

The North Dakota Sheep Industry

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Newsletter

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A joint publication brought to you by the North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association and the NDSU Extension Service

-A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-

We have recognized the importance of adult education since biblical times. According to Proverbs *"Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding."* Today we recognize that adult education is important for three distinct sets of needs and goals: 1) the needs and goals of **individuals**, 2) the needs and goals of the **institution**, and 3) the needs and goals of **society**. Every society has used adult education processes to continue the development of its citizens. This concept is also evident in the purpose statement of the NDSU Extension Service – "To create learning partnerships that help youth and adults enhance their lives and communities."

In efforts to provide you with more educational

opportunities we will be holding an **Advanced Sheep School** at the **Bowman Auction** in Bowman, ND on **October 25th**. If you would like to receive more information on this school please contact me at 701-231-7993 or Andrea Bowman, Bowman County Agriculture Extension Agent at 701-523-5271. Also remember that joining the North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association and American Sheep Industry Association is an excellent way to identify other educational opportunities.



Justin S. Luther

Justin Luther, Ph.D.

-GREETINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT-

It is a busy time of the year for the North Dakota Sheep Industry! Our Dakota Terminal Ram Test at the Hettinger Research Extension Center came to an end on August 15th. Congratulations to Curtis Stanley of Bismarck for breeding and entering the Champion Overall Ram on this years test. The Champion Average Daily Gain Ram was a Hampshire bred and entered by Clayton Fried. The Champion Carcass Ram was also a Hampshire that was bred and entered by Burton Pfliger.



Brent Stroh

The 31st Annual Hettinger Ram Sale is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. September 13th, 2006 at the Adams County Fair Barn in Hettinger, ND. We currently have 200 rams entered and all of the rams from the 2006 Dakota Terminal Ram Test will be considered eligible for sale. **The Hettinger Research/Extension Center and North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association will be sponsoring a lamb feed and social for the consignors and potential buyers following check-in on the evening of September 12th.**

On September 30th our Annual State Replacement Ewe Sale will be held at the Bowman Auction Market in Bowman, ND. The sale will start at 1:00 p.m. (MDT) and Harry Kerr has stated "We will continue to have an excellent set of replacement ewes for sale." For more information on the sale contact: Harry Kerr (701-523-5922) or myself (701-327-4526).

*Brent Stroh
NDLWPA President*

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2006 Fall Ram Test Program

Dr. Christopher Schauer, Ph.D.
Hettinger Research Extension Center, Director

The 2006 Dakota Fall Ram Test will be held at the Hettinger Research Extension Center in Hettinger, ND. Dave Pearson will serve as the test manager.

The cost per ram is \$155.00, \$25.00 per ram at entry and the balance upon delivery at the test site. This will cover feed, management, veterinary attention, and wool testing.

For more information contact Chris Schauer at 701-567-4323. Full registration information can be found at www.ndlwpa.com.

SCHEDULE

(Dates Subject to Change)

September 14-October 2

- Rams to be delivered to the HREC

October 6

- Rams shorn

October 9

- Rams to be weighed and started on test

November 6

- 28 day weighing

December 4

- 56 day weighing

January 1

- 84 day weighing

January 29

- 112 day weighing

February 26

- 140 day - End of growth test period

March 9-10

- Rams to be shorn, ultrasound, field day, rams can be picked up by owner

Questions to Consider When Selecting A Ram

Justin S. Luther, Ph.D.
Extension Sheep Specialist
Department of Animal & Range Sciences

Selection of a new ram is one of the most important management decisions in the sheep enterprise. The ram will contribute to half the genetic potential of the lamb crop and if offspring of the ram are kept as replacements, the ram's genetic contribution will persist for years to come. The purpose of this article is to discuss the thought process that should occur before se-

lecting and buying a new ram. Answering the following three questions may provide direction to the ram buyer, while saving him time and money. More specific characteristics and records to consider when selecting a ram have also been included in discussion.

1. What is the **main purpose** of your flock?

Another way to ask this question is "What are you trying to produce?" If the main purpose of your flock is to produce fast growing, heavy muscled, good yielding market lambs, you will want to select a terminal ram with these characteristics. Average daily gain and muscling are two traits that can be easily identified and both are highly heritable. Ram performance tests are an excellent way to identify rams that possess these characteristics.

If the main purpose of your flock is to produce Rambouillet replacement ewes that will consistently breed out-of-season for your customers, then you will want to find a Rambouillet ram that was born out-of-season and confirm that his dam possesses good maternal characteristics. Rams born out-of-season or fall born rams have higher fertility during the spring of the year. Fall born rams can be purchased from a number of sheep producers in North Dakota and at sales throughout the Midwest. However, keep in mind that the dam of the fall born ram should have been exposed naturally during the spring of the year and not synchronized with hormonal therapies. This will ensure that he is genetically predisposed to have acceptable fertility out-of season.

2. What are the **main strengths and weaknesses** of your flock?

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your own flock will help narrow the search and give you confidence during the selection process. Make a critical and accurate evaluation of your own flock before purchasing your next ram. It often helps to have another producer provide you with a fair evaluation.

