

Hoof Print

The Small Ruminant Magazine



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Wool Pool
- FSA Disaster Assistance
- 5th Annual Kentucky Sheep & Fiber Festival

GENETICALLY SPEAKING

Are Hair Sheep
Meat Sheep?

DIRECT MARKETING

How to Market the Meat
From Your Livestock

Southern States Dorper

JUDGE:
Robert
Dinsmore

SHOW & SALE

AUCTIONEER:
Pit
Kemmer

Hyder-Burks Agricultural Center
Tennessee Tech University

Cookeville, Tennessee

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Saturday, July 26

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The Small Ruminant Magazine

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Cover Photo: courtesy of Philippe Roca ©2014 taken at Allen's Farm Purebred Jacobs LaRue and Holly Allen (859)556-1758

Why should we care about the national sheep industry?

Sheep Producer's of TN,

I hope spring has brought you all lots of green grass and healthy, growing flocks. My last letter summarized the things I learned at ASI's annual conference and hinted at some of the issues the sheep industry is facing as a whole. In this one, I'd like to wade into a few of those issues and start the discussion on how our state association should respond. First, let me provide a little background.

The traditional sheep industry (large western flocks supplying lamb for meat to feeders and packers) has been in decline since WWII. The average American's consumption of lamb has decreased from 4.87 lbs/year in 1942 to .31 lbs/year in 2012. In response, the American Sheep Industry hired the Hale Consulting Group to identify why this was happening and to develop a plan to address it. In short, the study found that American lamb was a product being sold at premium prices, but for a variety of reasons, was also a product that did not have consistent quality. Due to this lack of consistency, it predicted that American lamb would continue to lose market share to imported products and that the traditional US sheep industry would collapse within ten years without concerted and coordinated efforts to improve by all the players in the industry, from the producer to the grocery store. However, the study did not conclude that the collapse was inevitable and provided a plan for correction.

The plan, called the American Lamb Industry Roadmap, was released this year and was the talk of the annual conference. It identified four primary goals for the industry: improvement of product characteristics (quality and consistency), demand creation, productivity improvement, and industry collaboration. So, where do we fit in and why do we care? Typically, Tennessee sheep producers have not shared many concerns with the national industry. Our production methods, sheep and sheep numbers, and marketing are different than our friends out west. However, the study did identify the one aspect of the sheep industry that is growing and thriving, what it calls the non-traditional market. The non-traditional market is made up of direct marketers and includes those selling into the growing ethnic marketthe bread and butter of our sheep business in the east!

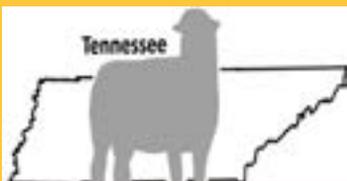
It is significant that we were recognized as the one bright spot in the sheep industry, and we will play a key role in goal number two, "demand creation". The developers of the Roadmap realized that, although the majority of sheep numbers are out west, the majority of sheep producers are in the east. Furthermore, as direct marketers, we are the face and interaction point of American Lamb with the public. If demand is to be created, it will start on ground level and the Roadmap recommended ASI to provide support to the non-traditional market, an item the organization has taken on for action. If we do our job well, and the traditional side of the industry can rise to meet goals regarding quality and productivity, then we will together create a demand that will make all sectors of the industry more profitable and start to put lamb on America's plate again.

Towards this effort ASI and the American Lamb Board offer free American Lamb marketing materials as well as financial support for the marketing of American Lamb through their Supplier Coop Program and Industry Sponsorship Program. All of this material as well as information on the Roadmap are available at www.lambcheckoff.com. I encourage you to check them out!

Have a great summer,
Sam Kennedy

TSPA - UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY	
Date	Location / Details
July 14-16 th	TN Sheep Expo – Tennessee Tech University - Hyder Burks Pavillion, Cookeville, TN
July 25-26 th	Southern States Dorper Show and Sale – Tennessee Tech University - Hyder Burks Pavillion, Cookeville, TN
DECEMBER	
Date	Location / Details
December 5-6 th	TSPA Annual Meeting – Ward Ag Center - Lebanon, TN
TBA	
Date	Location / Details
TBA	UT Block and Bridle Club Lamb Sale – University of Tennessee - Brehm Animal Science- Knoxville, TN



If you are interested in a committee please select below:

- Wool Youth
- Jr. Expo Sale
- Production Education
- Membership/Revenue
- Publicity
- Annual Meeting

RENEW TODAY! TSPA Membership Application

Annual Dues: Adult: \$30.00 Junior \$10.00

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Breed(s) of Sheep: _____

Please enclose a check for amount made out to TSPA and mail to:
Tennessee Sheep Producer's Association
4233 Poplar Hill Road, Watertown, TN 37184

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings to all Sheep Enthusiasts,

I hope that this letter meets you in good sheep times. It is an exciting time of year for the sheep industry in Tennessee and the southeastern states. There are many upcoming summer events for hair and wool sheep producers, exhibitors, and shepherds. Some of these events include, but are not limited to, the multiple fiber festivals, the Dorper Association Sheep Sale, State Youth 4-H/ FFA Sheep Expo, Youth Sheep Conference, and the Wool Pool. Also not to mention all the fairs across the state that will be held and prepared for throughout the next few months.

Some accomplished events that I would like to mention that excelled in the TN sheep industry are the Shearing school and middle Tennessee fencing schools. All of these past and upcoming events could not and would not be possible without the dedication of so many positive sheep promoters, supporters, agriculture leaders and youth, and progressive sheep board members. Board members for TN State Sheep Producers are as follows:

Scott Payne-President	Ed Bowman-Vice President
Mark Powell-Secretary/Treasurer	Sam Kennedy-ASI Rep.
Allan Bruhin-Board	Stevan Alsup-Board
Chris Wilson-Board	Dwight Loveday-Board
Ricky Skillington-Board	Jessica Shanks-Board

All these board members and members of the TSPA contribute multiple hours and days in the promotion of the sheep industry so we can thrive in Agriculture. I commend all producers on

everything they do for the sheep industry and I encourage future involvement from all producers and participants.

I also want to note a big step has been taken in the promotion of the state sheep industry from the Board; a professional promotional display board has been purchased. The display board was constructed by board member and ASI representative, Sam Kennedy. A special thanks to him and all involved with this project.

I believe it is time to grow as producers. It is time to build and promote our commodity. And it is time to enhance our industry as a whole. We need to increase production so we can utilize a more uniform product to promote to our customers. The sheep industry is changing in modern times. I believe that we need to focus on our production of quality to maximize our involvement in future products. Be like a ram at the head of the flock. Be ahead of the industry and embrace change, rather than be behind and try to catch up like an orphan lamb lost away from the herd. Sheep and lamb promotion is the base of our industry and needs to be a large concern to all producers. Some of these concerns and topics will be discussed at our annual sheep meeting. Our annual sheep meeting will be held the first Friday and Saturday of December. I look forward to seeing current and future sheep producers, agricultural leaders and supporters, and industry promoters at our meeting.

Sincerely,
Scott Payne

2014 TSPA Board of Directors

Scott Payne, President
Columbia, TN

Ed Bowman, Vice President
Gray, TN

Mark Powell, Secretary/Treasurer
Watertown, TN

Sam Kennedy, ASI Representative
Columbia, TN

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Sevierville, TN

Stevan Alsup
Lascassas, TN

Chris Wilson
Jonesborough, TN

Dwight Loveday
, TN

Ricky Skillington
Marshall County, TN

Jessica Shanks,
, TN



2014 TN Sheep Shearing School

The 2014 Shearing School was held on April 18-19, 2014 at the Middle Tennessee State University Campus in Murfreesboro, TN. The school was taught by Mr. Doug Rathke professional shearer and instructor. Ten students attended the school which was a collaborative effort by the Tennessee Sheep Producers Association, Middle Tennessee State University, and the University of Tennessee Ag Extension Service. Assisting Rathke with the school included Dr. Warren Gill, MTSU, Mark Powell, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and veteran sheep shearers Caleb Fritz and William Rick. The class began on Friday with Rathke teaching proper equipment selection and care, correct set up of the hand piece, and techniques in blade sharpening. Students then received hands on training for shearing sheep and techniques in handling sheep. Rathke stressed the importance of keeping the skin tight to avoid cutting the skin, and proper foot placement to keep the sheep in a comfortable position while shearing. The students then paired up and started shearing on their own, some for the first time. The second day of the class was more hands on shearing instruction and then a full day of shearing by the students.



Doug Rathke shows the proper technique for sharpening blades as students look on.



Rathke demonstrates proper shearing technique.

Save The Date!

2014 Annual Producers Conference

October 25, 2014

Cave City Convention Center



Guest Speakers
Workshops
Networking
Cheese Making Classes
Soap Making Classes
& Much More!

Visit www.kysheepandgoat.org for registration and conference details!



