



Maryland Sheep & Goat Producer



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Vote on the Lamb Checkoff

Sheep producers, lamb feeders, and first handlers (packers) will get to decide whether to continue the American Lamb Check-off. The four -week voting period will begin on January 31 and end on February 28. The referendum will be conducted at local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices.

Anyone who was or is a lamb (sheep) producer, feeder, or first handler (or authorized representative) engaged in the production, feeding, or slaughter of lambs during the period from January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004 is eligible to vote in the referendum. Anyone voting must provide documentation that they were engaged in the production, feeding, or slaughtering of lambs

from January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004. Voting in the referendum is voluntary.

Ballots may be requested in person, by fax, or by mail during the voting period from the county FSA office and via the Internet (www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mpb/rp-lamb.htm). Ballots must be returned in person, by fax, or mail to the appropriate local FSA office.

The goal of the Lamb Checkoff program is to expand market share of American lamb.

You will complete a ballot voting “yes” if you wish to continue the Lamb Checkoff, or “no” if you do not wish to continue the Lamb Checkoff. Producers will also vote the total number of lambs owned and produced during the 2004 calendar year. Feeders will vote the total number of lambs fed to slaughter weight during the 2004 calendar year. First handlers will vote the total number of lambs slaughtered during the 2004 calendar year.

Results will likely be announced about 60 days after the voting period ends. For the Lamb Checkoff to continue, it must be approved by a majority of those persons voting who also represent a majority of the volume of lamb produced, fed, or slaughtered. Both, the number of persons voting and the volume of lambs voted, must be a majority in favor of the Lamb Checkoff in order for it to continue. The

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referendum vote does not affect the assessment rate, currently one half cent per lb. of live lamb and 30 cents per carcass.

The Lamb Checkoff began collecting assessments on July 1, 2002. The annual budget for the American Lamb Board is \$2.3 million. Administrative costs are less than 10 percent of the collections. The 13-member board is composed of six producers, three packers (or first handlers), three feeders, and one seedstock producer. USDA oversees the activities of the lamb board.

Editor's note: The constitutionality of the American Beef Check-off is currently being challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court. A final ruling is not expected until spring. The ruling may affect all other check-offs, including the Lamb Check-off.

Revised 4-H Tail Docking Policy

The **Revised** (for 2005) Maryland 4-H Sheep Tail Docking Policy, which was announced at the 4-H Animal Science In-Service Training held at the Howard County Fairgrounds on December 7, is as follows:

"Lambs born after January 1, 2005 will be accepted for exhibition only if tails are not docked shorter than the level of the distal end of the caudal tail fold. Lambs that are properly docked will have a minimum tail length of 0.7 inches at show, measured by the approved measurement device, which will be placed against the base of the tail and pin bones."¹

The tail docking policy will be implemented in the following manner:

- 1) Only a measurement device designated as an official device by Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE) will be used to measure tails.
- 2) Each sheep show or event will appoint a committee of 3 OR 5 designated individuals (MCE Extension personnel and/or MCE volunteers) for the purpose of measuring tails.
- 3) The committee must be trained by MCE staff in the proper use of the measuring device.
- 4) The committee will determine if the length of tail is acceptable by confirming if the distal point of the tail (excluding wool) meets the line in the trough designating 0.7 inches.
- 5) A simple majority is all that's needed to determine a lamb's eligibility for show.

- 6) If at any measurement an animal fails, the lamb is ineligible for show in any future Maryland 4-H lamb show. At that time, tags will be removed and returned to the State 4-H office or the lamb will not be tagged (if at initial weigh-in).
- 7) All docks (tails) of market lambs must be sheared at both weigh-in and fair time. Breeding sheep do not need to be sheared.
- 8) The measuring device is an objective, research-based tool, similar to scales. The decision of the committee shall be final. It is not an appealable decision.

Most county 4-H programs have the tail measuring devices in their possession. The measuring device may also be purchased from Pipestone Vet Supply (1-800-658-2523) or NASCO (1-800-558-9595).

Research has strongly implicated short tail docks as a cause of rectal prolapses in lambs. The purpose of Maryland 4-H Tail Docking Policy is to eliminate this unethnical practice in our state's youth programs. Questions about the policy should be directed to J. Willard Lemaster at Lemaster@umd.edu or (301) 314-7187.

¹Source: Maryland 4-H Sheep Tail Docking Policy, December 7, 2004.

Editor's note: Maryland and West Virginia should be praised for their strong position on the practice of extreme tail docking. Hopefully, a national policy will soon be adopted that will bring consistency to all states.

