

# Creep Feeding



## Introduction

Young kids and lambs benefit from getting extra, good-quality feed which in terms leads to improved survival and growth rate of young ones. Farmers can use 'creep feeding' to provide this extra feed only to kids and lambs, but not to adult animals that do not need it. Creep feeding is **in addition** to regular feed (milk, grazing, fodder or other feeds).

## Advantages of creep feeding

- Creep feeding has been shown to dramatically improve survival of young goats and sheep and can increase resilience to disease. In villages in Sindh, about one sixth (17%) of young animals died in households using creep feeding but many more animals (one third – 33%) died in households using traditional management without creep feeding.
- Creep feeding is cost-effective: using a 'creep barrier' prevents feed consumption by older animal
- Creep feeding helps prepare lambs and kids for successful grazing after weaning.
- Lambs and kids can be marketed at an earlier age, and have been reported to fetch higher prices



Young kids eating their daily ration with adult goat excluded from the creep area

## When to Start Creep Feeding?

Offer creep feed to animals up to about 6 months old. They will typically start to eat some creep feed once they are about 3 weeks old. If lambs and kids don't readily eat the feed at first, you may need to open the creep pen to the dams as well as for a few days so that they can train their young to eat the feed.



Example of creep feeding system

## How to Set Up Creep Barrier

- The aim of creep feeding is to create an area where young animals can access the creep feed but adults cannot. A typical creep pen is a fenced area with 3 to 4 gaps in fence each 4 inches (10cm) wide. These gaps should be small enough for young animals only to fit through. Make gaps smaller if adults fit through.
- The creep pen can be made out of cheap materials like wood or bamboo.
- Kids/lambs should be able to freely access the creep area for at least part of the day so they can consume the creep feed.



## Creep feed: What to feed and how much?

- The creep feed is made up of ONE THIRD good-quality feed and TWO THIRDS poorer-quality feed.

Examples of good- and poorer-quality feeds:

Good-quality feeds (ONE THIRD of total feed) 33 %	Poorer-quality feeds (TWO THIRDS of total feed) 67%
Burseed/clover	Chickpea straw
Chickpea grain	Peanut straw
Cotton trash*	Groundnut straw
Cottonseed cake*	Local grass (fresh or hay)
Cow pea forage <sup>†</sup>	Millet hay
Groundnut cake	Napier grass (fresh or hay)
Jantar/Sesbania	Oat forage <sup>†</sup> (fresh or hay)
Jawar/sorghum grain	Rice straw
Lucerne/alfalfa	Sorghum forage <sup>†</sup> (fresh or dry)
Millet forage <sup>†</sup> (fresh)	Wheat forage <sup>†</sup> (fresh)
Millet grain	Wheat straw or hay
Oat grain	
Wheat bran	
Wheat grain*	



Creep feeding area: young goats and sheep can move in and out to access feed and water while older animals cannot fit through

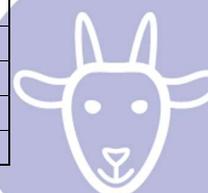
\* Suddenly consuming these feeds can cause digestive upsets: introduce them slowly by only offering one handful of feed per head every second day for one week. After that, increase the feed to the full daily amount.

† 'Forage' means the stem and leaf parts of the plant

- Make up the creep feed by mixing a ration of ONE THIRD good-quality feed and TWO THIRDS poorer-quality feed. Choose the cheapest feeds on the list that are available to you.
- Offer about half a pound (200 grams) of the mixed feed per animal per day, placing it in a feed container inside the creep area where the adult animals cannot get it.
  - Half a pound is about one big adult handful of feed, but it is preferable to check how much you are feeding by weighing it
- Provide water inside the creep area too

Amount of feed to offer according to number of young animals in household. Choose ONE column that uses the measuring unit you are familiar with:

Number of young animals receiving the creep feed	Total amount of creep feed to offer PER DAY (choose one column only)		
	pounds	kilograms	handfuls
2	1	0.5	3
4	2	0.75	5
6	2.5	1.25	8
8	3.5	1.5	11
10	4.5	2	13



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'Together'