Cartoon created by Tonya Fedders, Flat Creek Wool & Pottery

KSWPA - UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY	
Date	Location / Details
July 5 th	Bluegrass District Lamb Show – Winchester, KY
July 12 th	Germantown District Lamb Show – Germantown, KY
July 17 th	Wilderness Trail District Lamb Show – London, KY
July 19 th	Pennyrile District Lamb Show – Madisonville, KY
July 24-26 th	KY Jr. Livestock Expo – Bowling Green, KY
AUGUST	
Date	Location / Details
August 18-20 th	KY State Fair Market Lamb Show – Louisville, KY
August 21-23 rd	KY State Fair Breeding Sheep Show – Louisville, KY
SEPTEMBER	
Date	Location / Details
September 9-11 th	TN State Fair Open Sheep Show
September 11-21 st	Gwinnett County Fair – Lawrenceville, GA
OCTOBER	
Date	Location / Details
October 4 th	Small Ruminant Profit School – see ad on page 15
October 7 th	EweProfit II School – C. Oran Little Research Farm
October 11 th	KY Proud Youth Livestock Points Banquet – Frankfort, KY
October 25 th	KGPA and KSWPA Annual Producer Conference – Cave City Convention Center, Cave City, KY



KSWPA Membership Benefits

- Quarterly issues of HoofPrint Magazine plus the newly designed 2014 Sheep and Goat Management Calendar
- A unified voice for the sheep industry and representation on important state and national committees
- Assistance with new marketing opportunities such as The Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival and HoofTrader.com
- Support of various educational and youth activities

Name: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please enclose a check for \$30.00 made out to KSWPA and mail to:
 Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office
 P.O. Box 4709, Frankfort, KY 40604-4709.

Start your KSWPA Membership TODAY!

Visit www.kysheepandgoat.org



KENTUCKY MAKE IT WITH WOOL COMPETITION

If you like to sew with wool fabric this is the competition for you! There is a category for everybody. To receive information and entry form, please **contact Dorothy Vale, State Director** at 142 Carolyn Lane, Nicholasville, KY 40356, 859-420-3217, kymiww@aol.com. This year Kentucky competition will be **October 25, 2014** in Cave City, Kentucky. Entry forms are due **October 1, 2014**. The junior and senior winners from Kentucky will represent Kentucky at the National Competition held in Sparks, Nevada, January 29-31, 2015. The adult winner outfit will advance to the national competition.

ALL KENTUCKY CONTESTANTS RECEIVE 2 ½ YARDS OF PENDLETON WOOL, sewing equipment and sewing notions. The BEST 4-H WOOL OUTFIT at Kentucky State Fair will receive 2 ½ yards of Pendleton Wool.

YOUR WOOL MUST BE OFFICIALLY TESTED BEFORE PARTICIPATION!!! PLEASE SEND A 5X5 PIECE OF YOUR WOOL AND \$4.00 BEFORE YOU START MAKING YOUR OUTFIT to verify it is at least 60% wool. Send sample to Dorothy Vale, State Director at 142 Carolyn Lane, Nicholasville, KY 40356.

President's Letter

Dear KSWPA Members:

Hope this letter finds you well this July. Now that we have all finally warmed up, it is time for a busy summer.

The 5th Annual Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival was held May 17-18, 2014 in Lexington, KY. There were 100 fiber artists, fiber producers and soap makers present. The festival has come such a long way in just 5 short years due to the dedication and hard work of so many volunteers and sponsors. Each year adds another great aspect to the festival, as so many people are educated on the versatility of sheep. Be sure to check out www.kentsheepandfiber.com to see details from the event.

It's not too early to mark your calendars for the 2014 Annual Producer Conference on October 25, 2014 at the Cave City Convention Center. Last year was a huge success and this year will be no different. We are already planning to have the cheese and soap making workshops again, as well as speakers on guardian animals, holistic veterinary medicine, how to save lambs and kids in distress, and a FAMACHA Training. More details on the meeting and registration will be available at www.kysheepandgoat.org.

Small Ruminant Profit School will be starting October 4, 2014. You don't want to miss this great opportunity. Although the program is designed for new producers, experience producers are welcome as well. Participants will receive great information on production basics, develop a step by step production schedule, receive resource materials, and beginning producers will receive personal mentors as well. Participants can also take part in the Herd Improvement Program from Kentucky State University. The Herd Improvement Program is a record keeping system that can give you a better look at the production capability of your herd and we all know that production is the key to success! Check out details and registration at www.kysheepandgoat.org.

Sincerely,

Warren Adcock,
KSWPA President



2014 KSWPA Board of Directors

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Jim Mansfield, Vice President
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Nicholasville, KY

Sara Evans, Secretary
Winchester, KY

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Scott VanSickle, Auburn, KY
Alex Leer, Pairs, KY
Kathy Meyer, Pairs, KY
Endre Fink, Winchester, KY

KY Derby Day Classic Winners!



Overall Champion Buck,
Moto Untouchable owned
by Michael West



Overall Champion Full
Blood Doe Sgr. Regal Vision
owned by Isaiah Perry



Jackpot Youth Wether Show
Champion Casey Simpson



Grand Champion Dairy
Goat, Snowcrest owned by
Jackie Liddington

KGPA - UPCOMING EVENTS - If you have a goat related event you would like listed please contact Denise Martin, martinmeadowfarms@yahoo.com.

Northern Kentucky Goat Producers Association Meeting - First Tuesday of every month 6:00pm
Kenton County Extension Office - 10990 Marshall Road

JULY

Date	Location / Details
July 11 th	Two Rivers District Show - Powderly, KY
July 17 th	Wilderness Trail District Goat Show - London, KY
July 19 th	Pennyrile District Lamb Show - Madisonville, KY
July 24-26 th	KY Jr. Livestock Expo - Bowling Green, KY

AUGUST

Date	Location / Details
August 15-16 th	KY State Fair Market Goat Show - KY Expo Center
August 18-19 th	KY State Fair ABGA Boer Goat Show

SEPTEMBER

Date	Location / Details
September 8 th	TN Valley Fair
September 18 th	Fort Harrod Goat Association Meeting - 6:30 pm Mercer County
September 25-29 th	National All Breed Goat Expo - Mclean County Fairgrounds Bloomington, IL

OCTOBER

Date	Location / Details
October 16 th	KSU Goat/Sheep Field Day - KSU Research Farm
October 25 th	KGPA and KSWPA Annual Producer Conference - Cave City Convention Center, Cave City, KY

Kentucky Proud Champion Buckles



Once again this year the KGPA wants to honor our state fair Kentucky Proud Champions! Compete for one of the 5 belt buckles available. See you at The 2014 Kentucky State Fair!

KGPA Youth Membership

Children can become KGPA members too! Add a child (or children) to a current adult KGPA membership for \$5 each. Or, a youth can become a member for \$20! Visit KGPA page at kysheepandgoat.org for more information.



Your \$30 membership provides:

- 4 issues of the *HoofPrint* Magazine plus the newly designed 2014 Sheep and Goat Management Calendar
- A unified voice for the goat industry on the state and national level
- Representation on important committees such as the Check-Off and the Animal Care Standards boards
- Support of various educational and youth activities
- Youth Membership forms can be found at kysheepandgoat.org/KGPA.html
- **And much, much more!**

Sign Up for your KGPA Membership Today! Membership Application

Visit www.kysheepandgoat.org to join today!

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please enclose a check for \$30 made out to KGPA and mail to:

Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office
P.O. Box 4709, Frankfort, KY 40604-4709.

ASK THE GOAT GURU

Dear Goat Guru,

I have a pen of yearling does and I noticed two of these does were chewing on their legs. Upon closer examination their skin from the top of the hoof to the knee or hock on all 4 legs was thickened with scabs on their skin. Some of the sores were bloody. The affected animals were sore when handling their legs. What could this possibly be and how can I give my goats some relief?

- Sincerely, Itchy Goat Owner

Dear Itchy Goat Owner,

What you describe sounds like a mite (Sarcoptic or Chorioptic mites) infestation on the lower extremities. It can appear at any time of the year but is more prevalent in the spring when environmental temperatures begin to warm up. If left untreated, severe secondary bacterial or fungal infections can occur within the affected skin. I have actually seen cases where the skin is so thickened and painful that the animal did not want to walk and had to be treated for about a month before it was back to normal.

Treatment involves administering insecticides both externally and internally. If the skin appears thickened with scabrous lesions, present then an antibiotic should be administered. I usually treat with injectable Ivermectin, external pour-on (Cylence), and give a dose of Excede antibiotic. The legs can also be treated with an antibiotic spray such as Vetericyn to treat open wounds. Some producers have sprayed the legs with Permethrin spray in hopes of killing the mites. Always work closely with your veterinarian when treating your goats. All of the products we must use to treat this condition are extra label and require a valid veterinary-patient-client relationship (VPCR).

- Sincerely, Goat Guru

Information provided by Dr. Beth Johnson, DVM, Kentucky Department of Agriculture Staff Veterinarian.

>> To ask the Goat Guru your question, email kygoatguru@yahoo.com.

President's Letter

Greetings Fellow Goat Producers,

Summer is here and I believe the goats and I have finally warmed up from the winter.

