



Maryland Sheep & Goat Producer



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Animal Fiber Expo

An Animal Fiber Expo will be held on Saturday, October 15, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville, MD (9 miles south of Hagerstown). Speakers and presentations will relate to the following types of animal fiber: wool, mohair, cashmere, alpaca, and angora rabbit. If you are interested in raising and selling fiber as an economic enterprise, plan to attend. The registration deadline is Friday, October 7. The registration fee is \$20 per person (payable to the University of Maryland). The fee will include lunch, breaks, and conference materials. Send registration fee to Animal Fiber Expo, Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Rd., Keedysville, MD 21756; (301) 432-2767 x343; sschoen@umd.edu or cmason@umd.edu.

Crossbred Hair Sheep Ewe Lambs for Sale

Due to the limited availability of hair sheep breeding stock, the hair ewe lambs currently being grazed at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC) in Keedysville/Washington County will be offered for sale to the public via sealed bid auction.

The lambs are part of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's (UMES) sire comparison study in which Katahdin ewes were mated to Suffolk, Texel, Dorper, or Katahdin rams. The offspring were born at UMES in March 2005 and are being utilized in a study on internal parasite control at WMREC. The lambs are handled bi-weekly to determine FAMACHA© eye scores, body condition scores, dagginess, and the need for deworming. The lambs are weighed every four weeks and fecal samples are collected and analyzed. Part of the grazing rotation includes two acres of chicory, a forage with anti-parasitic effects.

The following numbers of ewe lambs will be available for sale via sealed bid:

- Up to 14 Katahdin ewe lambs*
- Up to 14 Dorper x Katahdin ewe lambs*
- Up to 18 Suffolk x Katahdin ewe lambs*
- Up to 19 Texel x Katahdin ewe lambs*

Educating People to Help Themselves

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Descriptions of the Sale lots will be posted to the web on September 5.

www.sheepandgoat.com/hairsheep lambs.html

The lambs will be sorted into groups of 3 to 6 lambs for sale. The lambs sell as-is. Unsound ewe lambs will be eliminated from the sale. Descriptions of the lambs and sale lots will be posted to the web at www.sheepandgoat.com/hairsheep lambs.html on September 5. Persons without Internet access can request the same information by mail by contacting Susan Schoenian at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center, 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD 21756; (301) 432-2767 x343.

In a sealed bid auction, participants submit a bid on paper (or via e-mail), and the sale is awarded to the highest bidder. Bids should be on a per pound basis. September 2 weights will be posted to the web site. Lambs will be re-weighed on the day of pick-up to determine the sale weight. Bids will be accepted from September 5 until September 23. Winning bidders must pick up their lambs on Saturday, October 1st, unless other arrangements are made ahead of time. Minimum bids will be established using prevailing market prices for slaughter lambs and hair sheep breeding stock.

Rash of Livestock Shootings

Thurmont, MD -- Two of Beverly Pearsall's registered Texel sheep were shot on July 8 by unknown assailants. One ewe was killed outright. A second ewe had to be put-down due to her gunshot injuries.

According to Harold Domer, Frederick County Animal Control Director and former police officer, the shooting is being investigated "to the fullest." The culprits face up to three years in prison under Maryland's animal cruelty laws.

Sadly, it was the third such incident in Frederick County recently. Three Holstein cows were killed in two incidents last year, and in March, someone kidnapped an alpaca. Police in Montgomery County are still looking for suspects in the abduction and killing of a pet sheep.

Near Gettysburg (PA), a pony and dairy cow were recently shot. The 15-year-old pony was a child's pet. The cow was pregnant. An emergency c-section was performed to remove her calf, but the cow had to be put down. Arrest warrants have been issued for three persons suspected of shooting the pony and cow.

Sources: *Washington Post*, July 14, 2005; *York Daily Record*, July 28 and August 9, 2005.

Performance Record-Keeping for Small Ruminants

The National Sheep Improvement Program, better known by its acronym NSIP, is a computerized, performance-based program for genetic selection in small ruminants. Progressive breeders use NSIP data to make selection decisions in their flocks and to advertise and sell their breeding stock.

