6	2
Lamb losses	2 rams, 1 ewe	1 ram, 3 ewes
Mortality rate	20%	40%
Gender split surviving lambs	7 rams, 5 ewes	2 rams, 4 ewes
Ewe losses	Nil	1
Assisted births	1 (twins, one born dead)	Nil

NOTES

1. Definitely a good idea to put the ram out later (4 May in 2013, 7 April in 2012).
2. Back paddock makes the best lamb nursery – most sheltered.
3. “No interference” policy worked really well – no rejections, even with the assisted birth.
4. Why so many rams in 2013? More research needed.