Meat Goat Activities Planned for Western Maryland

Meat Goat Conference and Spring Meeting

The MPWV¹ Meat Goat Producers Association will hold its annual Meat Goat Conference and Spring meeting Saturday, March 26 in the Continuing Education Room (305) at Garrett College in McHenry, Maryland. Conference topics will include:

- Livestock Guardians
- FAMACHA© and Selective Deworming
- Web Site Development for your Farm
- Other topics to be announced

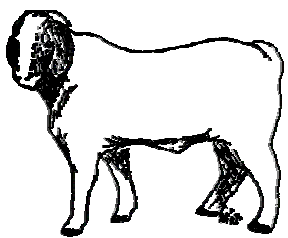
The cost of attending the conference is \$10 per person and includes lunch. The registration deadline is Friday, March 18.

The Business meeting will be held at 2:30 p.m. All producers are invited to attend the business meeting and to become members of the MPWV Meat Goat Producers Association. Membership dues are \$35 for the first year and \$20 for subsequent years. Contact the Treasurer, Cecil Ferguson to join the association. Cecil's contact information is 225 Ferguson Lane, Perryopolis, PA 15473; (724) 736-0189 or Bowlby@alltel.net.

Mt. Top Boer Goat Show and Sale

The MPWV Meat Goat Producers Association will host the USBGA² Eastern Region National Boer Show on Saturday, June 4 at the Garrett County Fairgrounds. The Show will be held in conjunction with the McHenry Highlands Festival. There will be classes for percentage and fullblood Boer Goats that are registered with any of the approved associations. In addition to breeding classes, there will be a jackpot show for prospective market goats and showmanship classes and a showmanship workshop for youth.

Registration forms for the goat show are due May 10. There is a \$5 entry fee per class. There is no entry fee for youth showing in showmanship or market goat classes. To be eligible for the sale, goats must be shown in the breeding goat classes. A \$10 consignment fee will be charged for each goat consigned to the sale.



A 5 percent commission will be charged on sales above \$200. A consigner must sell two does for each buck sold. Consigners must be members of the MPWV Meat Goat Producers Association in order to sell goats in the sale.

Boer Goat Judging School

A USBGA Official Judging School will be held June 3-5 during the USBGA Eastern National Show at the Garrett County Fairgrounds. The instructor will be Dr. Alan Fires, a Senior Licensed Judge with the

USBGA, chairman of the USBGA Official Shows and Judges Committee, Vice-Chairman of the USBGA Executive Committee, and Sr. Agricultural Extension Agent with Texas A&M University. The judging school will offer the opportunity to gain national certification in judging Boer and meat goats. Persons who are not interested in becoming certified judges but want to learn how to judge and select Boer goats may audit the judging school for a reduced fee.

The cost of the judging school will be \$225 for those interested in pursuing a license through the USBGA or \$75 for persons wishing to audit the course. The registration deadline for the judging school is May 1. The registration fee will not be refundable unless the judging school is cancelled by the USBGA or MPWV Meat Goat Producers Association. A minimum enrollment is required to hold the school. Applicants will be notified by May 5 if the course is to be cancelled. A similar course will be offered in Tennessee in September. For more information, contact Willie Lantz at (301) 334-3960 or wlantz@umd.edu.

¹Maryland-Pennsylvania-West Virginia Meat Association. ²United States Boer Goat Association.

www.meatgoat.biz

Maryland State Fair Update - 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Show

The Maryland State Fair is adding a premium class for rate-of-gain for market goats entered in the 4-H/FFA Meat Goat Show. Market goats gaining more than 0.3 lbs. per day will receive BLUE premiums. Market goats gaining between 0.2 and 0.3 lbs. per day will receive RED premiums. Market goats gaining less than 0.2 lbs. per day will receive WHITE premiums. The exhibitor of the market goat with highest rate-of-gain will receive a trophy donated by the MPWV Meat Goat Producers Association.

Unfortunately, the Maryland State Fair did not approve a second request to split the meat goat breeding show into commercial and registered divisions. All meat goats will continue to compete in the same show regardless of breed or registration status. Hopefully, as

the show continues to grow, the fair will approve this change. For information about the 4-H Meat Goat Show, contact Susan at (301) 432-2767 x343 or sschoen@umd.edu.

