



# Wild & Woolly

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3 □ FALL 2007

Maryland's Sheep & Goat Producer Newsletter

## Inside this issue:

World Sheep & Wool Congress	1
Lambing & Kidding School	1
Meat Goat Show at State Fair	3
WMREC Update - Susan Schoenian	4
Soyhulls: A Feeding Alternative	4
Featured Web Sites	5
DSU Update - Dr. Dahlia Jackson	6
Featured Breed: Romanov Sheep	7
UMES Update - Dr. Niki Whitley	8
Breeding Season Ram Management	9
Circling Disease	10
MD Wool Pool Report	11
Small Ruminant Resources Available	11
Calendar of Events	12

The Maryland Sheep and Goat Producer is now **"Wild & Woolly"**! Hope you like the new name!

For more information, visit:  
[www.sheepandgoat.com](http://www.sheepandgoat.com)

Shepherd's Notebook Blog  
<http://mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com>

## 8th Annual World Sheep & Wool Congress

by Susan Schoenian

In July, I attended the 8th annual World Sheep & Wool Congress in Querétaro, Mexico. The congress is held every 3 years. The last congress was in Québec, Canada. The next one will be in Sydney, Australia in April 2010. Next year's International Goat Conference will be held in Querétaro.

The World Sheep & Wool Congress draws participants from all over the world. In Querétaro, there were over 700 participants from 18 countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay, and many states of Mexico. About two dozen Americans make the trip to Mexico.

The first several days of the congress featured a scientific program and various special events. Farm tours took place mid-week, with four farms to choose from. The last several days of the congress featured a multi-breed sheep show and trade show.

American speakers included Jim Morgan, from Katahdin Hair Sheep International and the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) and Yves Berger, a dairy sheep specialist from the University of Wisconsin.

### About Wool

While the congress focused mostly on meat sheep production, one of the more interesting speakers was Australian Ben Watts, who spoke about global wool market dynamics. He described a growing demand for apparel wool under 21.5 microns. The finest wools (less than 18.5 micron) are required to produce next to skin apparel. Europe (e.g. Italy) is still the primary consumer of these types of wool, whereas China is the largest consumer of raw wool in the world.

*Continued on page 2*

## 2007 Lambing & Kidding School Scheduled

A Lambing & Kidding School will be held Saturday, December 8, 2007 from 9:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Carroll Community College in Westminster, Maryland.

The featured speaker will be Dr. Kevin Pelzer, Production Management Medicine Specialist at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. Breakout sessions will be held to meet the diverse interests of small ruminant producers in Maryland and surrounding states: sheep vs. goat; meat, dairy, and fiber production; adult vs. youth; and new vs. experienced producers.

More than 175 people attended the first Lambing & Kidding School held in West Friendship, Maryland, on December 10, 2005.

As additional details about the school become available, they will be posted to the web sites <http://mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com> and [www.sheepandgoat.com](http://www.sheepandgoat.com) or you may call 301-432-2767 x301 or x343.



## Sheep & Wool Congress (cont'd from page 1)

### Sheep Shows

Most of the breeds at the show were ones common to the United States: (Barbados) Blackbelly, Dorper, Dorset, East Friesian, Hampshire, Katahdin, Suffolk, Texel, Romanov, and Rambouillet. There were a few breeds that I had never seen before (only in pictures), such as Charollais, Damara, and Dorset Down.

The Charollais is a French breed with outstanding muscling, akin to the Texel. The Damara is a fat-tailed hair sheep from South Africa. They are an extremely hardy breed. The Dorset Down originates from the United Kingdom and is a cross between Southdown, Hampshire, and a few other British breeds.

Unlike here, the largest shows were for the hair sheep breeds, specifically the Katahdin and Pelibüey. The Katahdins were judged by Wes Limesand from North Dakota State University. If the show was any indication, the Mexicans are trying to increase size and muscling in the Katahdin, whereas in the U.S., most of us value the Katahdin as a maternal breed.

One of the most numerous breeds represented at the show was the Pelibüey. Pelibüeyes are beautiful sheep with slick red hair coats and originate from Cuba. Like their Blackbelly "cousins," they are noted for their outstanding reproductive qualities. I saw in a Mexican sheep magazine where they are crossing the Pelibüey with the Suffolk to form a new breed, appropriately called the "Pelifolk."

The show itself was impressive, with much more fanfare than in the U.S. The bleachers were always full. The judges wore white (lab) coats, with "judge" written on the back. Owners do not show their own sheep. Their hired hands do. It was the same in the Caribbean when I visited there. The winners and losers are gracious. The sheep are all halter-broken and well-behaved.