The Kentucky Proud Elite Breeders Sale was a resounding success this year. We had record sale prices for the excellent wether and commercial does our Kentucky proud producers offered. It was wonderful to see our animals fetch the prices they deserved. Congratulations Jessica and Beth Johnson of Keinan Boers for having the high selling market goat \$2300.00.

The Derby Day Classic was a fun filled day offering us a real opportunity to share our new youth program with several young people at the jack pot wether show. The ADGA and ABGA show were well attended. See pictures of our winners on these pages.

The opening day of the Kentucky State Fair, August 14th, will once again feature goat bacon during the Commissioner of Ag Breakfast. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to expose more people to the delicious benefits of goat meat.

Help is on the way!!! Small Ruminant Profit School is a three class course created for beginning goat and sheep producers. Participants in the program will not only receive sound information on many areas of goat production, they will also receive a personal mentor to help implement knowledge learned in the course. If you are new to the business of raising goats this is an excellent way to learn how to achieve success raising goats in Kentucky. Check the website www.kysheepandgoat.org for more information.

The KGPA is once again hosting a buck collection at the Marion County fairgrounds this fall. The fine folks of Biogenics will be on site to collect your bucks to ensure their genetics will be available long after the buck is gone. Space is limited so be sure to watch for updates on our website at www.kysheepandgoat.org.

Sincerely,

Denise Martin, *President Kentucky Goat Producers Association*



KGPA Board Positions!

If you are interested in being a board member of the KGPA, be sure to attend the 2014 Annual Producer Conference. We will be taking nominations for a variety of positions. Information on board seats and how to apply will be coming soon!

2014 KGPA Board of Directors

2014 KGPA Board Members

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270.307.2356

Beth Johnson, Vice-President
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859.583.5655

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- *Connie Gray*, Cadiz, KY, 270.350.1499
- *Shawn Harper*, Benton, KY, 270.705.7800
- *Dr. Debbie Reed*, Hopkinsville, 270.977.3143

- *Mary Ann Holmes*, Pleasureville, KY, 502.845.2224
- *Ray Graves*, Perryville, KY, 859.209.0690





Direct Marketing: *How to Market the Meat From Your Livestock*

by Dr. Gregg Rentfrow

The local food movement has become more and more popular over the last few years. Livestock farmers want to take advantage of the popularity, but may not know how to begin or how to sell meat legally. Here a few tips to marketing the meat from your farm's livestock.

1) The Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906 mandated that all meats intended for interstate commerce be inspected by the government. Basically, all meats have to be inspected by the USDA before retail sale. There are no exemptions for number of animals, size of the farm, or sales location; all meat and meat products have to be inspected by the USDA – Food Safety and Inspection Service to be sold legally. In addition, the farmer needs to communicate with the meat processor that he intends to sell at local farmer's markets and/or roadside stands. This will help the meat processor properly label the packages, including the inspection legend and possibly safe handling labels. The farmer should consider only selling at registered farmer's markets and/or roadside stands. State Departments of Agriculture have strict rules and

regulations that all entrepreneurs must follow in order to sell at farmer's markets and roadside stands, to further insure safety and legality. You can locate your state Department of Agriculture from <http://www.rma.usda.gov/other/stateag.html>. Those direct marketers not wanting to limit themselves to farmers markets, but also want to sell from the farm need to contact the local health department. Some counties may require additional legal paperwork. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

2) The direct marketer, regardless of what product they intend to sell, needs at least \$500,000 of liability insurance. Hopefully this will help protect your farm and your family.

3) Today's consumers have more disposable income to spend on a wider variety of foods than ever before and are willing to pay a premium for local meats. However, they may not be willing to pay a premium for less desirable cuts of meat, such as roasts or ground products. Direct marketers should consider selling bundles of meat that contain a few of the more desirable cuts such as a few roast and a few pounds of ground



KY Lamb selling lamb at the Lexington Farmer's Market.

product. For example, a \$25 bundle may contain two steaks/chops, two roasts, and 2 lbs of ground product. Bundles will help prevent a surplus of less desirable cuts of meat.

4) Packaging is often overlooked but could be what makes or breaks the success of a direct marketer. The consumer will expect the meat to taste as good today as when they put it in the freezer six months ago. Freezer burn is characterized by the formation of ice crystals, causing the

meat's surface to dehydrate. Freezer burned meat is not harmful to human health, but will have extreme off-flavors. Vacuum packaging will help maintain product quality in the freezer, as the tight seal will prevent air from reaching the surface. The extra costs of vacuum packaging will pay in the long run as your product is only as good as the last time it was consumed.

5) Direct marketing meat from your farm's livestock is an excellent way to promote the family farm along with highlighting the excellent products made in Kentucky. Please contact me (gregg.rentfrow@uky.edu) or the University of Kentucky's Food Systems Innovation Center (fsic@uky.edu) for help in promoting your farms products.

Dr. Gregg Rentfrow, Ph.D. is an Associate Extension Professor at the University of Kentucky. His marquee extension programs are the UK Meat Cutting School, the Food Systems Innovation Center, and the 4-H Country Ham Project. Dr. Rentfrow has over 25 years' experience in the meats industry.

The University of Kentucky Food Systems Innovation Center

The University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture Food Systems Innovation Center, is a multi-disciplinary program designed to aid Kentuckians in developing healthy, profitable, safe, and legal food products, as well as evaluate potential markets for these products. The UK Food Systems Innovation Center is managed by the Department of Animal and Food Sciences, with aid from the Department of Agricultural Economics, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, and Horticulture.

Family farms in Kentucky have increasingly looked for opportunities to grow products for processing and consumption within the state or to actually process products themselves. The FSIC provides cost effective options for local food processors and marketers working toward profitable commercialization of their products. This program includes technical support in the way of science-based food processing strategies and



technologies, food safety implementation, and consumer marketing research for product design and placement, as well as overall business improvement strategies. The University of Kentucky has assisted over 500 new family farm-based food producers in product development, safety, and marketing in the past year. The UK Food Systems Innovation Center seeks to provide services to a wider variety of processed products and to work with clients across the state. If you have any questions please consult the Food Systems Innovation Center at: www.uky.edu/fsic/ or fsic@uky.edu.



USDA inspected value added processing.

Complete label design using your logo or we can design one.

All natural products also available (no nitrite, nitrate, or msg).

Jerky and snack sticks available bagged or individually packaged and boxed in a point of purchase retail display box.

We'll even **use your favorite recipe** to create a unique flavored product of your very own.

Small enough to meet individual needs & large enough for high volume demands.



VARIETY OF PRODUCTS

**smoked roasted pulled bar-b-que • bacon
• smoked sausages • summer sausage
(regular, jalapeno, hot and spicy with
or without cheese) • skinless wieners •
jerky's & snack sticks**

**Ask us about having a fundraiser
for your organization!**



Webb's Butcher Block
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(270)863-1529 • webbsbb@bbtel.com



WOOL POOL

by Kim Caulfield

So, the weather is warm and your sheep are much happier now that they are shorn. Now, what happens to your wool?

The Tennessee Wool Pool is an annual event where sheep producers from across Tennessee and several other southeastern

states can gather together to market their wool. Another added benefit of the event is the chance to visit with other shepherds as the wool is processed and packed. The Tennessee Wool pool is a 100% volunteer effort processing 10,000 to 20,000 lbs of wool annually.

The process starts several months before the actual Wool Pool collection. Wool mills from across the country are contacted and asked to bid on the wool. Mills bid for the purchase of the entire Wool Pool. The winning bid goes to the highest bidder. The TSPA members are then contacted and given the current prices that will be paid per pound of wool brought to the Wool Pool.

When wool is brought to the pool, it is first unloaded and weighed. A grader inspects each bag. The grader then collects a couple of samples from each bag to evaluate the length, strength, cleanliness, and fiber diameter. Then a commercial grade is assigned. If the wool is from white faced sheep it may be graded as White Faced Clear, the top grade of wool. Fleeces from black faced sheep, such as Suffolks and Hampshires, sometimes have a few black fibers around their edges. Still they have wonderfully springy fleeces that are valued for a variety of uses. These fleeces get the grade of Black Faced Clear. Fleeces that have more hay, burrs, dirt, or other contamination are classed as Heavy or Light Burr. These will require extra processing to be used, so the mills pay a lower price. Bags with ANY colored fleece are classified as Black. In the wool industry, "Black" is a generic term. It simply means

"not white." Since it is not possible to dye a gray fleece canary yellow, it has more restricted uses. Even if a mill wants a dark color, dyeing natural colored fleeces is not as predictable as dyeing white wool. Since even a few black fibers can cause problems in a batch of white wool, many mills will not process black wool. The mills that do run colored wool often wait until they have accumulated a large amount so that they can run it all at once, before doing an extra thorough cleaning down of all their equipment. This is why the commercial price for black wool is much lower than for any grade of white wool. It is also why a single black fleece in a bag of white wool will require that the entire bag be graded as Black.

Once the wool is graded, it is packed in heavy bales. The TSPA has two hydraulic balers used to stuff and pack the wool into large wool packs and then label them according to grade and weight. The wool packs, which usually weigh close to four hundred pounds, are loaded on trucks and hauled to the mill. Wool packs are attractive to several wool mills because they are easily loaded onto trucks via forklifts and more wool can be loaded onto a truck if it is compressed rather than in floppy lightweight wool bags.

