

Table 1: Summary of positives and negatives of different artificial feeding systems


			
Feeding system	Buckets/bottles	Ad libitum feeding	Automated feeding
Positives	Cheap Less milk replacer used (9kg to 10kg)	Moderate cost Labour limited to cleaning and refilling daily Less risk of digestive upsets Faster lamb growth rates	Lowest labour input Fastest lamb growth rate Less risk of digestive upsets
Negatives	High labour demand Lower lamb growth Increased risk of digestive upsets	Requires mains power Higher milk replacer requirement (11kg to 13kg)	High set up cost Highest milk replacer used (12kg to 15kg)

Table 2: Feed costs for rearing surplus lambs

System	Management points	Costs
Rear triplets on ewe (where successful)	Meal input for ewe (35 days x 0.5kg/day)	€4.50
	Meal input for three lambs (70 days x 300g x three lambs)	€17.64
	Cost weaning to sale (8 wks @ €0.10/day)	€5.60
	Total:	€22.79
Ad lib milk and turn out to grass at 8 weeks	Milk replacer (12.5kg @ €2.60/kg)	€32.50
	Meal input for lamb (avg 70 days @ 700g/day)	€13.72
	Cost weaning to sale (7 weeks @ €0.10/day)	€4.90
	Miscellaneous costs (straw/electricity etc)	€2.00
	Total:	€53.12
Ad-lib milk and finish intensively indoors	Milk replacer (12.5kg @ €2.60/kg)	€32.50
	Meal input to sale (110 days x 1.1kg/day)	€33.88
	Miscellaneous costs (straw, electricity etc)	€4.00
	Total:	€70.38