During this process keep in mind that there is no such thing as a perfect ewe. Similarly, no ram is perfect. Selecting for too many traits in a ram will only lessen the progress that can be made in a single trait. A general rule of thumb is to select a ram that has all the positive qualities possessed by your ewes, plus one additional feature your flock is currently lacking.

3. What are your **flock goals** during the next 5 to 6 years?

The quality you can offer your customers during the next 5 to 6 years will largely be determined by the genetic contribution of your newly selected ram. Therefore, it is wise to devise a clear vision of where you would like to see your flock in the future. Do you have a growing niche market for spinning wool and want to expand your customer base by enhancing the quality of your wool? Would you like to make a strategic shift in your lambing season in order to sell finished market lambs when prices are at a seasonal high? Do you want to be the leading club lamb producer in the state of North Dakota? The ram you select now must fit the goals you want to achieve in years to come.

Answering these questions will provide you with a clearer direction when searching for a new ram.

2006 Dakota Terminal Ram Test

The 2006 Dakota Terminal Ram Test has come to an end. The test lasted 85 days and data for average daily gain, rib-eye area and fat-thickness were collected.

Congratulations to Curt Stanley of Bismarck for entering the Champion Indexing Ram! Burton Pfliger and Clayton Fried entered the Champion Carcass and Average Daily Gain Rams, respectively.

According to Dave Pearson "This is the best set of rams that we have ever had on test." I would also like to thank the Hettinger Research Extension Center for doing an excellent job in managing these rams. All of the rams will be sold through the Hettinger Ram Sale on September 13, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. (MDT). Final results for the 2006 Dakota Terminal Ram Test can be viewed at www.ndlwpa.com.



Late Season Enterotoxemia

by Dr. Goelz
Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

Heavy feeder lamb enterotoxemia (overeating disease) is caused by *Clostridium perfringens* and specifically the Type D toxin. This is most often seen in lambs 4-6 months old. Nearly every sheep operation will vaccinate for entero-

toxemia with Type C and D toxoid. Most operations will do this in lambs 6-10 weeks of age.

Late season enterotoxemia can be a problem on some farms. This is simply type D enterotoxemia but the lambs are often weighing 80-120 pounds. In these situations the lambs have been previously vaccinated correctly when younger, and in theory should still be protected. My best explanation—not all lambs read the textbook.

Often there are no noticeable signs before death. The shepherd simply finds a dead sheep that had no apparent problems 12 hours previous. Many times we don't get too excited with one dead sheep however with enterotoxemia the case is usually one dead sheep to day followed by two tomorrow—and now we have a problem. Occasionally, you might find one prior to dying. These sheep will be down, sometimes convulsing, hypothermic and from a practical standpoint—dying. Post mortem examination shows blood-red intestines and signs of toxic shock.

The cause of enterotoxemia is the toxin that the *Clostridium perfringens* bacterium produces. In fact, the C and D vaccine is aimed not at the bacteria but at the toxin. If found alive treatment is unsuccessful and time is usually better spent getting the sheep to a Veterinarian or diagnostics lab to confirm the diagnosis.

Once you have a diagnosis you can stop the outbreak by boosting the lambs with a vaccine. While C and D vaccine is fine, many producers will use a type D only vaccine, as it is more economical. One dose will stop mortality. Producers that are raising ewe lambs should give type D booster around five to six months of age. Feeding tetracycline at ten to fifty grams per ton appears to decrease late feeding season enterotoxemia.

Ram Purchase Financial Assistance

Beth Carlson, DVM
Deputy State Veterinarian

The 2005-2006 scrapie cooperative agreement allows for financial assistance for producers to purchase certain types of rams.

- ◆ Producers enrolled in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) will be compensated for purchasing up to two rams from other flocks of appropriate status in the SFCP.
- ◆ Producers following a PEMMP or a Flock Plan will be compensated for purchasing up to two RR rams.

- ♦ If funds remain after January 1, 2006, any producer who has purchased an RR ram may be eligible for reimbursement for one or two rams, based on availability of funds.

In order to take advantage of this program, producers must provide the North Dakota State Board of Animal Health with a copy of official genotype results and the flock number of the ram. **Rams must be purchased between September 15, 2005 and September 15, 2006.** Funds may be depleted prior to the end of the cooperative agreement period. Blood for genotyping must have been collected by an accredited veterinarian in order for results to be considered official. Producers enrolled in the SFCP and those following a PEMMP or a Flock Plan will have priority in receiving these funds. Other producers will be eligible for reimbursement for one or two rams per flock, depending upon demand, until funds are depleted. Funds are available on a first come, first served basis.

Ram purchase forms will be made available at the 2006 Hettinger Ram Sale on Wednesday, September 13.

31st Annual Hettinger Ram Sale



**Sponsored by:
North Dakota Lamb and Wool
Producers Association**

**September 13, 2006
1:00 p.m. (MDT)**

**Adams County Fair Barn
Hettinger, ND**

200 rams will be available!

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THE NORTH DAKOTA SHEEP INDUSTRY

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