

Small Ruminant Field Day

Sept 16, 2023

On September 16th KGPA, Central Ky Goat Association, and KSWPA partnered for a field day at the Marion County fairgrounds.

The day started off with Shawn Harper giving a talk and demonstration on many of the tools and supplies that sheep and goat producers should have on hand. This was an informative session, especially for new producers, as he explained each item, when and how to use them, and which of these items producers should have on hand before the need arises.

Shawn's talk was followed by a presentation from UK Agronomist, Dr. James Henning. Dr. Henning covered the identification of several grass species, and the relevance of each to a forage-based sheep and goat operation. There was also a good discussion on pasture management, rotational grazing, and weed control. This was a particularly good talk considering the dry conditions of most everyone's pastures.

Dr Henning then followed up with a demonstration on how to take hay samples. He covered the information obtained from a sample, how to read a sample report, and how that applies to livestock producers.

After breaking for a lunch of lamb or beef burgers, attendees divided into smaller groups for presentations on how to select for good conformation in sheep or goats. The emphasis of this presentation wasn't just to explain how animals are judged at shows, but the reasoning behind why conformation is important to the health and production of the animals. These sessions were presented by Jason P'Poole, Murray State University for sheep and Taylor Graves, Washington County Ag Agent, for goats.

While some groups were attending the conformation sessions, Matt Hamilton from the UK Sheep Unit, demonstrated the correct way to trim hooves. He covered why hooves need to be trimmed and what problems to look for while trimming. After a discussion on the differences of hoof scald vs hoof rot, Matt covered some possible causes and how to treat each of these hoof issues.

This was a good field day for both new and experienced producers. Anytime you get the opportunity to attend one of these field days, I encourage you to go. The information presented is always helpful and the chance to talk with other producers makes for an enjoyable day.

I would like to thank all those who shared their knowledge at this event and also the sponsors.

Burkmann Feed of Lebanon, Tarter Gate, StayTuff, and Hadley's Hay. I would also like to thank the Marion County Cattlemen's Association for cooking the burgers and hotdogs.