Brothers Win Rate-of-Gain Contests with Mother-Daughter Goats

Shawn and Shane Downes were consecutive winners of the 2003 and 2004 4-H Goat Rate-of-Gain Contest sponsored by the Delaware Farm Bureau. Shawn won in



Shawn (L) and Shane (R) Downes

2003 with his goat, Chevy, who gained 23 pounds over a two month period. Shane won in 2004 with his goat, Malibou who gained 34 pounds over a two month period. Chevy is Malibou's mother.

Shawn is 18 years old. Shane is 15. They are the sons of Steve and Carolyn Downes of Hartly, Delaware. Both brothers are active members of the Just Country Kids 4-H Club where they have each held numerous positions while participating in a variety of 4-H projects and programs. Both have been the proud recipients of the annual 4-H community service award, as well as nominated for the Governor's Youth Award for Community Service. They live in the country where they raise, breed, and care for their 15 Boer-cross meat goats to be shown competitively at the Delaware State Fair and local fairs. They are very proud of the many trophies, ribbons,

and certificates they have won while involved with 4-H. They are both very interested in a future with goats!

Editor's note: Youth are the future of the sheep and goat industry. We will gladly publish articles about the accomplishments of 4-H and FFA members and other youth involved with sheep and goats. Thanks to Carolyn Downes for submitting this article about her sons' accomplishments with their meat goats.

MD-DE Sheep Shearing Schools

The Annual MD-DE Beginning Sheep Shearing School will be held Friday and Saturday, March 18 and 19, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Thompson Farm in Westminster, MD. An Advanced Sheep Shearing School will be held at the same location on Saturday, April 2. The beginning school is open to anyone who wants to learn to shear sheep and has the strength and willingness to do so. The minimum age is 16. The advanced school is for persons who have attended previous schools and have sheared over 150 sheep. Participation is limited to the first 25 people who register (beginning school); 10 for advanced school.

The registration fee payable to Carroll County Extension Advisory Council (CCEAC) is \$50 per person for the beginning school (registration deadline March 11) and \$25 per person for the advanced school (registration deadline March 25). It should be mailed to David Greene, 2014 White Hall Road, White Hall, MD 21161-9712, tel. (410) 329-6241, e-mail: greelamb@bcpl.net.

The New Zealand method of shearing will be taught at both shearing schools. The instructors will be retired Carroll County Extension Agent David Greene and Delaware State University Animal Science Professor Dr. Richard Barczewski.

Tubing Lambs and Kids

One of the most useful items to have around the barn is a stomach tube, also called a feeding tube, lamb reviver or saver, or weak kid syringe. Tube feeding is the simplest, safest, and quickest way to feed any lamb or kid that can hold its head up and sit up under its own power.

Albeit, it's somewhat intimidating the first time you tube feed a lamb or kid. I know how I felt; I was convinced I was going to put milk into the lamb's lungs and drown it. Now, I wouldn't hesitate to tube feed a lamb or kid that needs it. While it's possible to insert the tube into the animal's windpipe, it's not very likely. The lamb will let you know if you're doing it right.

Here's how you do it: Find yourself a comfortable place to sit; a bale of hay or straw will do. Hold the lamb or kid on your lap. Another technique is to hold the lamb between your legs. Support the lamb's head

Measure the tube on the outside of the lamb so you can see how far to insert it. Lay the tube along the lamb from the tip of its nose, along the neck and side, so the tip lies at the last rib. Mark the tube at the nose and this will show the length to insert.

with your hand and extend its neck slightly to give the tube a more direct path to the stomach. Lubricate the tube in warm water or milk before inserting it. If you encounter a bump when inserting the tube, back up and try again. If cool air is felt coming out of the empty tube after it has been inserted, remove and try again. Reposition the lamb if necessary.

The lamb should show no signs of discomfort as the tube slips down the esophagus and reaches its stomach. It will chew on the tube, but should lie quiet when the tube is in place. If the lamb coughs, rolls its eyes, struggles and calls out as you are inserting the tube, then withdraw it immediately; you've probably put it down the windpipe by mistake. The length of the tube should indicate whether or not the stomach has been reached. Most tubes are of the length such that there will be 2 to 3 inches sticking out of the lamb's mouth once the tube is fully inserted.

You should have a full syringe attached to the tube. Empty it to a slow count of 20. The plunger is not needed if the syringe is being used in a vertical, upright position. To

prevent milk from getting into the lamb's lungs, you should pinch the end of the tube when withdrawing it. Don't worry if the lamb coughs a little after you remove the tube; a drop of milk may have entered its windpipe upon removal of the tube.