The show had a fantastic trade show. The enthusiasm in the Mexican sheep industry was apparent, especially in the hair sheep sector. Apparently, lamb prices are at an all-time high. The United States was represented in the trade show by the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and Katahdin Hair Sheep International (KHSI).

The Eco-Center, where the show was held, was a very large complex, with excellent facilities. A huge blue arch marked its entrance.

### Farm Tour

On tour day, I visited "El Gavillero Shangrila," a Katahdin stud farm in Tequisquiapan, about an hour from Querétaro. This farm keeps approximately 600 Katahdin ewes in a semi-confinement/dry lot (zero grazing) setting. Confinement rearing of small ruminants is common in less developed countries, such as Mexico and the Caribbean. Security is one of the big reasons why stud sheep and goats are raised in confinement or dry lot. There are many hungry people in Mexico. It is also easier to control predation, internal parasitism, and foot rot. Since labor is cheap in Mexico, the increased labor required by this type of production system is not a problem. While the sheep are not grazed, they still consume predominantly a forage diet.

The farm (ranch) had excellent facilities. All the sheep had access to shelter or shade. They were fed mostly in fenceline concrete bunks and some in combination feeders with v-shaped hay racks, usually covered. The sheep and lambs were fed haylage, silage, and alfalfa hay with some grain in their mixed rations, depending

upon their production class. We were told that good quality feed is expensive in Mexico. The sheep were penned by sex, age, and production status.

Ewes lamb every 8 months, producing 1.3 to 1.7 lambs at each lambing, according to the owner. The lambing facilities included lambing jugs and larger pens where ewes could be separated into small groups to raise their lambs. Each pen had a creep area. There were automatic waterers. Each animal had a collar which indicated its sire. The sheep looked good.

The farm was very clean. It had five employees (men) to feed and take care of the sheep, plus two additional employees (women) whose job it was to keep the place clean.

After we toured the farm, the breeder paraded his rams in front of us. It was great. I enjoyed seeing his prized rams. The pride the owner had in his animals (and ranch) was obvious. The rams were big.

Mexico did a great job showcasing its sheep industry and hospitality.

Read full article at [www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/worldsheepcongress.html](http://www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/worldsheepcongress.html)



Dee Dee Allen (left) and me (center) posing with Katahdin ram.

## Meat Goat Show at State Fair

### Champion 4-H/FFA Meat Goats

This was the 5th year of the 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Show at the Maryland State Fair. Sixty-four market goats were exhibited. The breeding show included classes for commercial and registered does and buck kids. Dr. Frank Craddock, Sheep and Goat Specialist from Texas A&M University was the judge.

For the second year in a row, Konnar Miller from Frederick County exhibited the Grand Champion Market Goat. Julia King from Queen Anne's County had the Reserve Champion Market Goat. The Best Bred and Owned Market Goat was exhibited by Claire Bennett from Carroll County. To be a bred and owned animal, the exhibitor must own its dam at the time of breeding.

Another of Konnar's market goats had the highest rate of gain at 0.51. Only 0.001 lbs. separated her top gaining goat from the second highest gainer exhibited by Dean Bennett from Carroll County. The market goat show does not have a minimum requirement for rate-of-gain. Exhibitors receive blue, red, and white premiums based on their goat's performance.



Dr. Frank Craddock with Meat Goat Champions Konnar Miller (Grand), and Julia King (Reserve)



Dr. Frank Craddock and Grace Garst with her Grand Champion Doe

Six market goats, including the Champion and Reserve Champion animals were sold at the 4-H Livestock Sale. The top selling goat was Julia King's reserve champion which brought \$5 per lb. Konnar's Grand Champion Market Goat was purchased by Susan Schoenian (The Baalands), superintendent of the 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Show.

Cooper Bounds from Carroll County exhibited the Grand Champion Doe in the commercial show. Grace Garst from Frederick County exhibited the Grand Champion Doe in the registered show. Her aged doe (>2 years) was named Best Doe in Show. Another of Grace's aged does was selected as Best Bred and Owned Breeding Meat Goat. The Grand Champion Buck of the show was exhibited by Thomas MacDonald from Caroline County.

For information about the 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Show at the Maryland State Fair, contact Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 x343 or [sschoen@umd.edu](mailto:sschoen@umd.edu).

### Top 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Showman

Three young men from Carroll County won the 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Showmanship competition at the recent Maryland State Fair in Timonium.

Ryan Hevner was the champion junior showman (ages 8-10). Sam Harden was the champion intermediate showman (ages 11-13). The champion senior showman (ages 14-18) and overall grand champion meat goat showman was Drew Cashman.

Drew competed against prior-year's winners in the "Showmanship Challenge" and successfully defended his title. The 2006 winner was Konnar Miller from Frederick County. The 2005 winner was Troy Bennett from Carroll County.