NSIP uses the latest scientific technology to measure genetic performance and make predictions about progeny (offspring). It works through breed associations to deliver across-flock EPD's to participating producers. Sheep breeds that currently participate in NSIP include Columbia, Dorset, Katahdin, Polypay, Suffolk, and Targhee. Rambouillets, Romneys, and Boer goats (ABGA¹) recently joined the ranks of NSIP. Breeds/species which are currently being considered for admission into NSIP include Hampshire sheep, Kiko goats, and Alpacas (IAC²).

EPD is short for "expected progeny difference." It is an estimate of the genetic merit of an animal for a specific trait. Specifically, an EPD is the expected difference between an animal's progeny and the average progeny perfor-

mance of all the animals in the breed for that trait. EPD's are reported in the normal units for the trait (e.g. pounds, microns). They are expressed as deviations from the average population value and may have a positive or negative sign in front of them.

The positive and negative symbols don't always mean better or worse. For example, while the progeny from a ram with a weaning weight EPD of +3.0 would be expected to have weaning weights 3.0 lbs. more than the breed average, a ram with a fiber diameter EPD of -0.3 would be expected to sire lambs whose fleeces would be 0.3 microns finer (better) than the breed average.

Flock EPD's (FEPD) are the same as EPD's except that all the data is derived from a single flock. FEPD's do not use across-flock data. For 10 years, NSIP just calculated FEPD's for producers. Calculation of across-flock EPD's is dependent on the establishment of good across-flock genetic linkages. Genetic linkages are created when rams are sold or traded and progeny are distributed into many flocks.

Across flock EPD's allow comparison of sheep under different management conditions. For example, comparisons can be made between animals that are raised on grass and those which are fed grain and between animals raised in Maryland and those raised in Texas. NSIP does not allow comparison between different breeds.

NSIP evaluates many economically important traits including maternal (number of lambs born, maternal milk, and milk+growth), growth (weaning weight, post-weaning weight, and yearling weight), and wool (grease fleece weight, fiber diameter, and fiber length). NSIP is in the process of adding evaluation for carcass traits (fat thickness, ribeye area, and carcass value), accelerated lambing (date of first lambing, lambing interval), fecal egg counts, and ewe productivity (lbs. lamb weaned per ewe lambing). Breed associations determine which traits are important to their breed. For example, Targhees, Columbias, and Rambouillets receive genetic evaluations for wool traits, while (in the future) Polypay breeders will receive data on accelerated lambing and Katahdin breeders will receive fecal egg count and ewe productivity EPD's.

The cost of participating in NSIP is only \$50 per flock, plus \$1.25 per breeding animal.

Producers enter data into an electronic data form and send it to their breed coordinator, where the data is compiled, checked, and sent to the NSIP computer at Virginia Tech. After EPD's are calculated, the results are sent back to the breed associations, who process the reports and send them to individual producers. Breed associations also publish breed or sire summaries. Most of the work of NSIP is done over the Internet.

NSIP was implemented in 1987, but unfortunately is not widely used by sheep producers, despite dramatic genetic progress in the beef, swine, and dairy industries using the same technology. Producers interested in NSIP should contact their respective breed associations or NSIP directly at (303) 771-5717 or info@nsip.org.

¹ American Boer Goat Association

² International Alpaca Community

Web site: <http://www.nsip.org>

Improving Carcass Merit with Ultrasound Scanning

by Kelly Vorac Cole³
Jefferson, Maryland

The aim of this article is to educate sheep and goat producers about the value of using ultrasound when selecting breeding stock. Research shows that the heritability of loin eye is very high at 50%. However, the data set collected from Suffolk ram lambs at the 2004 Pennsylvania ram test suggests that loin eyes need improvement. See Table 2.

Situation: The U.S. sheep industry is very fragmented today. Two very large segments have emerged in the industry -- the frame show-type sheep and the wether sheep shown in market classes. A similar situation is emerging in the meat goat industry. The problem is that both of these segments are shifting away from the core values of commercial meat production. Ultimately, all sheep and goats must have the carcass traits required to satisfy the consumers. Selection for these carcass traits will be key, if the sheep and goat industries are going to become viable commercial meat entities, they must return to the basic core values

held by the commercial swine and cattle industry. Those core values are performance and carcass traits. This article will focus on the latter.