Lambs and kids should receive 20 ml (cc) of colostrum per pound of body weight. Feedings should be given four hours apart. The smaller the lamb, the more frequent the feedings should be to avoid overloading the lamb. Most lambs are underfed. According to the Pipestone (Minnesota) Veterinary Clinic, a large lamb requires 50 oz. of colostrum the first 24 hours. Extra large lambs require even more.

You should only tube feed lambs that can swallow. Never tube a lamb that is unconscious. A semi- or unconscious lamb cannot swallow and will not react if the tube is inserted incorrectly. Lambs that are so weak and cold that they cannot lift their heads should receive an intra-peritoneal (in the abdomen) injection of glucose.

It is better to tube feed a chilled lamb than to feed it on a bottle as it is less likely to choke this way. It is also better to tube feed a lamb that you plan to graft onto another ewe as a bottle-fed lamb is less likely to nurse a ewe than a lamb that was tube fed. Tube feeding also helps to prevent lambs from bonding with humans.

I've found tube feeding to be a great labor saver. We've all struggled with small or orphan lambs, trying to get them to nurse from a bottle, only to throw our hands up in total frustration. With tubing, you can be assured the lamb is getting the colostrum that it needs.

A number of commercial tubing devices are available. The simplest is a 60 cc (2 oz.) syringe and catheter. Tubing should be 14 to 18 inches long (long enough to extend from the lamb's last rib to its mouth plus approximately another foot, 18 gauge, and preferably rubber, like that used for surgical procedures. If you're a little unsure about tube feeding a lamb, don't hesitate to contact an experienced shepherd or veterinarian for assistance.

NRC Requirements to be Updated: Maryland scientist on committee

University of Maryland Animal Scientist Dr. Brian Bequette has been appointed to the National Research Council (NRC) Committee to develop new nutrient guidelines for small ruminants. A committee of five experts will be authoring a new NRC publication entitled, "*Nutrient Requirements of Small Ruminants*." The committee has been convened to revise two reports in its series: "*Nutrient Requirements of Goats*" (1981) and "*Nutrient Requirements of Sheep*" (1985). The two reports will be revised in a single report on nutrient requirements of small ruminants.

Source: University of Maryland Department of Animal and Avian Sciences Newsletter, May 2004.

From the National Sheep Center . . .

A \$50,000 grant from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center will be combined with \$200,000 from other sources to complete the updated Nutrient Requirements publication that will include all small ruminants. The anticipated release date is summer 2005.

Western Maryland Update

A second year of research has been planned for the Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville (Washington County). Plans are to graze 70 to 90 lambs from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore beginning on approximately June 1. The lambs will be from UMES's sire comparison study described in previous newsletters. The lambs will be ewe and wether lambs of three breed crosses: Katahdin x Dorper, Katahdin x Suffolk, and Katahdin x Texel.

The FAMACHA© system will be used to determine the need for deworming individual lambs. Lambs scoring 3, 4, or 5 (pink, pinkish-white and white), based on the FAMACHA© eye anemia chart will be treated with an effective anthelmintic. The lambs will

be examined every 2 to 4 weeks and eye scores will be recorded to determine sire breed differences and effectiveness of the FAMACHA© system as a means of managing internal parasites in grazing lambs. Lambs will be weighed to determine their rate of gain on pasture and to determine sire breed differences.

The pasture system at WMREC is being re-designed. A semi-permanent lane way will be constructed through the center of the 10-acre field. Port-a-hut shelters and a handling system will be set up in the lane way. Electric netting will be used to subdivide the 10 acres into 2-acre paddocks for grazing. Each paddock will have access to the central lane way. Water will be available in each of the paddocks. In addition, a second acre of forage chicory will be planted. This way, there will be a two acre paddock of chicory for grazing to determine the effects this high tannin forage has on internal parasites.

Sire or Progeny Testing

2005 will be a trial year under the new grazing system to make sure the system works well in terms of nutrition and health of the animals. It will also let us know if our pastures are at high risk for the meningeal worm. If you recall, last year several of the doelings that grazed at WMREC were infected with the meningeal worm.

In 2006, plans are to conduct a pasture-based progeny or ram/buck test whereby producers could consign 3 to 5 animals from the same sire. We would collect parasite (FAMACHA scores) and rate-of-gain data and scan (for back fat and rib eye area) the animals at the end of the test using realtime ultrasound. At the conclusion of the test, animals could be returned to the farm, sold for meat, or we could host an auction at WMREC. Most performance testing programs confine bucks and rams and feed them concentrate diets, but we feel that a pasture-test is more similar to the way small ruminants, especially goats, are being raised. Let us know if you'd be interested in participating in progeny or sire test for sheep and/or goats.