Dr. Frank Craddock with champion showmen Drew Cashman (Senior & Overall), left; Sam Harden (Intermediate), center; Ryan Hevner (Junior), right.

## WMREC Update from Susan Schoenian

### Meat Goat Performance Test Ongoing

The 2007 Western Maryland Pasture-Based Meat Goat Performance Test began on June 9 and will conclude on October 6. Forty-seven (47) goats were consigned by 11 farms from five states. Breed composition is Kiko, Boer, Kiko x Boer, South East Cross, and dairy x meat. There are 40 bucks and 7 wethers.

While on test, the goats are being evaluated for growth performance (ADG and BCS), parasite resistance (FEC) and resilience (FAMACHA scores), and carcass merit (BF and REA). The goats are handled every two weeks for data collection and health monitoring.



The goats are averaging 0.235 lbs. per day of gain (through September 12); 0.258 during the last weigh period. That's a pretty good average considering the drought conditions. The goats are consuming a pasture diet, with free choice minerals. They were given nutritional tubs and grass hay when drought conditions had resulted in weight loss to most of the goats during August. Rainfall towards the end of month has helped to rejuvenate the pastures.

Gastro-intestinal parasites (worms) have not been a problem so far this year, due to the drought conditions.

The barber pole worm requires warmth and MOISTURE to carry out its life cycle. Only five goats have been dewormed during the test and their needs were marginal. The goats were dewormed when they arrived at the test site so that fecal samples could be collected later in the test, analyzed, and compared among goats. Fecal egg counts have been variable, but high, despite the lack of clinical disease and need for deworming.

Most of the goats on test are available for sale via private treaty. Contact Susan Schoenian at (301) 432-2767 x343 or [sschoen@umd.edu](mailto:sschoen@umd.edu) if you are interested in any of the goats you see in the data or pictured on the blog. If you need a breeding buck, this test is an excellent place to

purchase one, since we can provide you with data on the buck's performance.

You can learn more about the goat test and follow the progress of this year's test by visiting the blog at <http://mdgoattest.blogspot.com>.

#### Acronyms:

ADG – average daily gain  
 BCS – body condition score  
 FEC – fecal egg count  
 FAMACHA scores – eye scores  
 BF – back fat thickness

## Soyhulls: A Feeding Alternative

With high grain and hay prices, many producers are wondering what else they can feed their sheep and goats without compromising the health and welfare of their animals or depleting their wallets.

Soyhulls are an alternative feed source that many producers may wish to consider. Soyhulls are a by-product of soybean processing. They are the seed coat (not the pod) of the bean.



Because they are a processed product, the nutrient composition of soyhulls varies; however, on average, they contain 77 percent TDN (energy) and 12 percent CP (protein). They are a good source of calcium and a moderate source of phosphorus. Soyhulls contain more copper than conventional feed sources: 17 ppm vs. 8-12 ppm. Copper toxicity tends to be a risk (with sheep) when the total ration exceeds 25 ppm.

*Continued on page 5*

## Featured Web Sites

### <http://www.scsrpc.org/>

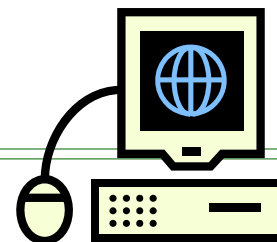
The Southern Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (SCSRPC) was formed in response to the critical state of the small ruminant industry associated with the emergence of anthelmintic-resistant worms. SCSRPC is a group of scientists, veterinarians, and extension agents devoted to (1) developing novel methods for sustainable control of gastrointestinal nematodes in small ruminants, and (2) educating the stakeholders in the small ruminant industry on the most up to date methods and recommendations for control of gastro-intestinal nematodes.

Members of SCSRPC meet regularly and are in close communication, continuously updating recommendations for parasite control. They represent several universities, research institutions, and countries.

The group maintains a web site at <http://www.scsrpc.org/>. Recently, several new domain names were purchased to make it easier to find the web site, which contains information about the FAMACHA© system and other novel methods for controlling internal parasitism in sheep and goats.

The additional domain names are:

[www.wormcontrol.org](http://www.wormcontrol.org)   [www.controlworms.org](http://www.controlworms.org)   [www.wormx.org](http://www.wormx.org)



### <http://www.caf.wvu.edu/avs/sheep/>

The West Virginia Small Ruminant Project, formerly the Sheep Management Project, was introduced in 1998 by the West Virginia University College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences in cooperation with the WVU Cooperative Extension Service, USDA Wildlife Services, and the WV Department of Agriculture.

The Project is currently being supported through funding provided by the WV State Legislature. The goal is to help farmers increase the economic efficiency and overall profitability of their small ruminant enterprises through improved production practices and through the introduction of new technologies and to help revitalize this industry in West Virginia.

