

“ELECTROLYTES”

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Electrolytes are responsible for many fundamental processes in your animals body. Electrolytes play a role in transmitting nervous impulses, contracting muscles, keeping the animal hydrated and regulating your stocks' pH. When you stress livestock in any way, the balance of natural electrolytes available for optimum body function may be compromised. Show animals are particularly vulnerable to dehydration due to the very nature of their lifestyle. Shearing, trimming, hauling, new surroundings, change in diet and water restrictions are all factors that can lead to dehydration and metabolic disfunction. Feeders, it is imperative that you pay close attention to hydration and develop a protocol for your individual needs that puts your show animals in the best shape possible. Electrolyte supplementation can be achieved orally with fluid administration or top dressing your feed with a high quality electrolyte Top dress. There are a number of oral paste available if you prefer that option. Don't forget the number one ingredient for proper hydration is sufficient water intake!! Typical mineral content in electrolytes are sodium chloride, calcium, potassium chloride, chloride acetate, magnesium Chloride, phosphate and Bi carbonate. Some more complete electrolytes may also provide vitamins such as Vitamin A, D3, E, and B. Amino acids are available in products that are like vitamins and electrolytes plus type solutions. Some supportive's supply energy as well in the inclusion of dextrose, milk or fats. Typical amino acids found in some complete electrolyte's are folic acid, menadione, niacin, riboflavin and choline.

“Pro Tip”—There are so many options in electrolytes out there that it is mind boggling. My take on these products is first of all think safe, simple and consistent. My personal preference for hydration in show lambs is a good buffered electrolyte that provides the basic minerals like sodium, chloride, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. I prefer to mix up drench in individual batches at each drenching that are customized for each animal. All animals are different and respond to hydration therapy differently. Fat sheep need basic minimal electrolytes bc over use of electrolytes and energy supplements will make them spongy and soft. On the other hand, if you are squeezing on a fat one with water reduction and feed reduction, they will get dehydrated and wrinkle at some point. Thin sheep will require a more aggressive drench program with energy and vitamins as well. Sheep that are finished correctly will need lots of water and a balanced electrolyte program with energy, vitamins and some amino acid supplementation. My personal hydration tool box includes the following ingredients: Dyne, mineral electrolytes, Propylene glycol, probiotic paste and a good quality bottled complete electrolyte, like electrolyte plus or A Lyte concentrate. I also like to have liquid amino acid concentrate on hand. With these options, I can formulate and change my program as the situation dictates. I am not a big fan of pre made convenient drenches that are one size fits all mentality. We have covered a lot of ground in this issue of Stockman's Tips. If you would like more explanation on using electrolytes, please feel free to call me or email me at joel@jacobyfeed.com. Thank you and good luck with your stock!