#23 Comparison of lamb rearing systems on sheep-dairy farms: behavioural changes and welfare implications.

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The mother-young bond is an important interaction between the Dam and the lamb, it begins at birth and is maintained when the lamb is weaned. It is the first social interaction that the lamb encounters. With increasing intensive farming systems, farmers are removing the lambs from the mothers earlier to produce a higher quantity of milk for human consumption. The earlier the removal of the lamb the more stressful it can be, leading to multiple different changes in the behaviour of the animal and can have welfare implications. There are 3 major rearing systems that are being used; Removal of the lamb around 2 days (2DY), removal of the lamb around 30 days (30DY) or a mixed system (MIXED) where the lamb are removed through the day but re-join the dam after she has been milked. Looking into the behavioural changes and welfare implications has not been conducted in New Zealand Diary lambs and should provide beneficial findings about the lamb’s behaviour and welfare issues of different rearing systems.