The project recently unveiled a new web site at <http://www.caf.wvu.edu/avs/sheep/> and a blog at <http://wvsrp.blogspot.com/>. For more information, contact the project office at (304) 874-3561 or [sara.hare@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sara.hare@mail.wvu.edu).

### <http://goatdairylibrary.org>

Goat Dairy Library is a Wisconsin-based library that holds information for setting up and managing a commercial goat dairy. Materials are extracted from professional articles, journals and books, and from interviews with experienced goat milk producers. The site is arranged so that readers can quickly find a topic, scan the best information currently available, and locate links.. Wherever possible, the entries are followed by a short citation, which corresponds to a full entry in the site bibliography. The Table of Contents page lists all of the topics and sub-sections on the site, with direct links to the material. "What's New?" has an events calendar, notice of news and new research findings, and announcements about new material on this site.

## Soyhulls *(continued)*

When used as an energy supplement, soyhulls can substitute pound for pound with corn and barley. Because of their unique physical characteristics, soyhulls can also safely replace a portion (up to 50%) of the forage in the diet. One pound of soyhulls would replace 1.4 pounds of forage. Pricing all feeds on a cost per pound of TDN basis will help identify whether soyhulls fit into feeding programs for sheep and goats.

### Soyhulls

#### Additional Online Articles/Resources:

- <http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/articles/ExEx2023.pdf>
- <http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/articles/ExEx2052.pdf>
- <http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/forglvst/soybenhu.htm>

## DSU Update from Dr. Dahlia Jackson

### Small Ruminant Program at DSU

#### Extension and Research

Delaware State University Small Ruminant Program is relatively new and we are in the process of building up our herd and working towards building a recognized research program. The Small Ruminant Program was initiated to provide producers with information on goat breeds, management practices, parasite control, and effective marketing to gain access to the expanding ethnic market in the Northeast States. Activities from this program will include:

- Demonstrations and applied on-farm research opportunities
- Production advice for small ruminant management, herd health, and parasite control
- Extension workshops on topics of relevance for small ruminant producers

The breeding herd at Delaware State University consists of approximately 60 crossbred does (mainly Boer, Spanish, and Kiko crosses) and 3 bucks (2 Boer and 1 Kiko) and is located at Hickory Hill. The farm is just over 77 acres and we also have a cattle herd consisting of around 40 cows. Recent funding was obtained from the USDA to characterize levels of dewormer resistance (AR) in gastrointestinal nematodes (GIN) of small ruminants in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. Participating producers will be asked to collect fecal samples from their animals and submit to either DSU or the University of Georgia (UGA) for dewormer resistance testing.

This study is a collaborative effort between DSU, University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), and UGA. Results will indicate dewormer resistance on your farm and which drug/drugs is still effective with no cost to you. This will help producers in implementing a chemical deworming strategy that is most effective on their farm in order to prolong the efficacy of available chemical treatments. This study will only be effective if producers



participate and therefore, I am seeking producers in the Mid-Atlantic area (DE, MD, VA, PA, NJ, NC and WV) to participate beginning next spring.

For more information on this project and what would be expected from you if you participate please contact me at the number/email below. In addition to this project, future research plans at DSU include determining the efficacy of natural/alternative dewormers in parasite control, evaluating the benefits of multi-species grazing (cattle and goats), and identifying methods to increase goat production to satisfy increasing market demands.

#### Teaching

In the past, the cattle and goats have mainly been used as a teaching tool, allowing DSU's animal science and pre-veterinary medicine students to gain valuable hands on experience and skills that will no doubt be beneficial in the future. Even though there will now be a heavy research emphasis on the goats, they will still be used just as heavily as a teaching tool for students.

The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources at DSU offers two baccalaureate degree programs, one in Agriculture and the second in Natural Resources. Within the Agriculture degree, there are five options including, Agri-business, General Agriculture, Animal and Poultry Science, Pre-Veterinary Science and Plant Science with sub-options of Horticulture or Agronomy.

In Natural Resources, options include Fisheries and Wildlife Management, with sub-options in Fisheries or Wildlife, Environmental Science, and Pre-Forestry. Classes such as Animal Science, Farm Management, Beef and Sheep Production (will be Ruminant Production in future), Nutrition, and others are designed with a clear intention of providing students with a highly interactive and as hands on experience as possible. Labs are scheduled in collaboration with the Farm Manager in order to guarantee that students have an opportunity to participate in many management activities. At the

same time, field trips to various farms, zoos and production facilities allow students to get a behind the scenes look at many management practices that they might have been curious about previously.

The department also offers a Master degree programs in many of the options listed above. Because the teacher - student ratio in the department is around 1 - 7, this provides a unique opportunity for one-on-one interactions and facilitates students receiving individualized attention that promotes their learning potential.