Carcass traits: In sheep and goats, hind saddle, loin eye, and rack are the highest priced cuts of meat. These are the same traits valued in swine and beef. The swine industry has done a tremendous job increasing loin eye area. They have done this by collecting data using ultrasound technology, which can measure loin eye area in the live animal. Live evaluation allows selection for increased loin area. Loin eye area (LEA) is one of the most highly heritable traits at 50% heritability. See Table 1. This high heritability indicates how easy it should be to increase LEA. In just 10 years, the swine industry increased loin eye measurements from 4-5 square inches to 6-8 square inches – that amounts to a 50-60% increase in loin area.

Carcass Evaluation with Ultrasound technologies: Since the 1950's, ultrasound technology for biological application has been available for use. Ultrasound consists of very high frequency sound waves. Pulses are produced in a transducer by the vibrations of piezoelectric crystals. These pulses are transmitted through tissue until they reach a tissue interface, such as between fat and lean tissue. Ultrasound images appear in various colors and shades on the display unit. Bone and fat will appear white in color, while muscle and tissue will appear a dense grey color.

Table 1. Heritability of Carcass Traits

Carcass weight	35 %
Trimmed retail cuts	45 %
Percent trimmed retail cuts	40 %
Loin eye area	50 %
12 th rib fat thickness	30 %
Dressing percentage	10 %

Body composition measurements are taken with an Aloka 500 real-time ultrasound machine equipped with a 3.5 MHz transducer designed for animal use. In the normal scenario for estimating carcass traits via ultrasound, a “Certified Technician” travels to a designated location with portable ultrasound

equipment. The technician would apply a “couplant” (usually vegetable oil) to the back of the animal at a designated location. The couplant prevents the interference of air between the transducer and the animal. This allows for maximum conduction of sound waves. Real-time ultrasound will allow for an image to be produced immediately. This image can be captured to a computer’s hard drive allowing for the images to be interpreted at a later time. Ultrasound measurements for backfat thickness (BF; Figure 1) and longissimus dorsi area, which is the LEA, (Figure 1) are taken between the 12th and 13th ribs on each animal.

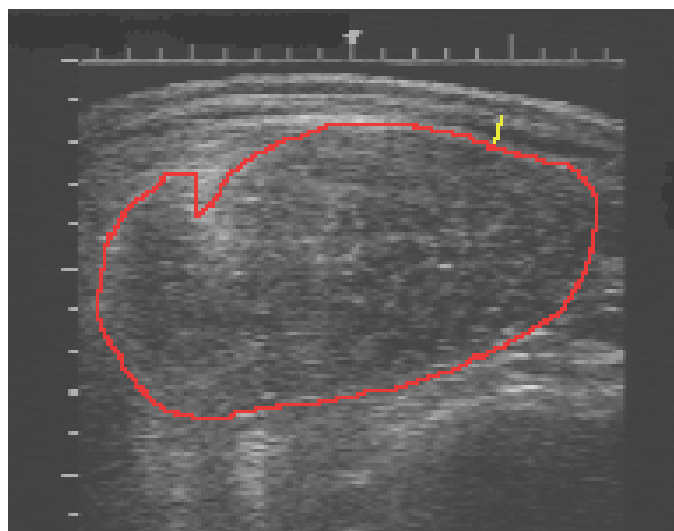


Figure 1. Ultrasound Image

Loin eye area is measured in square inches and is positively and highly correlated with percent retail product (% RP). This trait is a moderately high heritable (0.4 to 0.6) trait. This means that the trait will be passed on to progeny. Ultrasound measurements of LEA are accurate within one square inch of the actual LEA measurement. There is a 62 -94 % relationship between the ultrasound values and measurements taken on the carcass at slaughter. Much of this variation may be due to the accuracy of the technician. Backfat thickness is measured in inches, and is a good indicator of % RP. However, unlike LEA, it is negatively and highly correlated with %RP. This means, as BF increases, % RP decreases. This trait is similar to LEA in heritability (>0.4). Ultrasound measurements of BF are accurate to within 0.07 inches of the actual carcass BF. Ultrasound BF is highly corre-

lated (0.96) with carcass BF. Some believe ultrasound BF may be more accurate than carcass BF, because of the fact that no BF has been removed during the ultrasound process. Unlike in the packing plant, varying amounts of BF may be removed when the hide is removed from the carcass.