After arriving at the wool mill, the first step in processing wool is scouring. The wool must be thoroughly washed to remove all the lanolin, wax, and dirt. The wool loses a good deal of weight in scouring. Mills generally prefer to buy high yielding fleeces, so they will have as much clean wool as possible.



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Processing wool at the mill.

The scoured wool is put through a picker. It is laid on a moving belt and fed past a rotating drum covered with loosely set, sharp teeth. These tease the locks open and throw the fluffed wool out the back of the machine.

The picked wool is then fed through a carder. This is a big machine with a series of drums covered in densely set, fine teeth

that resemble those of a dog brush. The drums turn very fast. If the wool is clean and strong, the teeth brush the locks apart and align the fibers. If the wool is weak, it may tear in carding, causing lumps or boils. When it comes out of the carder, the wool is a soft, fluffy, thick rope. This is called sliver in the commercial industry, although hand spinners call it roving. Following the carding, the wool is put through a machine called a pin drafter to further align the fibers.

Spinning machines in commercial mills are huge. They usually spin hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of threads at one time. They can be adjusted to control the thickness and twist of the yarn they spin. Often, two or more spun threads are twisted backwards together. This process, called plying, makes a yarn heavier, stronger, and more even.

Most commercial mills dye yarn. For producing large batches of solid colors, this is usually easiest. There are some color effects, blends of different colors, that require wool to be dyed after scouring. Colors are then blended during carding or pin drafting.

The basic steps are the same, whether

the goal is to produce fine thread to go into expensive suits, or to make soft yarns to sell to hand knitters. There are some variations in the equipment used, but the basic sequence of scouring, picking, carding, and spinning is almost universal. Even hand spinners tend to follow the same steps, just on a smaller scale. (More about hand spinning next time.)

Sometimes it helps us to know a little about how our wool is processed. It may help us to produce better quality fleeces, and earn higher prices. Besides, these days most Americans live in cities and have little idea of where food and clothing come from. When you see somebody putting on wool socks, or snuggling in a wool scarf, remember that this might be your wool. Tell them the story of how their warm garments were made and where wool comes from. They'll be impressed, and you'll be proud.

Kim Caulfield is a passionate wool lover. She is equally fascinated by hand spinning and the commercial wool industry. She runs a cottage industry wool processing mill, and she and her mother, Jane, raise a flock of around 150 Romneys, Cotswolds, and Shetlands near Cornersville, TN.

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Identifying genetically-superior bucks



by Susan Schoenian

A pasture-based meat goat performance test was initiated at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC) in Keedysville, Maryland in 2006. The test is sponsored by University of Maryland Extension (UME). Since 2006, 478 bucks have been tested.

The purpose of the test is to evaluate the post-weaning performance of male goats consuming a pasture-only diet with natural exposure to gastro-intestinal parasites, primarily *Haemoncus contortus* (the barber pole worm). The test provides an opportunity to evaluate the performance of meat goats under typical Mid-Atlantic production conditions.

Each year, male goats, of any breed or breed cross, are tested at the Western Maryland facility. While on test, the goats are evaluated for growth performance, parasite resistance (FEC) and parasite resilience (FAM), and carcass merit.

The test bucks are managed as a single group on pasture from early-June until mid-September. They do not receive any supplemental feed, other than free choice minerals. Though sometimes, drought conditions have necessitated the feeding of

nutritional tubs and/or grass hay.

The pasture system consists of six, two-acre paddocks containing various warm and cool season grasses and forbs. The goats always have access to a central laneway containing port-a-hut shelters, mineral feeders, water, a treatment pen, and a handling system. The goats are handled every 14 days to determine body weights, FAMACHA®, body condition, coat condition, dag and fecal consistency scores. Low stress livestock handling techniques are emphasized (no handling by the horns). Individual fecal samples are collected every 14 days. Pooled samples are collected every 28 days for larvae ID.

Toward the end of the test period, the goats are scanned to determine carcass characteristics. They are evaluated for structural correctness and reproductive soundness and given a frame score and USDA grade.

Bucks meeting Gold, Silver, or Bronze standards of performance for growth, parasite resistance, and parasite resilience and minimum standards for structural correctness and reproductive soundness are eligible to sell for breeding. Goats that do not qualify for the sale are returned to

their owners or sold at a sale barn (for meat).

For two years, some of the bucks were harvested to collect carcass data and characterize the carcasses from pasture-fed meat goats. Starting in 2011, the research center began comparing the performance and carcass characteristics of pen vs. pasture-fed goats.

For more information about the test, visit the blog at <http://mdgoattest.blogspot.com>. All pertinent documents can be downloaded from the blog.

Susan Schoenian, is a Sheep and Goat specialist at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center. She has been with University of Maryland Extension since 1988. Previously, she served as a Regional Farm Management Specialist (Eastern Shore region) and county agricultural agent in Wicomico County. Susan holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Animal Science from Virginia Tech and Montana State University, respectively. Susan lives on a small sheep farm (called **The Baalands**) in Clear Spring, Maryland. She shares her home with her cat, Max, and dog, Zak.

BLUEGRASS INVITATIONAL PREMIER BUCK & DOE SALE

The top performing bucks from the 2014 Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test will be sold in Frankfort, Kentucky on September 5-6 at Lakeview Park. The sale will feature speakers Ken Andries Ph.D., of Kentucky State University, Susan Schoenian of the University of Maryland, and Richard Browning Ph.D. of Middle Tennessee University. The sale will also include approximately 65 does from the top performance testing herds in the country.

According to Susan Schoenian, the 2014 Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test will consist of two phases. The first six weeks will consist of a parasite challenge where the goats will graze paddocks of cool season grasses that have been precontaminated with worm larvae. The second phase will be a growth challenge in which the goats will graze annual pastures and have access to quality hay. The goats will also receive a copper

wire bolus during this phase of the test. At the end of the test, the top performing goats will be determined by average daily gain, parasite resistance, and parasite resilience.

Goat producers recognize the value of on the farm performance data to determine their best producing animals, however this data cannot be used to accurately compare animals from different farms. Centralized buck testing, like the one performed at Maryland, provides a valid comparison of animals from various farms in an effort to determine goats with the performance characteristics that are valuable for herd improvement, such as average daily weight gain and parasite resistance.

For more information regarding the Bluegrass Performance Invitational Premier Buck and Doe sale, visit the website



Bluegrassperformanceinvitational.com., or contact Jarred Dennison at 502-875-8857.

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Are Hair Sheep Meat Sheep?

A Project to Determine if Carcass Composition is Influenced by Hair Sheep Breeding

by Dr. Debra K. Aaron, University of Kentucky

Sheep are generally considered multi-purpose animals, producing meat, wool and milk. However, most sheep breeds are best suited to only one purpose—either meat or wool or milk—and are classified accordingly: Meat breeds, wool breeds, dairy breeds. Meat breeds are often further categorized as either sire breeds (for example, Hampshire) or maternal breeds (for example, Polypay). Sometimes breeds are referred to as general or dual purpose, having adequate amounts of muscling along with acceptable maternal characteristics. Then we speak of hair breeds (for example, Katahdin, Dorper/White Dorper). Classified according to purpose or marketable commodity, hair sheep must be meat sheep. But, how does their carcass merit compare with traditional wool meat breeds?

About the Project

Producer interest in hair sheep breeds has increased dramatically over the last 15 years. Hair sheep numbers have risen accordingly. The latest NAHMS Sheep Study (USDA, May 2012) reported that approximately 22% of all sheep operations in the U.S. were using hair breeds. In 2013, based on number of registrations by purebred associations (The Banner, March 2014), two composite (or improved) hair breeds were among the five most popular sheep breeds in the U.S. For the first time ever, a hair breed, the **Katahdin**, ranked first in popularity. It was followed closely by Hampshire (2nd), Suffolk (3rd), **Dorper/White Dorper** (the other hair breed, 4th) and Dorset (5th).

There are several reasons behind the increased use of these two composite hair breeds in U.S. production systems.



The first, and most obvious reason, is that hair sheep do not have to be sheared, naturally shedding coats (mixtures of hair and wool fibers) in late spring and summer. This is a selling point for many producers, given increased shearing costs and decreased prices for the medium wools that are characteristic of most U.S. meat breeds. Second, these composite hair breeds are more resistant or tolerant to internal parasites (in particular, *Haemonchus contortus*) than most wool sheep breeds, giving them a reputation as being “easy care” sheep. This is a big advantage in most producers’ minds because anthelmintic resistance continues to build and drenching with traditional dewormers is becoming less and less effective. Third, these hair breeds are generally recognized for high lamb and ewe vigor. In addition, they are noted for their efficient use of forage. All these reasons are valid, but what about lamb growth? Muscling? Carcass merit? After all, the one and only commodity being produced and marketed is meat. So, how do these composite hair breeds measure up to traditional U.S. meat

breeds when it comes to the production of lean lamb? **Is carcass composition influenced by hair sheep breeding?**

This was one of the primary questions of interest to sheep researchers at the University of Kentucky in 2002 when Polypay ewes were exposed to White Dorper rams in the first phase of a long-term breeding project designed to grade-up to the White Dorper breed. The Polypay, a traditional white-faced, medium-sized, wool breed, was chosen as the foundation because of its outstanding maternal characteristics and ability to produce lambs with good growth and carcass quality. The White Dorper was chosen as the hair breed to grade up to because of its reputation for heavy muscling and high carcass quality. The White Dorper is not parasite resistant, but does have increased tolerance to parasites as compared to wool breeds. Its growth rate, while slower than traditional fast-growing meat breeds, like the Hampshire, is acceptable and reported to be faster than other hair sheep breeds. However, because the White Dorper is an early maturing breed, lambs

are expected to finish at lighter weights than traditional wool meat breeds.