If you would like more information on attending DSU and the programs it offers please do not hesitate to con-

tact me at (302) 857 – 6490 or [djjackson@desu.edu](mailto:djjackson@desu.edu). In addition, please contact me if you'd like to give your opinion about the type of research and programs that you would like to see conducted at Delaware State University.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [djjackson@desu.edu](mailto:djjackson@desu.edu) or (302) 857-6490.

*Dr. Dahlia Jackson is the small ruminant specialist at Delaware State University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.*

## Featured Breed

## Romanov - "lambs by the litter"



The Romanov breed is one of the most prolific breeds of sheep in the world. The North American record for a Romanov ewe is seven live, healthy lambs in a litter. The Romanov breed record is a litter of nine.

The Romanov breed originates from the Volga Valley in Russia (near Moscow). The name "Romanov" comes from the old royal family of Russia. Romanov sheep were first imported into Canada in the 1980's, then after a 5-year quarantine period were spread throughout North America.

Romanov sheep are small. The average ewe weighs between 100 and 150 lbs. and the average ram weighs between 150 and 180 lbs. The Romanov is a fine boned sheep that lacks the conformation of conventional breeds. They have a small head with large eyes and are usually polled but some males do have horns. The face is mainly black but they may have a "star" or "stripe" of white down the front of their face. Their legs are usually black, but some have little white socks around their ankles.

When Romanov lambs are born they are pure black, but when they get older they turn gray. The color is lost on the first cross. Most 1/2 Romanov lambs are born white (even 1/2 Suffolk). A few are born tan, gray, or speckled and bleach out to look like a regular crossbred sheep as they make their fleece.

Romanov sheep are double-coated. Their wool ( a mixture of gray wool and black guard hair ) is used for rugs, mats, and wall hangings. It can also be used as a lining inside jackets.

Romanovs do not have head, leg or belly wool and the wool is open and light (containing hair) and is easily sheared. Rams have a thick mane of black hair around their neck and brisket.

Romanov sheep have outstanding reproductive qualities. In addition to their multiple birth ability, they have phenomenal early sexual maturity and ewes will breed any month of the year.

The lambs are very vigorous and hardy. They are born with their tail being only about 3 inches long so there is no need for docking. Romanovs belong to the Northern European Short-Tail group of breeds, which also includes East Friesian, Finnsheep, Icelandic, Shetland, and Soay.

The most practical application of Romanov genetics is in the production of crossbred ewes. According to the breed association, a half Romanov ewe can produce a 250 to 300 percent lamb crop every eight months.

Half Romanovs retain much of the productivity and prolificacy (triplets are normal, quads common), but produce offspring with improved carcass qualities. Quarter Romanov ewes are ideal for commercial sheep production. However, purebred Romanovs are probably not well suited to the beginning sheep producer, as they require a high level of management and special care around lambing time.

## UMES Update from Dr. Niki Whitley



A group of scientists interested in parasites, forages, chemistry, animal nutrition and genetics is working together with veterinarians, producers, and Extension personnel to address the problem of parasites in goats and sheep. Alternative anthelmintics (dewormers) are one of the interests of everyone involved in this issue. The scientists involved have

been testing different natural anthelmintics, including high tannin containing forages (such as sericea lespedeza) and COWP (copper oxide wire particles, a copper supplement developed first for beef cattle), both of which have shown promise for reducing parasite worm egg counts in the feces of sheep and goats.

A group of which I am part has recently conducted a study in which Boer crossbred goats (wether and doe kids) naturally infected with worms were individually penned in pens with slatted floors that would not allow for re-infection with worms. They were fed diets with 0, 20, 40 or 60% sericea lespedeza pellets (SLP) at 4% of their body weight each day. This level of feeding was adequate because the goats always had a little bit left over each day (feeders were emptied weekly).

The diets had alfalfa pellets, SLP, commercial feed pellets, minerals, and urea mixed so they were similar in protein and TDN (calories). Of course the 0% SLP (control diet) had no SLP. There was ammonium chloride in the feed to prevent urinary calculi. The goats had free access to water. They were fed their diets for 28 days (4 weeks) and fecal

egg counts (FEC) were measured before starting and then weekly.

Although it seems that the SLP may have had a slight effect when looking at the “raw” data with FEC decreasing less for 0% (control) after the first week and increasing more for weeks 3 and 4 (see Figure 1), when statistical analyses are conducted to account for the large variation from goat to goat, there will probably not be a significant effect of SLP on fecal egg counts. However, in this study, anemia was not a problem even though FEC were high, indicating that most of the worms in the goats were probably not the blood-sucking *Haemonchus contortus* that causes most of the problems with goats and sheep in the U.S.