How Does a Producer Use Ultrasound Information? Proper use of ultrasound data involves an understanding of its limitations. For example, rams having LEA measurements of 2.7 and 2.8 square inches are likely not detectably different. However, we could be more confident that a ram having an ultrasound LEA of 3.0 square inches is more muscular than a ram whose LEA measures 2.0 square. Ultrasound measurements may be most useful to distinguish which sheep and goats are above average, average, or below average compared to their contemporaries (e.g. flock mates), or within sire groups. One should closely monitor BF; this is an indicator of development of the animal and/or the maturity status of the animal. One must remember these are just a couple of traits to evaluate, and one should not get carried away with single-trait selection. With single-trait selection, one may be creating more problems than what they may be attempting to correct. Before embarking on the selection of future genetics, one must have a defined set of goals established for their own operation.

Hopefully, you are beginning to see that you can use ultrasound technology to measure the LEA on live animals rather than harvesting the animals and doing actual measurements of the hanging carcasses. Producers should take advantage of this opportunity for evaluation and selection of breeding stock. Many State ram and buck test stations collect ultrasound information for participating producers. Table 2 shows a subset of the data collected from the 2004 Suffolk ram test; a total of 16 Junior rams were on test. The LEA were adjusted for 125 pounds.

Cause for Concern: Please note the 125-pound loin eye measurements in Table 2. These young rams should represent a good cross section of progressive breeders in the Northeast. Note that the average loin eye is 2.49. Further note that the average drops to 1.94 square inches when ram number 30 is omitted from the data set.

Table 2. Suffolk Junior Ram Lambs from 2004 Pennsylvania Ram Test

Ram	Wt.	LEA	Adj. LEA	Adj. BF	Type
28	163	2.29	1.93	0.15	Frame
29	183	3.27	2.65	0.13	Wether
30	176	4.50	3.97	0.17	Wether
31	186	2.52	1.86	0.14	Frame
32	161	2.80	2.46	0.20	English
33	160	3.25	2.90	0.13	Wether
34	176	3.18	2.65	0.16	F/wether
35	148	2.32	2.15	0.15	Frame
36	156	2.55	2.28	0.12	Frame
37	143	1.77	1.67	0.17	Frame
38	146	2.76	2.60	0.18	Wether
39	156	3.05	2.78	0.15	Wether

The sheep and goat industry in the U.S. has not adapted selection technology as quickly as the swine and beef industries. In reading this article, we hope that you see a great tool that could greatly benefit the sheep and goat industry. Let's use this technology to increase the percentage of retail cuts. Research has shown that LEA is highly heritable. We believe this technology can increase the value of American lamb and goat, which will increase profitability to our farmers.

"Once I chose to focus on breeding for loin eye, I found it very difficult to find sires that could increase carcass traits such as loin eye without first measuring the LEA of the ram and collecting real data. I have made many mistakes choosing rams that I thought had large loin eyes based on visual appeal, only to find that is was not there when the offspring were born."

John Hall, Suffolk breeder and Extension Agent, Kent County

For further information on ultrasound technology, contact Willard Lemaster (Lemaster@umd.edu), Susan Schoenian

(sschoen@umd.edu), or Niki Whitley (nwhitley@umes.edu).

³Kelly is a Suffolk breeder in Jefferson Maryland. She received assistance on the article from J. Willard Lemaster, 4-H Animal Science Extension Specialist, University of Maryland; John Hall, Kent County Extension Agent and Suffolk breeder; and Susan Schoenian, Sheep and Goat Specialist.

Focus on Research

Kiko, Spanish Does Hardier Than Boers

Straightbred Boer (n = 42), Spanish (n = 47), and Kiko (n = 38) does were evaluated for fitness traits (hardiness) by researchers at Tennessee State University. Does were managed together on pasture from September 2003 to October 2004. Three quarters of each breed were mated in October and the remainder bred in December. Herd health records were analyzed to assess animal fitness.