Getting Started

In the fall of 2002, a foundation flock of Polypay ewes was mated to Polypay and White Dorper rams, in equal numbers, to produce Polypay and White Dorper x Polypay offspring. Selected F_1 (White Dorper x Polpay) ewe lambs subsequently entered the flock and were exposed to White Dorper rams. Contemporary Polypay ewe lambs and foundation Polypay ewes, retained on the basis of productivity, were mated to Polypay and White Dorper rams. This grading up mating scheme continued for 10 years, producing Polypay (PP), 1/2 White Dorper x 1/2 Polypay (1/2 WD), 3/4 White Dorper x 1/4 Polypay (3/4 WD), 7/8 White Dorper x 1/8 Polypay (7/8 WD) and 15/16 or higher White Dorper (WD) lambs. Producing contemporary lambs of each genetic type enabled researchers to measure changes in production traits as breed composition evolved from Polypay to White Dorper.

Producers grading up to the White Dorper would not continue to produce intermediate crosses each year. Instead, they would mate White Dorper rams to Polypay ewes and their crossbred female offspring generation after generation until the flock consisted of “purebred” White Dorpers.

This portion of the project compared carcass characteristics of a random sample of wether lambs produced from 2003 through 2010. Overall, carcasses were harvested from 233 lambs varying in the percentage of White Dorper breeding from zero to over 93.75% (PP: 50; 1/2 WD: 50; 3/4 WD: 50; 7/8 WD: 35; WD: 48).

Collecting the Data

Lambs were born in April each year, creep fed on pasture and weaned at an average age of 70 days. After weaning, lambs were managed on pasture under typical Kentucky conditions and supplemented with grain at 2 to 3% body weight. As lambs reached a live target weight of 120 lb, they were sent to the University of Kentucky Abattoir where they were weighed and carcasses harvested following normal industry practices. Carcasses were weighed prior

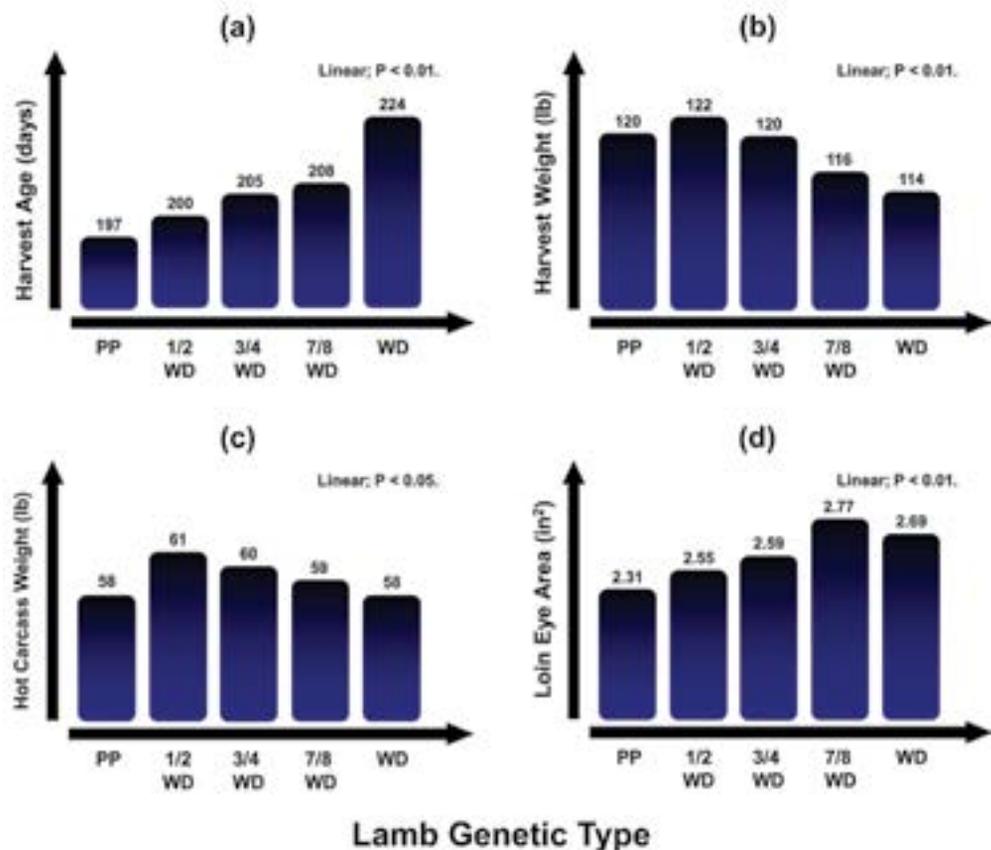


Figure 1. Averages for harvest age (a), harvest weight (b), hot carcass weight (c) and loin eye area (d) by lamb genetic type (PP = Polypay, WD = White Dorper).

to chilling. Dressing percentage was calculated by dividing hot carcass weight by live harvest weight. Carcasses were chilled for 24 hr and ribbed between the 12th and 13th ribs before carcass measurements were taken. All carcass measurements were made by University of Kentucky Abattoir personnel. Fat thickness was measured between the 12th and 13th ribs over the center of the *longissimus dorsi* (loin eye). Body wall thickness was measured across the lean, bone and fat of the lower rib, approximately 5 inches off the carcass midline. Loin eye area was measured at the 12th rib. Yield grades were assigned according to USDA standards. Wholesale cuts were weighed and the percentage of boneless, closely trimmed retail cuts was estimated from carcass weight, fat thickness, body wall thickness and loin eye area.

Traits analyzed statistically included age at harvest, harvest (or final) weight, hot carcass weight, dressing percentage, fat thickness, body wall thickness, loin eye area, wholesale cut weights, yield grade and estimated percentage of boneless, closely trimmed retail cuts. All carcass composition traits were statistically adjusted so comparisons

would be based on carcasses of similar weight. Differences and trends were determined to be statistically significant if the probability level was either 1% or 5%. This simply means that, for this project, the risk of an observed difference or trend being due to chance, and not real, was either 1 or 5%.

The Results

At Harvest

Average age at harvest is shown in **Figure 1(a)** for PP, 1/2 WD, 3/4 WD, 7/8 WD and WD lambs. PP lambs were the first (197 days) to reach the live target weight of 120 lb. After that, as percentage White Dorper breeding increased from 50% (1/2 WD) to over 93.75% (WD), average age at harvest increased significantly in straight line fashion. WD lambs were the oldest at harvest. Directly comparing “purebreds,” WD were significantly older than PP (224 versus 197 days).

Trend in harvest weights is illustrated in **Figure 1(b)**. On the average, PP, 1/2 WD and 3/4 WD met the live target weight. Of these lambs, 1/2 WD slightly exceeded the target weight, weighing 122 lb when slaughtered. As percentage White

Genetically Speaking continues on pg. 20

Dorper breeding increased, average harvest weights decreased significantly in straight line fashion. Lambs of 87.5% and higher White Dorper breeding had not met the target weight by the time of slaughter. These results indicate White Dorper lambs should be slaughtered earlier at lighter weights. This is not surprising given that the White Dorper is reported to be an early maturing breed. Directly comparing **WD** and **PP**, **WD** lambs were lighter but older than **PP** lambs (114 lb at 224 days *versus* 120 lb at 197 days). Keeping **WD** lambs on feed the additional 27 days, as compared to **PP**, was an inefficient use of feed resources and did not promote the additional gain necessary to meet the 120-lb live target weight.

Hot carcass weights [Figure 1(c)] followed the same general pattern as harvest weights, but there was less variation among lamb genetic types. Heaviest carcasses were produced by 1/2 **WD** with weights decreasing as percentage White Dorper breeding increased. Both **PP** and **WD** carcasses weighed 58 lb. Representative carcasses are shown in Figure 2. When hot carcass weights [Figure 1(c) pg. 19] were divided by harvest weights [Figure 1(b) pg. 19], the resulting dressing percentages were 49.2, 50.0, 50.0, 50.9 and 50.9%, going from one “purebred” to the other (**PP** to **WD**). The slightly lower dressing percentage for **PP** may be explained by the difference between lambs covered in all wool to mostly hair as the percentage of White Dorper breeding increased.