In previous studies at other Universities using animals with a high *H. contortus* infection level, SLP dramatically decreased FEC and increased red blood cell levels (helping to cure the anemia). So, SLP may work preferentially on *H. contortus*, but more research is needed to determine if this is really the case. For more information on this or other alternative parasite control methods, contact me at 410-651-6194 or [nwhitley@umes.edu](mailto:nwhitley@umes.edu). You may also contact one of the other parasite-fighting group members listed at [www.wormX.org](http://www.wormX.org).

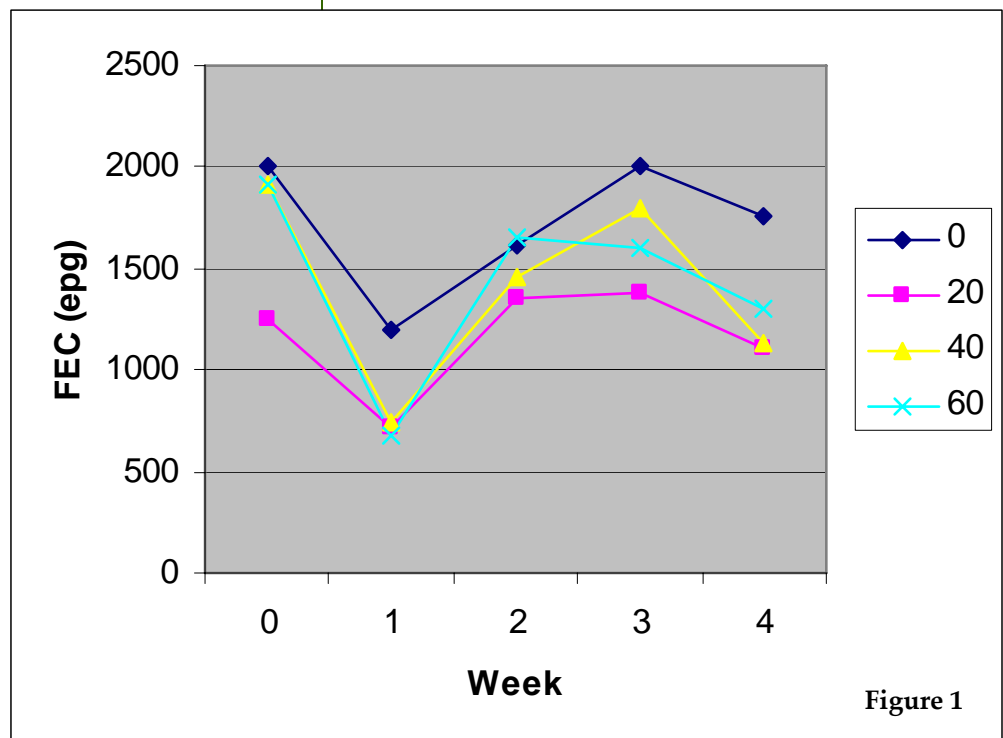


Figure 1

## Breeding Season Ram (and Buck) Management

by J. L. Goetz, D.V.M., Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and Supply

Once you turn the rams out into the ewe flock ram management is not done. If possible, rams should be observed daily. I prefer observing rams in the evening as you are more likely to see them chasing ewes than during the heat of the day. Rams should be actively chasing ewes during the evening and sometimes you may even observe mounting. This confirms that the libido (desire to breed) is good in the ram. If the ram has a breeding harness new marks can be recorded and a reasonably accurate due date can be calculated. Marking crayons can be switched every two to three weeks (moving from light colors to darker) to help keep track of ewes that remark.

Rams should also be observed for general health. Rams should be athletic and sound on their feet. Any lameness is cause to consider pulling a ram out of the breeding pasture. During the act of breeding a ram must be able to support nearly all his weight on both back legs. If one is painful he will not breed. When a ram dismounts half of his weight lands on both front feet; if one is sore he will not breed.

Back injuries are a common reason for pulling rams from the breeding pasture. Breeding requires both strength and flexibility in the spine. As rams age the spine becomes less flexible as calcium bridging starts to fuse the vertebrae. If this bridging cracks the ram will experience intense pain and have no desire to breed. Intervertebral disks can also become compressed or inflamed and cause compression of the spinal cord. This is often evident as pain or hindlimb weakness or lameness. While lameness from a foot injury carries a good prognosis for recovery and a future as a breeding ram, a back injury will nearly always reoccur the next time that a ram mounts a ewe.

