

MATERNAL BEHAVIOUR SCORING

Maternal behaviour refers to the ewe's behaviour towards its lamb(s). It can be scored through assessing the distance a ewe travels from the lamb when handled by operators when tagging at birth. Maternal behaviour can vary from the ewe staying close by to running away and not coming back. A breeding value for maternal behaviour score (MBS) can be estimated as long as the trait is measured in a consistent manner across flocks. Repeated measurements of the ewe over her life will increase the accuracy of the breeding value estimated.

When: Within 24 hours of parturition /birth

How to score: A single score of 1,2,3,4 or 5. MBS Scores can be recorded with your mating information and submitted to Sheep Genetics.

Rule of Thumb: A ewe with Score 1 shows excellent maternal behaviour and stays close to the lamb. A ewe with Score 5 shows poor maternal behaviour and little interest in the lamb.

Score	Description
1	Ewe stays close to the lamb and operator
2	Ewe stays within 10 meters of the lamb and operator
3	Ewe stays within 30 meters of the lamb and operator
4	Ewe ran away but readily returned when operators moved away
5	Ewe ran away and was difficult to get to return to the lamb