Carcass Evaluation

Carcasses were further evaluated to determine differences in composition. Average loin eye area increased significantly in straight line fashion [Figure 1(d) pg. 19] as percentage White Dorper breeding increased from zero (**PP**) to over 93.75% (**WD**). On the average, **PP** had the smallest loin eyes (2.31 in²). In comparison, **WD** which had loins significantly larger loin eye (2.69 in²). On the average, **PP** had the smallest loin eye (2.31 in²). In comparison, **WD** had a significantly larger loin eyes (2.60 in²). Loin eye area is an objective measure of muscling and differences in loin eye areas reflect differences in muscling within the carcass. Therefore, these results add evidence to reports that White Dorpers are a muscular, carcass breed.

Average weights for the four major wholesale cuts (loin, rack, leg and shoulder) are shown in Table 1. The highest priced wholesale cut is the loin. Average loin weights increased linearly as percentage White Dorper breeding increased. When comparing the two purebreds, there was a significant difference in favor of **WD**, which had a loin 0.7 lb heavier than that of **PP**. Similar results were seen for the second highest wholesale cut, the rack. Again, weights increased linearly; on the average, **WD** had racks significantly heavier than that of **PP** (4.7 vs 4.4 lb). Interestingly, leg weights did not differ significantly across lamb genetic type, averaging 16.4 lb overall. Based on visual appraisal of live lambs, it was expected that **WD** would have a heavier leg than **PP**. Although this was not the case, there appeared to be a difference in leg shape between the **WD** and **PP** when carcasses were visually appraised. This was purely subjective, however, and not analyzed statistically. Average shoulder weights followed a different pattern to the other wholesale cuts. As percentage of White Dorper breeding increased, shoulder weights significantly decreased in straight line fashion, with **PP** having the heaviest shoulder (13.3 lb) and



Figure 2. Representative carcasses (left to right) of Polypay, White Dorper and 1/2 White Dorper lambs; corresponding harvest and carcass weights are 130 and 61, 134 and 63, and 135 and 65 lb.

Lamb Genetic Type	No.	Wholesale Cut			
		Loin ^{1,2}	Rack ¹	Leg	Shoulder ¹
PP	50	5.2	4.4	16.3	13.3
1/2 WD	50	5.9	4.5	16.6	12.7
3/4 WD	50	6.2	4.9	16.5	12.4
7/8 WD	35	6.3	4.8	16.4	12.5
WD	48	5.9	4.7	16.4	12.3

¹Linear, P < 0.01; ²Quadratic, P < 0.01.

Table 1. Average wholesale cut weights (lb) by lamb genetic type (PP = Polypay, WD = White Dorper).

WD the lightest (12.3 lb). This trend fit visual observations made on the live animals.

Yield-related traits (fat thickness, yield grade, body wall thickness and estimated percentage of boneless, closely trimmed retail cuts) are summarized in **Table 2**. Fat thickness, measured between the 12th and 13th ribs, increased in straight line fashion as percentage of White Dorper breeding increased, with **PP** and **1/2 WD** lambs having the least back fat and **3/4 WD**, **7/8 WD**, and **WD** having the most. Trying to take **WD** to the same live target weight resulted in them putting on more finish than **PP**. Yield grades (YG 1 = highest expected yield; YG 5 = lowest expected yield) reflect differences in fat thickness. This is logical because fat thickness is the measure used to assign yield grades. Body wall thickness, another measure of fatness or finish, follows the same pattern as rib fat measurements and yield grades. The final measure, estimated percentage of boneless, closely trimmed retailed cuts, unlike the other indicators of lean yield, showed no significant trend, averaging 47.9% across lamb genetic types.

Lamb Genetic Type	No.	Trait			
		Fat Thickness (in) ^{L,Q}	Yield Grade ^{L,Q}	Body Wall Thickness (in) ^L	Percent Boneless Retail Cuts (%)
PP	50	0.18	2.2	0.60	47.5
1/2 WD	50	0.18	2.3	0.59	48.1
3/4 WD	50	0.22	2.6	0.64	47.8
7/8 WD	35	0.24	2.8	0.65	48.1
WD	48	0.22	2.4	0.71	47.9

^LLinear, P < 0.01; ^QQuadratic, P < 0.01.

Table 2. Averages for yield-related traits by lamb genetic type (PP = Polypay, WD = White Dorper).

Are Hair Sheep Meat Sheep?

Results of this project show carcass composition is influenced by hair sheep breeding. In general, as percentage White Dorper breeding increased from zero (Polypay) to over 93.75% (White Dorper), measures associated with lean meat production showed favorable changes (for example, larger loin eye muscles, heavier loins and racks). When directly compared to Polypay lambs, White Dorper lambs were older and lighter at harvest. However, at similar carcass weights, White Dorper lambs were meatier and had slightly more finish. Overall, these results show that White Dorper lambs do produce acceptable carcasses but suggest they should be harvested at younger ages than Polypay lambs and at weights less than 120 lb in order to maximize efficiency of production. Finally, our question was: **Are hair sheep meat sheep?** Results from this project show the answer is **Yes**, at least when White Dorper is the hair breed in question.

Dr. Debra K. Aaron, PhD, professor in the UK Dept. of Animal Sciences, teaches animal science and genetics. Her research interests are in sheep and genetic breeding.

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Ewes' Vacation Time Ends: Meet the Rams

by Donald G. Ely,
University of Kentucky

Ewes typically work 7 to 9 months of the year (5 months gestation and 2 to 4 months lactation). The rest of the time is spent on vacation. To begin their vacation, their body condition and other external characteristics may indicate they should be checked for stomach worms. Use the FAMACHA system for this check. Deworm younger ewes that have a score of 4 or 5. Those with a 3 are “on the bubble”. Older ewes with 4 or 5 scores should probably be culled. The beginning of the vacation period is a good time to trim feet and run ewes through a 10% zinc sulfate foot bath. Once milk production has ceased and udders have involuted, each needs to be palpated to identify any variations from soft, pliable, udders that are free from lumps. Consider culling those with abnormal udders.

The most important factor to consider when managing ewes on vacation is body condition; ewes should not become too fat. At lamb removal, healthy ewes should have a body condition score (BCS) of 1.5 to 2.0. They should retain this score until they come off vacation to begin the next nutritional flushing/breeding period. To accomplish this, shepherds must continually monitor internal parasite loads via FAMACHA, prevent foot problems and continually supply them with a complete mineral and cool, clean water. Control pasture forage intake by adjusting stocking rates and rotationally grazing pastures.

In contrast to ewes, rams may only work 1 to 2 months of the year. Many consider rams the most important members of the flock because they contribute half the flock's genetics. However, they are often the most neglected members of the flock.

Puberty

Ram lambs typically reach sexual maturity (puberty) between 6 and 8

months of age, but onset of puberty may be delayed by low planes of nutrition. More prolific and hair breeds reach puberty earlier than other breeds and meat-type breeds reach puberty earlier than wool-type breeds.

Sperm Production

It usually takes 6 to 7 weeks for sperm cells to reach maturity in rams. These cells are stored in the epididymis of the testicle, so palpation for a large, firm epididymis in a relatively large testicle is indicative of a large reservoir of sperm cells. Testicle size and sperm production are responsive to nutrition to the point that improving nutritional intake of rams during a 2-month period can double testicle size and sperm production. Testicle size, sperm production, and mating capacity of rams raised in temperate climates may vary in different seasons of the year, the highest during the fall and lowest in the spring. Rambouillet and Merino rams are the least seasonal in their breeding behavior, followed by the Polypay and Romanov.

Table 1. Accepted scrotal circumference measurements for rams.^a

Acceptance	Lambs, 8 to 14 mo.		Mature rams, > 14 mo.	
	cm	in	cm	in
Questionable	< 30	< 11.8	< 32	< 12.6
Satisfactory	30 to 36	11.8 to 14.2	32 to 40	12.6 to 15.7
Exceptional	> 36	14.2	> 40	> 15.7

^a One inch = 2.54 centimeters

The most seasonal are meat-type breeds (Hampshire, Suffolk, Southdown).

Mating

Ewes in heat may seek out the rams. They sniff, chase, and follow rams around. Rams may respond to urination of ewes by sniffing, extending the ewes' back legs, and curling their lips. If the females are receptive, they will stand for mating. Rams may mate with the same ewe more than once and may have a tendency to select older ewes over younger ones. In large flocks, multi-sire matings are usually necessary to get all the ewes bred. If more than one ram is used per flock, the shepherd should recognize that older rams usually dominate younger ones and may even prevent them from mating. Rams may fight. Also, it will be hard to identify infertile rams in multi-sire matings. Although these problems can be avoided in single-sire matings, low conception rates can be encountered especially if a ram with a reduced fertility or libido (sex drive) is used. Some breeds show libido continuously after they reach puberty while others may show reduced libido in the nonbreeding season (spring). Rams that are too thin or too fat lack libido. Age and lameness can also reduce libido and some rams have inherently low libido. The best way for producers to evaluate mating behavior is probably by observing breeding performance when rams are exposed to ewes. Use of a ram harness with paint or marking crayon that produces raddle marks can indicate breeding activity. Color of the paint or marking crayon should be changed every 15 days. If these rams fail to mark ewes, they may lack libido. On the other hand, if a high percentage of ewes re-mark after the first 16 to 17 days, this indicates mating occurred, but ewes didn't conceive because the rams were sterile.