Other reasons that rams may have to be pulled from the breeding pasture include pneumonia, rapid weight loss, or testicular injury. Pneumonia or fever in general may cause temporary infertility if the testicles get too

warm. Testicles are outside of the body for a reason. Sperm cannot be produced at body temperature. Therefore, if body temperature increases 2-4 degrees, the sperm in the testicles and epididymis are at risk of being dead. It takes 60 days for a sperm cell to be produced so fever can cause 60 days of infertility. Testicular injury is not common but obviously ends the ram's ability to breed ewes. After any insult to the testicle such as infection or trauma, the first sign is swelling

and heat. Heat will cause temporary infertility just like fever. After the swelling phase you may notice one or both testicles shrink in size. This is a poor prognostic indicator as it indicates that the sperm producing tissue is dead.



Rams will lose weight during breeding season, especially ram lambs as they are still growing and will not eat enough during breeding season to grow and

maintain their weight. Ram lambs may need to be pulled out of the breeding pasture if they get too thin. Often this is late in the breeding season when most of the ewes are bred and fewer rams are necessary to "clean-up" the remaining open ewes.

Treatment for rams that have to be pulled from the breeding pastures is aimed at 1) salvaging the ram to use later in the breeding season or for next year's breeding season, or 2) salvaging the ram for cull value. Number one is not a bad option if the reason for pulling is mild such as pneumonia, foot sprain, etc. Number two is a bad option as cull rams are never worth much. In most cases of severe injury, weight loss, etc producers will be better off by culling the ram immediately. As far as we know, treatment with Bamamine (flunixin), long-acting penicillin, Excenel, Naxcel, or Nuflor is not detrimental to fertility. Treatment with dexamethasone or LA-200 can cause transient infertility for 60 days.

Article as it appeared in **SheepLetter, Vol.26, No.7, September 2006.**

*Reprinted with permission of Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and Supply (www.pipevet.com).*

## Circling Disease

Darin Matlick, DVM  
Clinical Assistant Professor, West Virginia University

Circling disease or silage disease known as Listeriosis is caused by *Listeria monocytogenes* Infection. *Listeria monocytogenes* is a gram positive bacterium infection that occurs commonly in ruminants and is seen worldwide. The incidence of infection in at-risk animals in most circumstances does not exceed 1 – 2% of the population. However, outbreaks of greater proportions have been reported.

The disease causes the following clinical forms: systemic blood infection of neonates and ewes, abortion, neonatal death, eye infection and inflammation, and the most recognized form is the neurologic form that causes the circling.

The circling is a result of the infection locating in the brain stem and/or spinal cord. Mammary infections can also cause spread to humans by drinking raw, unpasteurized milk.

Clinical signs of Listeriosis include fever, off feed, depression, neurologic deficits such as lack of direction and balance, head pressing (pushing head against objects for extended period of time), dropped jaw, lip and ear. These signs usually occur on one side of the face and body and the circling walking pattern is in one direction or if down the head turns against their flank one way. The only definite diagnosis is with submission of brain and cerebral spinal fluid, usually diagnosis is made from clinical signs and history.

Other possible diagnosis of similar neurologic disorders might be Parasite migration (meningeal worm) to the

central nervous system, polio, injury, or rabies should always be considered for safety of the handler.

The usual causes of Listeriosis is from rotting, spoiled or decaying vegetation, which are most commonly improperly fermented silage, haylage/wrapped hay, spoiled/wet hay, and lots where close grazing is occurring in mostly wet contaminated soils. The agent can live in soils for two years as carriers can shed listeria in their feces and contaminate the soil.

Treatment of the disease is much more successful if started early in the course of the disease before the animal is debilitated and/or comatose. Untreated cases are 100% fatal.



Treatment of the disease must include antibiotic therapy that will cover at least a week in duration. Most commonly used is either oxytetracycline or penicillin. Other treatments would include an anti-inflammatory or steroid to reduce swelling in the central nervous system as well as supportive therapy such as fluids.

Prevention would include careful inspection of the feed and no feeding of spoiled feed as well as fencing off of known contaminated areas. It is also important to remember to handle any neurologic disease with caution and wear proper protective equipment (gloves) especially when working in or around the animal's mouth.

Source: *News Ewe Can Use - Summer 2007 (WVU)*  
Reprinted with permission.



**Baaaaatter Up!**  
Did you know there are  
150 yards (450 feet) of wool yarn in a baseball?

## Maryland Wool Pool Report by Dr. Rich Barczewski



The 2007 Maryland Wool Pool was held on Wednesday, June 20 at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. A total of 74 consignors brought 35,799 pounds of wool to this year's pool, up approximately 3,000 pounds from last year.

Wool was graded in the following categories. In the Choice Clear White-face grade, we had 2,123 pounds; Medium White-face, 13,174 pounds; Coarse White-face, 7,530 pounds; Non White-face, 6,567 pounds; and Short, 6,493 pounds.

This year's pool was especially successful in that we had a lot of volunteers who showed up to help with the pool, making it easier on everyone.