The herd was not vaccinated for hoof rot. Does were treated for hoof rot and hoof scald upon observed lameness. Boer does required more treatments for lameness than Spanish or Kiko does. More Boer does required multiple hoof treatments than Spanish or Kiko does.

	Hoof treatments		Dewormings	
	Cases per doe	%	Cases per doe	%
Boer	1.77	52.3	0.53	40.5
Spanish	0.60	19.2	0.11	6.4
Kiko	0.47	10.5	0.07	2.6

Does were dewormed as a group in January (ivermectin) and individually at kidding (moxidectin). Does kidding in March were also dewormed as a group in June (moxidectin). Individual does presenting clinical signs of internal parasitism during the year received additional treatments of moxidectin. Additional treatments were more numerous for Boer does than for Spanish or Kiko. More Boer does received extra dewormings during the year than Spanish or Kiko does. Fecal egg counts were

determined on a random subset of does as kids approached 3 months of age. Geometric means for fecal egg counts (FEC) were 606, 307, and 237 for Boer, Kiko, and Spanish does, respectively.

	FEC	% does that weaned kids	% does that remained in herd
Boer	606	76	79
Spanish	237	96	98
Kiko	307	100	100

Fewer Boer does weaned kids and survived through the production year as compared to Spanish and Kiko does. These preliminary results suggest differences among meat goat breeds for fitness under southeastern U.S. conditions.

Source: Abstracts: Joint meeting of the American Society of Animal Science, American Society of Dairy Science, and Canadian Society of Animal Science, Cincinnati, Ohio. July 2005.

Repairing Intestinal Damage (caused by coccidia)

by Carol Delaney
Small Ruminant Dairy Specialist
University of Vermont

Ideally, the offspring of a goat or sheep is raised by its dam for optimum health and immune system development. Weaning animals at a young age as a compromise to collect the milk for our use, leaves those young stock more vulnerable to disease. When a flush of kidding starts and the kid pens are not kept as clean as necessary, the wee ones can get a high dose of coccidia. The source is the ingestion of fecal matter from older animals who have had a chance to develop some immunity and are shedding spores or oocytes. The kids can't handle a high dose before their immune systems are ready to fight back and painful and bloody scouring occurs. Dairy replacement lambs on pasture can pick up coccidia spores from adult fecal matter and may develop bad scours.

When farmers face these extreme cases in a normally well managed herd or flock, they often treat with coccidiostats to beat back the infection and save animals from death. This treatment can arrest the proliferation of the coccidia that are invading, disrupting and causing inflammation and bleeding in the intestinal wall. However, it does nothing to help the intestine heal back.

At the Alternative and Herbal Livestock Health Conference⁴ held in Storrs, CT (Oct. 20-21, 2000), Drs. Sandoval and Miller presented convincing data of their research with *Uncaria tomentosa*, uña de Gato or Cat's Claw. Cat's Claw is a vine that quickly grows in Peru and the bark is harvested for its medicinal value. In their research trials, they caused chronic intestinal inflammation in rats artificially with indomethacin and later infected chickens with coccidia oocytes. Both cases produced pronounced disruption of the mucosal architecture with loss of villi as shown in histological sections of the ileum. When Cat's Claw was prepared as a decoction (5 gms bark simmered 30 minutes in a liter of water) and given to the rats and chickens, there was marked improvement and repair of the damaged intestinal wall as compared to the control groups.

While Cat's Claw is not a coccidiostat (as natural rearing or cleanliness as prevention and drugs as a treatment are), it is very useful in helping the animal to more quickly recover and may prevent some scarring. The damage and pain are resolved and the intestinal wall is brought back to doing its job of absorbing nutrients and protecting the body from infection. Its actions are anti-inflammatory and demulcent. Cat's Claw can be ordered at health food stores or from herbal catalogs.

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⁴Conference proceedings are available from NOFA-Vermont (www.nofavt.org, info@nofavt.org, or (802) 434-4122).

Association Between Scrapie Genotype and Production Traits

A joint study was carried out by USDA-ARS (Pullman, WA) and North Dakota State University to determine the association between scrapie prion genotypes at codon 171

and 136 and various production traits. Traits assessed include age, live weight (LW), carcass weight (CW), dressing percentage, back fat thickness (BF), body wall thickness, ribeye area (REA), flank streaking, and percent boneless, closely trimmed retail cuts (BCTRC). The data from 824 market lambs was analyzed.