Breeding Soundness Exam

Preparing rams for a breeding season should begin at least 2 to 4 months before the season is to begin. Rams should be fed a balanced diet that will keep them from getting too fat or too thin. Keep them as cool as possible in shaded areas or open-sided barns and make sure they don't get hurt fighting with other rams. Then, conduct a breeding soundness exam (BSE) to evaluate potential ability of rams to impregnate a given number of ewes within a defined breeding (mating) period. Examine eyes, legs, gait, teeth, body temperature, and body condition. Depression, pink eye, foot rot, lameness, sore mouth, ring worm, or presence of other contagious diseases can render rams either unuseable or questionable for breeding. A BCS of 1 to 2 is questionable as is a 5. A BCS of 3 or 4 is satisfactory. Examine the prepuce, penis, and scrotal contents. Cryptorchidism, hernias, epididymitis, scrotal abscesses, and pizzle rot render rams unsatisfactory for breeding.

Testicles and epididymis will normally be firm (turgid) during the normal breeding season (fall), without any exposure to ewes. If not, the rams are probably not useable. However, flaccid (non-turgid) testicles are normal in the off-breeding

season (spring) or if rams have been with ewes for a week or so. Rams with any lesions, lumps, hard or soft spots, swellings, atrophy, or any differences in size of testicles should not be used. Scrotal circumference (width of the testicles at their widest point) is a good indicator of rams' breeding abilities. Sperm production is greatest in rams with the largest scrotal circumference, although it may vary with season of the year. Largest circumference and greatest sperm production invariably occurs during the fall of the year. Table 1 shows the accepted scrotal circumference measurements for rams. If rams are

News to Ewes continues on pg. 24

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satisfactory or exceptional, the rest of the BSE may be unnecessary. If questionable, continue with the rest of the BSE, which is semen evaluation. Semen samples are usually collected by a veterinarian and evaluated under a microscope for sperm mobility, morphology, and white blood cells. White blood cells in the semen indicate an infection, such as epididymitis.

Ram Management

Shear, treat for internal parasites (if necessary), and trim rams' feet 2 to 4 weeks before the breeding season begins. Also, feed the breeding season diet, especially the concentrate portion, for a month before the season begins. Rams' BCS should be 3 to 4 when the breeding season begins. The number of ewes a ram can successfully cover during a 6- to 7-week breeding season is shown in Table 2. The ram lambs in Table 2 should be 7 to 8 months old and should weigh 50 to 60% of their expected mature weights.

Teaser Rams

Teaser rams have been vasectomized. They can ejaculate seminal fluid, but no viable sperm cells. They secrete testosterone like "intact" rams. Teaser rams are typically introduced to ewes 14 days before the breeding season is to begin. They are used to produce the "ram effect", which stimulates anestrus (noncycling) ewes to ovulate. Rams (and teasers) produce pheromone, the smell of which can stimulate the onset of estrus (heat) outside the normal fall breeding season. This effect can also synchronize estrus. For this to be most effective, ewes and rams need to be separated by at least 0.5 mile for a month before introduction of teasers.

Teasers appear to stimulate ewes to

Table 2. Ram to Ewe Ratios during a 6- to 7- Week Breeding Season ^a

Ram	Number of Ewes
Mature	35 to 50
Lamb	15 to 30
Synchronized Matings	5 to 10

^a <http://www.sheep101.info/201/ramrepro.html>.

ovulate 3 to 4 days after introduction. This first ovulation will be in a "silent" heat, which cannot be detected by either teasers or fertile rams. Two normal estrus peaks follow the silent heat. Replacing teasers with fertile rams on day 14 will allow fertile rams to catch some ewes cycling around 4 days later. Another group of ewes should cycle around day 11 after introduction of fertile rams. Ewes that do not conceive at either of these times may return to estrus (heat) 16 to 17 days later. Theoretically, 60 to 70% of the ewes will conceive at the first estrus. Sixty to seventy percent of the remaining ewes should conceive on the second estrus. This means that at least 10% of the ewes may conceive later in the breeding season or may not conceive at all. Use of teasers instead of fertile rams for the first 14 days tends to synchronize estrus and, thus, the lambing season. Fertile rams will produce the same "ram effect", but some ewes may conceive during the initial 14-day period. These occurrences may eliminate some of the subsequent lambing synchrony.

The "ram effect" is not as effective with ewe lambs. It is most effective during the transition period when mature ewes have not begun to cycle, but are almost ready. This would apply to "seasonal breeders" with a breeding season from August 15 to October 1 and a

lambing season in January and February. The "ram effect" may not apply to ewes bred from November 15 to December 7 to produce April lambs because all breeds of ewes should be cycling during this period. The breeding season is only 3 weeks long in this scenario, so ewes tend to synchronize themselves. On the contrary, "seasonal breeders" to be bred "out-of-season" (in April or May) sometimes respond to teasers. Granted, these ewes are far away from their normal breeding season, but as many as 30% may respond to the "ram effect". Still, this response may vary from year to year because of environmental differences from one year to another.

Summary

Sheep producers expect ewes coming off vacation to conceive early in the breeding season, so the subsequent lambing season will be short. Even though ewes may be ready, rams may ultimately be responsible for a successful breeding season. Introducing teasers to a group of anestrus ewes for 14 days may stimulate silent heats, but no pregnancies. The "ram effect" occurs when fertile rams replace teasers. Rams that successfully passed a BSE, have a BSC of 3 to 4, and have been separated some distance from ewes for at least one month can produce synchronized conception rates. This effect is most pronounced with ewes that are not cycling, but are almost ready (August/September breeding). Thirty percent of seasonal breeders bred out-of-season may respond to this "ram effect". Year to year success is dependent on uncontrollable yearly environmental conditions. 🐏

Dr. Donald G. Ely, professor in the Department of Animal & Food Sciences at the University of Kentucky



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UTILIZING TEASER BUCKS

by Dr. Beth Johnson

In the goat world, it is common to utilize artificial insemination and hand breeding. Both of these require effective methods of heat detection. Why would one want to maintain an infertile buck for use in detecting does in heat and stimulating does to cycle stronger and earlier than normal? The answer is simple, to achieve better reproductive rates and successes in heat detection.

Many embryo transfer programs also utilize a teaser buck to stimulate the recipient does after the vaginal cidrs are removed. This appears to trigger better reproductive rates and receptiveness to the transferred embryo.

How is a teaser buck created? There are several ways to produce teasers. The easiest way is to take a young buck around 5 months to a year of age and perform a bilateral vasectomy on it. This is a surgical technique performed by veterinarians. Other ways that have

been utilized involve castrating a buck at an older age (after he knew what being a male was all about) or administering testosterone to wethers to stimulate buck behavior. I have even heard of castrating a cryptorchid male which had one testicle retained in the abdomen and utilizing them as teasers. The testicle that is retained will continue to produce hormones and sperm but due to the animals body temperature all of the sperm is killed. One important reminder is to have your teaser buck semen checked prior to use on an annual basis just to be sure there are no viable sperm in the ejaculate. I have experienced those oops! Another hint is to use a buck with plenty of libido such as a Pygmy, Kiko or Dairy breed and to keep them in good but lean body condition.

With regards to the teaser buck, be sure he is healthy with no evidence of reproductive diseases such as chlamydia, coxiella (Q-fever), toxoplasmosis and does not appear to have a urinary tract

infection or abnormal discharge present in the sheath area. Most of these can be detected by a good physical examination and a thorough Breeding Soundness Exam performed by your veterinarian.

I have also heard of using a teaser buck to synchronize does prior to breeding early in the breeding season. If the teaser is placed into a pen of does for this purpose, try to do it at least 2-3 weeks prior to the planned breeding date. By doing this, all of the exposed does have had time to cycle at least once prior to breeding. This should increase conception rates.

Dr. Beth Johnson is a Staff Veterinarian in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and has 40 years of experience raising and treating small ruminants. Her family farm is in Parksville, KY where she raises Gelbvieh cattle and Boer goats.



Bellwether

by Nicole Roca

The practice of using bells on our livestock has become more whimsical over the years, but the tradition of putting bells on animals can be traced back as far as 5,000 years ago in Africa. Since then, bells have been used on many animals and by countries all over the world to serve as a means of location and protection.

For herds of goats and sheep in the wide open plains of South America or the equally vast savannahs of Africa, bells help shepherds keep track of their flocks. And imagine being a shepherd in the foggy hills of Great Britain, the Pyrenees mountains or the forests of Europe---bells are an essential tool to locate flocks. The word 'Bellwether' is defined by Webster's dictionary as someone or something that leads others or shows what will happen in the future. Shepherds choose the most trusted, confident wether in a herd of goats or sheep to wear the bell as it travels calmly and follows the shepherds' lead. Thus,

the rest of the herd easily follows the bellwether. In some herds, the shepherd may choose to put a bell on several of such sturdy and reliable animals. A different type or size of bell is put on several animals and the shepherd can tell by the different bell tones where or who is leading the herd. On a small farm operation, the shepherd may put a bell on their ram or buck as it's comforting to hear that audible bell and know that they are safely enclosed in their quarters.

