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MISMOTHERING IN ROMNEY SHEEP

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Two-hundred-and-five Romney ewes were observed during lambing. Eight observers in turn maintained a continuous watch. Records were obtained from 180 lambings.

The ewes were in one acre paddocks and stocking rates decreased from about 50 to 5 per acre as lambed ewes were shed off each morning. Each group of 50 lambed in about five days. Twenty of the lambs were fostered by an alien ewe. Mismothering occurred at a similar rate as stocking rate decreased and was related to the number of lambs dropped rather than stocking density. The mismothering did not contribute to lamb deaths but is obviously important where pedigree records are being kept.