I can't begin to thank everyone who pitched in this year to make the 2007 pool a success. This is the producers' pool, and while I have the charge to manage the pool, I could never get the job done without the volunteers.

For consignors who don't have the time to pitch in for a couple of hours, please take the time to thank those that did. These volunteers help to keep the costs down.

This year's cost to run the pool was 5 cents per pound. We work hard to keep these costs as low as possible. Additionally, if you are consigning large amounts of wool to the pool, we appreciate receiving the wool baled.

If you have over 300 pounds of similarly graded wool to bring to the pool, please contact me to make arrangements to get your wool baled prior to the pool. This year almost 16,000 pounds of wool arrived to the pool baled. Again, this makes our job at the pool easier and helps us to keep our costs down.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that I send notices of the pool out to consignors who sold wool in the past two years. If you would like to be notified of next year's pool and have not sold wool to the pool in the past two years, please contact me to let me know. I can be contacted by e-mail at [rbarczewski@desu.edu](mailto:rbarczewski@desu.edu) or at [richbar@starband.net](mailto:richbar@starband.net).



## Small Ruminant Resources Available



### A Producer's Guide to Scrapie

[http://sheepindustrynews.com/scrapie\\_guide/](http://sheepindustrynews.com/scrapie_guide/)

This web-based course takes about an hour to complete and describes scrapie, prevention methods, National Eradication Program, producer obligations, and assistance. This is a great reference tool for experienced and new producers as well as an excellent resource for youth programs. All U.S. sheep and goat producers are encouraged to access this user-friendly learning tool.

### Targeted Grazing Handbook

The Targeted Grazing Handbook represents a compilation of the latest research and experience on harnessing livestock to graze targeted vegetation in ways that improve the function and appearance of a wide variety of landscapes. The handbook is available for \$25 and includes the material in both printed form and on a CD. Copies can be ordered by calling the American Sheep Industry Association at (303) 771-3500, ext. 32 or by email at [info@sheepusa.org](mailto:info@sheepusa.org).



## Calendar of Events

**September 27 - PASA Field Day: Parasite Control with Dr. David Pugh**

Centre County Visitor's Bureau, State College, PA

Contact: PASA at (814) 349-9856 or [www.pasafarming.org](http://www.pasafarming.org)

**October 20 - MD Sheep Breeders Association Annual Mtg. & Banquet**

Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, MD

Contact: Nancy Starkey at (301) 253-4732 or [ncstarkey@aol.com](mailto:ncstarkey@aol.com)

**October 20 - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mid-Atlantic Hair Sheep Sale**

Mifflin County Fairgrounds, Reedsville, PA

Contact: Cadie Pruss at (717) 242-4154 or [acadia@lcworkshop.com](mailto:acadia@lcworkshop.com)

**October 27 - Virginia Bred Ewe Sale**

Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Harrisonburg, VA

Contact: Corey Childs at (540) 955-4633 or [cchilds@vt.edu](mailto:cchilds@vt.edu)

**December 8 - Lambing & Kidding School**

Carroll Community College, Westminster, MD 21157

Contact: Cindy Mason at 301-432-2767 x301 or [cmason@umd.edu](mailto:cmason@umd.edu)

Web site: <http://mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com> or [www.sheepandgoat.com](http://www.sheepandgoat.com)

**January 12 - Shepherd's Symposium**

Alphin Stuart Livestock Arena, Blacksburg, VA

Contact: Dr. Scott Greiner at (540) 231-9159 or [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

For additional events, visit <http://www.sheepandgoat.com> and click on the "Upcoming Events" link on the right.



*Wild & Woolly, Maryland's Sheep & Goat Producer Newsletter* is published quarterly by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. It is written and edited by Susan Schoenian, Sheep and Goat Specialist, at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC), 18330 Keedysville Road, Keedysville, MD, tel. (301) 432-2767 x343 or 301, fax (301) 432-4089; e-mail: [sschoen@umd.edu](mailto:sschoen@umd.edu) or Cindy Mason, administrative assistant, [cmason@umd.edu](mailto:cmason@umd.edu). The cost of receiving the newsletter by mail is \$10 per year, payable to the University of Maryland. The newsletter can be accessed for free on the Internet at <http://www.sheepandgoat.com/news/index.html>. Internet users can ask to be added to a list to receive an e-mail message when a new newsletter has been posted to the web.

Comments and suggestions regarding the newsletter are always welcome. References to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Maryland Cooperative Extension is implied.

More information on sheep and goats can be accessed at <http://mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com> and <http://www.sheepgoatmarketing.info>.

*Articles and photographs can be reprinted with permission.*

Sheep & Goat Extension Program  
University of Maryland  
Western Maryland Research & Education Center  
18330 Keedysville Road  
Keedysville, MD 21756-1104