Alternative Parasite Control

by Dr. Niki Whitley

If you raise sheep or goats, you know that the number one health problem we face as producers is internal parasites (worms). You probably have also heard of the major “killer”—the barber pole worm or *haemonchus contortus*.

Because of the overuse and misuse of dewormers by the majority of producers, parasites have become resistant to most dewormers. Though there are programs to help slow down the rate at which parasites are becoming resistant, there are some farms (like ours at UMES) that already have some resistance to all known dewormers.

At UMES, we were rotating dewormers yearly, rotating pastures when possible, using multi-species grazing, and giving all types of dewormers orally (and all but Cydectin® were given at twice the labeled dose). We started using FAMACHA© (eye color chart) to only dose animals that needed it. According to experiments conducted at UMES in 2002, worms had become resistant to every dewormer except Cydectin®. So for the past two years, that is all we have used. But we developed some resistance to Cydectin® this past summer and had to dose our Katahdin and Katahdin crossbred lambs with two times the labeled dose (for cattle) orally to save lambs. We always had to use double the dose with goats.

What are we going to do when Cydectin® does not work any more? Some research has indicated that all-natural dewormers might work. For example, a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) funded farmer-grower grant reported that garlic juice might be an effective dewormer for lambs. Garlic may prevent the eggs of certain parasites from developing into larvae. On the Internet, many different types of alternative treatments have been touted; some with research studies to back up their claims (e.g. http://www.abdn.ac.uk/organic/organic_14c.php), though the references were older studies.

A recent scientific research study in Oklahoma at the E Kika de La Garza Institute for Goat Research at Langston University (in

Oklahoma) indicated that the high tannin levels in *Sericea Lespedeza* can also decrease parasite egg production and may function as an alternative to chemical dewormers. However, not all areas of the country (or all farms) may be able to grow *Sericea Lespedeza*.

After talking about the use of *Sericea Lespedeza*, a Maryland producer recently asked me if high tannin grain sorghum (milo) would work. I looked it up and could not find any reason why it would not work, but could not tell him what variety, how much to feed, or how to feed it (alone or mixed with other feeds). Since then, he and others that heard about the possibility have been asking about this possible alternative deworming grain that could be easily fed to animals. So, after a year or so of planning and questioning grain sorghum growers and trying to get some room on my calendar, I have recently submitted a NE SARE grant in the hopes to get funding to answer this question.

If you are interested in this topic, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 651-6194 or nwhitley@umes.edu. If you are interested in learning more about the SARE program (which supports farmer research with grant money too) their website is: <http://www.sare.org>.

An Update on Artificial Insemination (AI)

Artificial insemination (AI) is a technology that largely eludes the American sheep industry. AI is the primary factor responsible for the rapid genetic progress in the dairy industry. AI is commonplace in beef and swine herds, and is a fairly easy technology to employ on goat farms. It is not widely used on sheep farms, and there are many reasons.

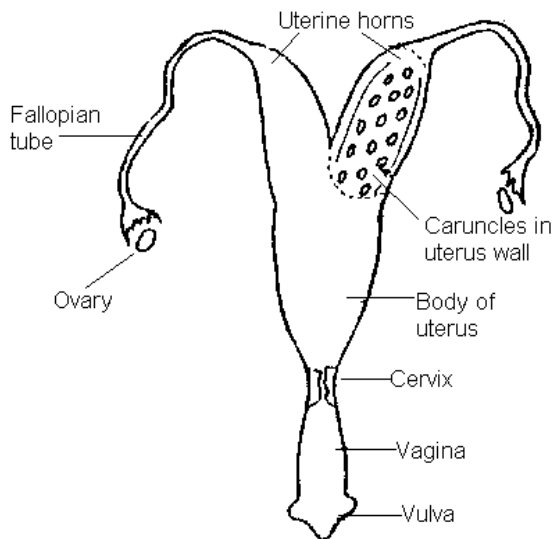
For a long time, ram semen could not be successfully frozen. This obstacle has been largely overcome. Ewes have a longer and more complex cervix than other ruminant livestock. It is approximately 12 centimeters in length and has 6 or 7 offset rings which make passage of AI equipment very difficult, if not dangerous to the ewe. There is also a flap of tissue at the opening of the cervix which makes entry through the first cervical ring especially difficult. The cervix of the ewe also

does not dilate during estrus (heat).