No differences were observed between lambs with codon 136AA or 136AV for LW, CW, BF, body wall thickness, REA, flank streaking, or BCTRC; however, 136AV lambs were older than 136AA lambs. Codon 171RR lambs weighed less than codon 171QR lambs and 171QQ lambs. 171RR lambs had lower carcass weights than 171QR and 171QQ lambs. There were no differences in dressing percentage. 171QQ lambs tended to have more back fat than either QR or RR lambs. Body wall thickness was less in RR lambs vs. QR or QQ lambs. REA was larger for QQ lambs as compared to QR and RR lambs. RR lambs had a larger BCTRC than QQ lambs.

	LW/CW (lbs)	BF (in)	REA (in ²)	BCTRC %
171RR	113.7 57.2	0.172	2.25	47.4
171QR	117.9 60.3	0.172	2.33	---
171QQ	117.9 61.8	0.192	2.45	47.0

The data suggest association between scrapie genotypes and production traits and a need for further study.

Source: Abstracts: Joint meeting of the American Society of Animal Science, American Society of Dairy Science, and Canadian Society of Animal Science, Cincinnati, Ohio. July 2005.

Disease In-Depth

Caprine Arthritic Encephalitis (CAE)

Caprine arthritic encephalitis (CAE) is a significant and costly disease of goats. It was first recognized in the early 1970's. It is a lenti/retro-virus, similar to ovine

progressive pneumonia (in sheep), maedi-visna, and AIDS (in humans). CAE and OPP are about 70% similar in their genes and can experimentally infect both sheep and goats, though under normal husbandry practices, transfer of CAE from goats to sheep is unlikely and vice versa.

The most efficient manner of transmission of CAE is from dam to kid by ingesting colostrum or milk from infected does. Horizontal transmission of CAE has been documented. When uninfected goats are housed with infected goats, a significant number of uninfected goats become infected. Transmission from doe to kid before or during parturition (kidding) has also been documented.

Prevalence

The prevalence of CAE is high in countries with goat-dairying industries where goats are intensively managed and confinement housing is routinely practiced. The feeding of pooled colostrum or milk has been identified as a practice associated with increased prevalence of CAE. Fiber goats (and probably meat goats) have a much lower worldwide prevalence of CAE because they tend to be raised extensively on range land, with kids nursing their own dams.

The prevalence of CAE in goats in the United States, Canada, and Europe ranges from 38% to 81%. However, goats can carry CAE their entire lives and never show an outward sign of it. Clinical arthritis is estimated to occur in less than 25% of seropositive goats. There may be a genetic predisposition to infection in certain breeds and within family lines of those breeds.

Symptoms

The effects of CAE on health and production are numerous. CAE can cause chronic disease in several body systems; however, most infected animals do not show clinical signs. Four clinical syndromes have been described for CAE-infected goats: arthritis, leukoencephalo-myelitis, interstitial pneumonia, and mastitis. Arthritis is the most common form of CAE. Chronic progressive arthritis is seen in goats older than 6 months and is usually characterized by swelling of one or both carpal joints. The time course is variable, with some animals deteriorating over a few years and others remaining stable for several years.

As the disease progresses, animals become lame or recumbent and debilitated. Animals experience weight loss, poor performance, and increased culling. Early signs of arthritis may be subtle. Progressive weight loss is sometimes the only sole clinical manifestation of the CAE virus.



Arthritis is the most common form of CAE.

Goats with mastitis or “hardbag”, caused by the CAE virus, have depressed levels of milk production. CAE-infected does produce up to 25% less milk than non-infected does. Kids with the neurologic form almost always die.

Treatment

There are no known treatments for any of the clinical forms of CAE. Animals with mild cases can be made more comfortable. Goats with advanced cases should be humanely euthanized.

