

The Pen 5 party crowd

It was a quiet summer's night. After loading the last of the big round bales on the bale wagon, and parking the tractor, I walked through the dusky darkness to the house, and settled down to watch TV with The Sidekick for a bit before taking Hamish our border collie, to the barn for the night.

As usual, we filled his dish with kibble. I only turn on one light when I feed the dog so it doesn't disturb the sheep.

As I pulled the barn door shut, I heard a lamb make a noise. I opened the door and flipped on the light again— nothing in the pen directly inside the door was amiss.

All the lambs were snoozing, happily chewing their cud.

Fast forward to the next morning.

When I stepped out the door of the house into the glorious morning air, I knew something wasn't right. The bleating emanating from the barn bordered on sounding like a slaughter was taking place.

Making my way to the barn at a fast walk, I opened the barn door to be greeted by Hamish. The poor dog looked like he'd been run over by a cement truck. His tongue was almost dragging on the floor, he was drenched down the front of himself from drinking so much water, and his one eye looked a lot like it might be twitching— he was exhausted.

As I pet him and listened to the noise in the barn, I cast a look down one passageway. A lamb was standing in the passageway, eating some of the select hay set aside for the very little lambs. In seconds I realized it wasn't just one lamb— there were nine.

They were nine lambs from Pen 5.

And I could see that they'd had a party from hell all night. The hay in two feed passages that they'd been cavorting in was ripped apart, there was an ample scattering of little lamb droppings from one end of the barn to the other, and twine was strewn all over the floor. Summing it up, it looked like a tornado had gone through.

And this was caused by a bunch of small lambs, not even close to full grown.

After letting the dog in with me, we herded the lambs back into their pen. Somehow

Ted Brown



they'd managed to open the slide bolt that locks the gate.

As I slammed the Pen 5 gate shut and securely latched the slide bolt, Hamish had a look of relief on his face, almost saying "Hey man, I was so upset— geez, like they've been doing this all night and I couldn't get near 'em cuz the gate was closed keeping me out. I could've held them in a corner for you until this morning— like man, it's hard to do my job when you're tying my paws by having these damn gates all closed up like this!"

I calmed him down, and fed the flock. Most of them were upset because those little guys had full run of the feed passages, stealing the 'good' hay and partying like a bunch of crazy university kids and they couldn't.

I now know the sound I heard the previous night had been one of the lambs 'talking' to the others in the dark, probably saying "Shush, he's still here..." until the door closed.

Since my day job was beckoning, I didn't have time to clean up the mess, but I knew full well it would be waiting for me once I got home that evening.

After feeding the flock, silence once again descended upon the stable. All I could hear was the sound of munching hay in the pens. I did a walk-about, checking all the pens, making sure all was well with Brown Woolies.

As I peeked into Pen 5, I could see all the lambs were curled up, dozing and relaxing. The little guys were tucked out from their night of wild partying. I locked the gate to that part of the stable and looked for Mr. Hamish.

There he was, man's best friend, sprawled out in the straw pile, virtually comatose. Seems he'd also put in a pretty long night.

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