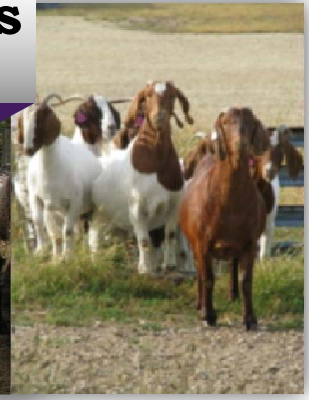


KSU Sheep and Meat Goat News

Department of Animal Sciences and Industry



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KSU Sheep and Meat Goat News

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We Need Your Help!

Please send questions, comments or ideas for future newsletter topics to Brian Faris at brfaris@ksu.edu or 785-532-1255.



Brian's Bleats...

The sun was shining brightly as over 125 individuals gathered for the K-State Sheep & Meat Goat Center Ribbon Cutting ceremony on March 3rd. Dr. Ken Odde, Animal Sciences and Industry Department Head, served as Master of Ceremonies over the program including Dr. Ron Trewyn, K-State Vice President for Research; Dr. Gary Pierzynski, K-State College of Agriculture Interim Dean; Tom Sloan, Kansas 45th District State Representative; Nancy Smith, Kansas Sheep Association President; Anne McGuire, Kansas Meat Goat Association Vice President; and Burdell Johnson, American Sheep Industry Association Past President. Other Kansas government attendees were Dale Rodman, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture and Sydney Carlin, Kansas 66th District State Representative. Additional K-State administrators in attendance were Dr. Sue Peterson, Director of Governmental Relations, Steven Graham, Assistant to the Dean of Agriculture, Dr. Ernie Minton, Associate Dean for Research for the College of Agriculture and Dr. Don Boggs, Associate Dean for Academic Programs for the College of Agriculture.

Following the program and the ribbon cutting ceremony, attendees were given a guided tour of the facility. Drawing a great deal of attention was the K-State Purple working chutes and penning made possible by a \$40,000 grant from the K-State Livestock and Meat Industry Council. Kim Ketcham, owner of Ketcham Sheep Equipment, donated all of the grain/hay feeders. Fencing of the barns and pastures will be completed this spring and summer.

Superior Farms donated the lamb served for lunch. The lamb was a "cook-in-the-bag" product using boneless lamb legs in approximately 2.5 pound, pre-seasoned portions that only required baking in the oven. This product showcased the incredible flavor and quality of lamb and required no special preparation.

K-State Sheep Day was held the afternoon of Saturday, March 3rd. Producers were extremely excited about having seen the new Sheep & Meat Goat Center and participated in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Thirty-seven producers attended from across the state of Kansas. Burdell Johnson, sheep producer from North Dakota, discussed the economics of raising sheep and what the future holds for the sheep industry. Mike Caskey, instructor for the Pipestone Wool and Lamb Program in Minnesota, presented information related to flock health and the similarities and differences of raising purebred and commercial sheep. The event wrapped up around 5 pm with attendees testing their evaluation skills on a class of wool and a class of Hampshire cross ewes. Jeff Ebert was the winner of the friendly competition.

We are looking forward to many future programs related to teaching, extension, and research. Mark your calendars for the next K-State Sheep Day on March 2, 2013, which will again be the Saturday following Cattlemen's Day.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Faris
Extension Sheep and Meat Goat Specialist

• Educational Programs coming up at K-State • Jr. Sheep Producer Day and Sheep & Goat Conference

K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day

K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day will be held Saturday, March 31, 2012. The program will be targeted at experienced and novice individuals. J.B. Massey will be our featured speaker. Mr. Massey has a wealth of experience in the youth sheep project area. His children showed sheep for many years. We are pleased to have his expertise for this event. I will be working with some of the novice participants in breakout sessions during the day. For more information, please contact myself or Kristine Clowers, Interim Youth Livestock Coordinator. You may also find registration information at the following link: <http://www.asi.ksu.edu/~doc6042.ashx>.

K-State Sheep & Goat Conference

The K-State Sheep & Goat Conference is slated for May 4-6, 2012. This is going to be an outstanding conference consisting of talks related to selection, health, nutrition, management, reproduction, carcass quality, marketing, guardian animals, hand-spinning, and dairy goat production. Registration deadline is April 15th. This program is only planned to be offered every two to three years. Don't miss this opportunity to hear nationally recognized speakers and producers such as Dr. Kreg Leymaster, Dr. Frank Craddock, Mr. Preston Faris, Dr. Dan Hale, Dr. Shelie Laflin, Dr. Justin Luther, Dr. Justin Wagoner, Mr. Bob Buchholz, Mr. Steve Burton, Mr. Noah Goddard, Mr. Bryce Gerlach, and myself. This group of individuals is made up of Extension and Research Specialists, Veterinarians, and Producers. Parts of the conference will be divided by specie allowing attendees to gain information specific to the sheep or goats they raise. A trade show will be available for your nutritional, health, fencing, and other needs. You will also have the opportunity to sample different lamb and chevon products. A separate registration fee is available for the entire program (1:00 pm Friday through 12:00 pm Sunday) or Saturday only. You may find speaker bios, the schedule, registration forms, vendor form, and lodging information at the following link: <http://www.asi.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=246>.

For more information about the Kansas State Sheep and Meat Goat program or events, go to our website: www.ksusheepandgoats.org.

What should be considered when making selection decisions in your operation?

For some producers lambing and kidding season has ended while others are just beginning the season. Weaning is just around the corner for many lambs and kids. Around weaning, producers typically start making decisions regarding the females they will keep for replacements as well as identifying those male offspring that could be potential stud sires.