Another function of putting bells on sheep and goats is that it gives them some protection from predators. The flocks that live out in the fields, plains and woods in the U.S. share those areas with everything from feral dogs to coyotes, bobcats, wolves and boars. The sound of the bell on an animal in a flock is *not* a natural sound to predators and alerts them to 'something being off'. The sound of bells could deter predators from getting any closer and hurting our animals.

When thinking about using bells in a herd, remember these tips:



Photos courtesy Roca © 2014

"The remains of the oldest bells were made from wood. The strongest bells over time have been made from brass or heavy metal. Bells can be made from any metal, horn or wood. Clappers are made from metal, horn, wood, glass, bone or plastic, depending on the size of the bell and the tone desired."

1. The collar will take more getting used to than the sound of the bell. The collars are generally made from leather or wood, although the practical vinyl material of today's time makes a sturdy choice also.
2. The size of the bell is also an important consideration as it should be suitable to the size of the animal. The bell is meant to be heavy enough to hang down from the animal's neck, so the sound it makes when the animal is grazing is low and soft. If the animal were to be spooked or chased by a predator, the sound is loud and clanging—an alarm alerting the shepherd to danger.
3. Generally, the larger the bell, the deeper the tone-- the smaller the bell, the higher the tone. Bells are typically referred to as 'cowbells' and can be found at most farm supply stores but it's fun to search a little deeper online if the shepherd is interested in authentic sheep or goat bells. A quick Google search can provide many choices, both new and vintage, so that any shepherd can take part in the tradition of livestock wearing bells.

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IMPORTANT LINKS

Livestock

Indemnity Program

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Livestock Forage Disaster Program

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20140214_distr_en_lfp.html

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program

https://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20111020_distr_en_

Tree Assistance Program

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20100510_distr_en_tap10.html

Farm Loan Program Modifications

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/2014_farm_bill_change_flp.pdf

Find Your Local FSA Office

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateOffices?area=stoffice&subject=landing&topic=landing>



FARM SERVICE AGENCY

DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Since the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, which restored and strengthened disaster assistance programs, USDA has made quick implementation of these programs a top priority. Farmers and ranchers began signing up for disaster assistance programs on April 15.

There are several different programs available, depending on the size and type of your farm or ranch operation. For livestock producers, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) will provide payments to eligible producers for livestock deaths and grazing losses that have occurred since the expiration of the livestock disaster assistance programs in 2011, and including calendar years 2012, 2013, and 2014. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. Eligible producer's who have suffered grazing losses in calendar year 2012, are encouraged to visit their local FSA office to sign up for the LFP program. For certain losses not covered by these programs, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish.

Enrollment also began on April 15 for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), which provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

To ensure that your application moves through the process as smoothly as possible, producers are encouraged to

collect thorough records documenting your losses, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures;
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records;

If you feel you are included in one of these categories, contact your county office ahead of time for more information on the types of records you'll need to apply for disaster assistance, and to schedule an appointment to apply. More information is available at disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

The Farm Bill makes a number of other changes to USDA programs that will impact farmers and ranchers, including recently-announced changes to farm loan programs that help support existing operations and invests in new farmers and ranchers. Visit www.usda.gov/farmbill for more information about our progress towards full implementation of all farm bill programs.

LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather. In addition, LIP covers attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators. LIP payments are equal to 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock on the day before the date of death of the livestock as determined by the Secretary.

The 2014 Farm Bill makes LIP a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible livestock losses back to Oct. 1, 2011.

LIP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ELIGIBLE LIVESTOCK OWNERS

To be eligible for LIP, a livestock producer must have legally owned the eligible livestock on the day the livestock died.

To be eligible for LIP, an owner's livestock must:

- Have died as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event or eligible attack by an eligible animal or avian predator occurring:
 - On or after Oct. 1, 2011, and;
 - No later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event, and;
 - In the calendar year for which benefits are requested.
- Have been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation on the day they died, and;
- Not have been produced for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. Excluded livestock includes wild free roaming animals, pets or animals used for recreational purposes, such as hunting, roping or for show.

LIVESTOCK FORAGE DISASTER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2014 Farm Bill makes the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) a permanent program and provides

retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. LFP payments for drought are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost for up to five months. LFP payments for fire on federally managed rangeland are equal to 50 percent of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland, not to exceed 180 calendar days. The grazing losses must have occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

Sign-up will begin on or before April 15, 2014, at any local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center. Additional details on the types of information required for an application will be provided as part of the sign-up announcement. Some eligibility restrictions may apply. Please consult your local FSA office for details.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR LIVESTOCK, HONEYBEES AND FARM-RAISED FISH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised

Fish Program (ELAP) provides payments to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish to help to compensate for losses due to disease (including cattle tick fever), adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill) as a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Enrollment will begin on April 15, 2014, at all local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Additional details on the types of information required for an ELAP application will be provided as part of the sign-up announcement. Some eligibility restrictions may apply. Please consult a local FSA office for details.

*Information provided by Winnie Breeding,
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Coordinator – KY State FSA Office
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(859) 224-7624*

What's happening with your Kentucky Sheep & Goat check-off dollars?

Accomplishments to date:

1. Assisted 4 producers in starting a meat goat enterprise through Farmer Recruitment Program.
2. Supported efforts to sample and promote the consumption of goat and lamb at various festivals and events, including the 2013 KY State Fair Commissioner of Ag Commodity Breakfast.
3. Supported efforts to educate the public about sheep and goat production at the 2013 Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival.
4. Supported the printing of the 2014 Kentucky Sheep & Goat Management Calendar.
5. Working to promote sheep and goat production at various industry meetings and events.
6. Compiled a Kentucky Sheep & Goat Breeder Directory on our website at www.kysheepandgoat.org.
7. Supported efforts to promote and market local producers of sheep and goat products throughout the state.

Learn more about the New
Farmer Recruitment Program
& Special Projects Grant
Programs by visiting
www.kysheepandgoat.org.



Your Check-Off Dollars At Work



5th Annual KENTUCKY SHEEP & FIBER FESTIVAL

by Kelley Yates

May 17-18, 2014 marked the 5th Annual Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival. Fiber artists and fiber enthusiasts from all over the world gathered to enjoy the collections from numerous vendors and take part in workshops, some of which were taught by Mary Jane Mucklestone, Anne Hanson and Dagmar Klos.

Festival attendees were also able to see shearing, spinning and cooking demonstrations. Sheep, llamas, alpacas, angora goats and much more were available for people to see and touch. We even had a Hug a Sheep booth where over a hundred people gave a squeeze to Button and Charlotte!

One of the highlights of the festival is the Kentucky Proud Lamb Cooking Contest conducted by the Sullivan University Culinary Department. Each year, four teams of students race the clock to prepare the most delicious and appealing lamb dinner plate. Winners of this year's competition were Tyler Keller, Chloe Dykes, and Tiffany



Shearing demonstration



Hug A Sheep with Button and Charolette, a fundraiser for 4-H and FFA



Baby Goats!

Easley. Congratulations to this very deserving team of individuals. They will receive a \$1000 scholarship from the Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival.

On May 18th, Tim Farmer from Tim Farmer's Country Kitchen conducted a fabulous cooking demonstration that proved to be a crowd pleaser. You can see more highlights from the festival at www.kentuckysheepandfiber.com.

2014 Kentucky Proud Lamb Cooking Contest Recipe

Lamb Marinade

- ½ cup red wine
- 1/3 cherry balsamic vinegar
- Sprig of Thyme and Rosemary
- 2 Tbsp Oregano, chopped
- 2 tbsp Mint, chopped
- 1 whole lemon juiced and zested

Stuffed Mushroom

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup shallot, minced
- 4 sun dried tomatoes, rehydrated
- 3 ounces, whiskey smoked cheddar cheese
- 5 mushrooms, de-stemmed and gutted
- Olive oil for sautéing the Mushrooms and tomato mixture

Red wine Rainer Cherry Reduction

- 15 Cherries, deseeded and halved
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup shallot, minced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup red wine
- ¼ cup cherry balsamic vinegar

- Serve with mixed arugula and other greens and toasted sun flower seeds for texture.



Winners of the 2014 Kentucky Proud Lamb Cooking Contest are pictured with from left to right: Tyler Keller, Chloe Dykes, and Tiffany Easley. Photo courtesy of Roca © 2014.

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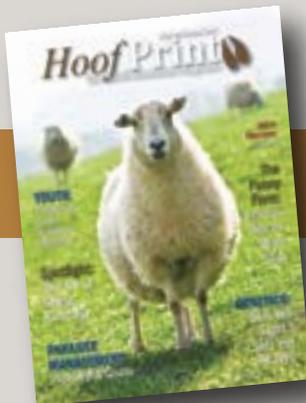
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