Eradication

CAE can be eradicated from a goat herd. CAE testing can be done on blood samples from suspected goats. The ELISA test is preferred to the AGID test, because it is more sensitive. Detection of serum antibody to the CAE virus confirms infection in goats, but does not prove the existence of clinical disease. Goats testing positive for CAE antibodies should be culled from the herd or segregated, as they are a potential source of CAE infection for other animals. Since the main source of CAE is the colostrum of infected does, positive does should be removed from the herd. If positive does are retained, then their kids should be removed from their dam at birth and fed colostrum from uninfected does or colostrum that has been pasteurized to inactivate any virus present.

The following management protocol should significantly reduce CAE in a herd by eliminating transmission of CAE in colostrum and

milk. Kids should be removed from the dam immediately after birth. Kids should be isolated from older animals and given colostrum that has been heat treated at 56°C for 1 hour. At this temperature, the virus is inactivated, but the immunoglobulins remain intact. Kids then need to be kept isolated and raised on pasteurized goat or cow milk or milk replacer.

Zoonoses

There is no evidence to suggest that people can become infected with CAE by drinking raw goat's milk.

Source: Goat Medicine by Mary Smith and David Sherman, 1994; and Sheep & Goat Medicine by David Pugh, 2002.

Featured Breed

Rambouillets: Backbone of the American Sheep Industry

The Rambouillet [rām boolā] is a direct descendent of the Spanish Merino. The breed began when the King of Spain ordered that a small flock of Spanish Merinos be exported to Louis XVI's estate at Rambouillet, France. A total of 318 ewes, 141 rams, and 7 wethers arrived at the farm on October 12, 1786. It was the first significant release of Merinos to the outside world and except for one small addition, provided the sole basis of the eventual Rambouillet breed.

After the Spanish Empire began to collapse, Merinos found their way throughout the globe, mixing and mingling with various breeds and types. However, the strain assembled at Rambouillet remained unusually pure. In the mid 1800's, a few American breeders began importing Rambouillet rams to cross onto domestic flocks of Merinos. A select group of sheepman chose to maintain pure Rambouillet stock. They established the American Rambouillet Association in 1889.

Rambouillets are raised in a wide variety of climatic conditions, from the scarce brush area of Texas to the extreme cold winters of Wisconsin. They are the foundation of most western range flocks, but have also found popularity in the farm flock states.

Rambouillet rams range from 250 to 300



Polled Rambouillet Ram

lbs.; ewes from 150 to 200 lbs. There are horned and polled lines of Rambouillets. Many Rambouillet rams have big, massive horns, while ewes do not. Under range conditions, Rambouillet ewes typically raise single lambs, while farm-bred ewes frequently exceed a 200 percent lamb crop. Rambouillets are a dual-purpose sheep. They are noted for their superior, long staple, dense, fine wool. The average Rambouillet ewe will shear 10 lbs. or more of wool per year. Besides being valued for their high-quality wool, Rambouillets are also a good meat sheep. Rambouillet lambs are large framed and fast-growing.

Web site: <http://www.rambouilletsheep.org>

Calendar of Events

August 27

Virginia Performance-Tested Ram Lamb Sale
Steeles Tavern, VA. Info: Dr. Scott Greiner at (540) 237-9159 or sgreiner@vt.edu.

September 3

6th Annual Virginia Tech Sheep Center Production Sale, Virginia Tech Campus, Blacksburg, VA.
Info: Scott Greiner

October 6-8

North American Hair Sheep Symposium
San Angelo, Texas
Info: Dr. Frank Craddock at (325) 653-4576 or b-craddock@tamu.edu.

October 13-14

Sheep Basics Workshop at Virginia Tech
Info: Scott Greiner

October 15

Animal Fiber Expo
Western Maryland Research & Education Center
Info: Susan at (301) 432-2767 x343 or
sschoen@umd.edu

October 22

Maryland Sheep Breeders Association Annual
Meeting and Banquet, Westminster, MD
Info: David Delamater at (410) 476-3821 or
sweetface@goeaston.com

October 28-29

Pennsylvania Sheep, Goat, Grazing and Production
Conference, Somerset, PA
Info: Charlie Cathcart at (717) 349-2511 or
charlesp@innernet.net

October 29

Virginia Bred Ewe Sale
Rockingham County Fairgrounds
Info: Corey Childs at (703) 777-0373 or
cchilds@vt.edu

November 3-5

11th Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium
Burlington, VT
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