How are those decisions made? I'm sure a survey could be given to producers and a variety of responses would result. Some producers will base decisions only on visual appraisal or collected data while others will use a combination of phenotype and performance data to make these important decisions. Within these selection criteria lie a host of things to consider such as qualitative traits (environment has little to no effect), quantitative traits (may be effected by environment), weather pattern, season of lambing/kidding, heritability of a particular trait, etc. Most economical traits that interest producers such as feed efficiency, average daily gain, milk production, and fleece traits are quantitative traits having a variety of influences. The biggest question is, "Are producers collecting and utilizing any of these values?"

What should be considered when making selection decisions in your operation? (continued)

Ultimately the goals of the operation must be identified before selection decisions are made. Most producers would agree that identifying and mating the superior performing animals in a flock or herd should result in the greatest amount of improvement. However, we cannot observe the genetic breeding value of those animals. We must rely on record keeping to give us the best estimate of breeding value of potential breeding replacements so our operation's goals can be met.

In order to maintain quality records each animal must be identified with an ear tag. Unfortunately, ear tags are considered temporary because they may be lost or torn out of the ear. Permanent identification methods such as ear tattoos and ear notches may be used. Tattoos can be difficult to read in black or other dark pigmented ears; however, this is a practice that many cattle producers are using and most cattle have a dark ear. Lambs and kids are usually big enough at weaning to be tattooed. A legible tattoo can be very beneficial in identifying an animal and maintaining production records in the event an ear tag is lost.

Records fall under a variety of categories such as reproduction, maternal ability, growth, wool, and carcass. Producers only need to maintain records on traits for which they are basing their selection decisions. For instance, there is no need for a hair sheep producer to maintain records on wool production. The following are examples of data points for each record category:

- Reproductive Traits – age at first lambing/kidding, date of lambing/kidding, ease of birthing, number of offspring born, number of offspring weaned
- Maternal ability – birth weight, 30-day, 60-day, or 90-day preweaning and weaning weights*, type of rearing (single, twin, triplet, etc), and level of supplemental feeding, pounds of lamb weaned
- Growth traits – 60-day, 90-day, 120-day, or 240-day weights*
- Wool traits – fleece weights, staple length, fiber diameter, coefficient of variation
- Carcass traits – live weight, carcass weight and length, fat depth, loin eye area, body wall thickness, age at harvest

*The date weights are obtained should be recorded so actual days of age may be calculated when necessary.

In order to utilize the information listed above in the most effective way, values should be adjusted for fixed effects using the appropriate adjustment factors. Examples of fixed effects would include year, season, sex, age of dam, birth type, rearing type, and supplement feeding (creep vs no creep). This will help “level the playing field” and eliminate biases that may influence a decision on a particular lamb/kid's value to the operation. There are several specific equations that can help in these areas.

Using this information, producers can make decisions on each individual compared to its contemporaries using a ratio or deviation to determine its relationship to the contemporary average. In order to calculate ratios, divide the animal's own performance value by the average performance value of its contemporaries and multiply the result by 100. Average performance is always 100 so the greater the value is over 100 the greater the performance of the individual over its contemporaries.

$$\text{Ratio} = (\text{individual animal's performance} \div \text{contemporaries' average performance}) \times 100$$

Deviations are calculated by taking the animal's own performance value and subtracting the average performance of its contemporaries. Average performance is always 0 so the larger the positive number the greater the performance of the individual over its contemporaries.

$$\text{Deviation} = \text{individual animal's performance} - \text{contemporaries' average performance}$$

What should be considered when making selection decisions in your operation? (continued)

Estimated breeding values (EBV) and estimated progeny differences (EPD) can be calculated but require heritability of certain traits and additional statistical evaluation.

I encourage producers to identify your operation's goals and which of the above mentioned performance values should be recorded to help achieve those goals. You will then need to set minimum standards for your flock/herd regarding those traits. You may want to consider identifying a superior set of females within your flock/herd from which you only select your replacement females or prospective stud sires. Having ratio or deviation values can help identify those superior animals over your flock/herd average.

Producers have been successful over the years basing their selections on visual appraisal alone, but I anticipate unexpected results have also been experienced. Incorporating data into your operation's selection protocol can help increase the rate of progress towards goals and minimize unexpected negative impacts.

If you do not currently have a record keeping system and would like some help in establishing a way of improving your selection program, please contact your local extension office or myself.

UPCOMING EVENTS.....

March 31, 2012: Kansas State Junior Sheep Producer Day

Kansas State University will host a Junior Sheep Producer Day on March 24, 2012. The program will be held in Weber Hall on the K-State campus. A tour of the new K-State Sheep & Meat Goat Center will be available at the end of the event. This biennial event consists of topics related to sheep/lamb production, market lamb projects, and fun activities for our young sheep producers. If you have any questions or would like to participate as an attendee or sponsor, please contact Dr. Brian Faris, K-State Extension Sheep & Meat Goat Specialist, at 785-532-1255 or brfaris@ksu.edu.

May 4-6, 2012: Kansas State Sheep & Goat Conference

Kansas State University will host a Sheep & Goat Conference on May 4-6, 2012 on the KSU campus. This conference is open to everyone and will begin Friday, May 4, at 1:00 pm and conclude at 12:00 noon on Sunday, May 6. This program is designed as an intensive learning opportunity for commercial and purebred sheep and goat producers to attend every two to three years. Subject areas will include alternative feed stuffs, multi-specie grazing, live animal and carcass evaluation, health, predation, marketing, parasitism, crossbreeding/composite genetics, and more. Breakout sessions will also be available related to specific species, types, and/or breeds. If you have any questions or would like to participate as an attendee or sponsor, please contact Dr. Brian Faris, K-State Extension Sheep & Meat Goat Specialist, at 785-532-1255 or brfaris@ksu.edu.



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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