Ewes show fewer signs of estrus as compared to other farm livestock, making hormonal manipulation and/or the use of teaser rams necessary. The U.S. sheep industry has not done a good job identifying genetically superior breeding animals. The National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) provides the means, but participation remains low and not all breeds participate. The most common use of sheep AI in the U.S. has been to introduce genetics from foreign countries.

Methods of AI

There are four methods to artificially inseminate ewes:



1. Vaginal
2. Cervical
3. Trans-cervical
4. Intrauterine.

Vaginal is the simplest form of insemination and involves depositing fresh semen in the anterior vagina without any attempt to locate the cervix. Reported success rates are highly variable and this method is unsuitable for use with frozen semen.

Cervical is another cheap and relatively easy method of insemination. The cervix is located, via a speculum fitted with a light source and the semen is deposited in the first fold of the cervix. Conception rates with fresh or chilled semen are good, but generally unacceptably low with frozen, thawed semen.

The trans-cervical method of insemina



Laparoscopic AI

Drs. Rachel Weiss and Sara Link

Photo by Nancy Starkey

tion involves grasping the cervix and retracting it into the vagina with a pair of forceps to allow an inseminating instrument to be introduced into the cervical canal. The University of Guelph (Canada) has developed an instrument with a special bent tip that allows passage through the cervix.

In 1982, Australian researchers developed a laparoscopic insemination (LAI) procedure that revolutionized the sheep AI technique. Laparoscopic AI, also known as intrauterine, by-passes the cervix and deposits semen directly into the uterine horns. It is a minimally invasive, minor surgical procedure that requires veterinary expertise. The technique utilizes an endoscope, a special telescope with a fiberoptic light, which permits the technician to view the ewe's reproductive tract. The semen is injected directly into the lumen of the uterus, and the same procedure is repeated on the other uterine horn. The procedure takes 2 to 5 minutes per ewe. After the procedure is over, the ewe normally starts eating within minutes. Conception rates range from 50 to 80 percent.

Regardless of the method used, timing of insemination and semen quality are essential to achieving high conception rates. Ewes are usually brought into synchronized estrus using hormonal therapy, usually a vaginal sponge containing progestogen or a CIDR, followed by an injection of pregnant mare serum gonadotropin (PMSG). Semen costs vary by breed and quality of ram. Hormonal therapy and insemination costs vary according to

the number of ewes inseminated and the number of lambs born.

Goat AI

While trans-cervical and laparoscopic AI can be used on goats to possibly increase conception rates, these techniques are generally not necessary. Does can be inseminated cervically and producers can learn to inseminate their own animals. The only difference between cow and goat AI is that rectal palpation is used in cows and a speculum is used in goats.

To inseminate a doe, a lubricated speculum (fitted with a light source) is inserted into the doe's vulva and the cervix is located. An insemination gun is inserted into the speculum and thread into the opening of the cervix. The semen is deposited.

Interested in AI?

Goat producers should let Susan, Niki, or Willie know if they are interested in participating in a workshop to learn goat AI. Some of the dairy goat organizations (e.g. Maryland Dairy Goat Association) have conducted AI workshops in the past. There are at least four people in the United States that perform laparoscopic AI on sheep for producers. Producers interested in having their sheep artificially inseminated should contact Susan, Niki, or Willie for contact information.

Pennsylvania Ram and Buck Performance Testing Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with Penn State University, the Pennsylvania Sheep & Wool Growers Association, and state breed associations will once again be conducting a performance testing program for rams and bucks. The test is open to rams out of registered parents and bucks that are purebred or papered. First choice will be given to Pennsylvania breeders, but out-of-state nominations will be accepted.

Rams or bucks may be nominated for the 2005 test between January 1 and February 28. The nomination fee is \$20 per animal. The delivery date for rams is April 5 and for

bucks is April 19. The tentative sale date is July 30. It will include an invitational ewe and doe sale.

Genetic testing for scrapie susceptibility is mandatory for all rams tested. Blood will be obtained from the rams immediately after deliver and breeders will be notified of the results as soon as available. The rams will be fed a ration consisting of at least 16% protein and 73% TDN. In addition, grass-mixed hay will be fed free choice. Bucks will have free choice access to a commercial concentrate diet of at least 16% protein and a grass-alfalfa mixed hay. Rams and bucks will be weighed every 14 days and progress reports will be sent. Other measurements will include back fat, rib eye area, and scrotal circumference.

For information, contact Glenn Eberly or Greg Hubbard at (814) 238-2527 or geberly@state.pa.us or ghubbard@state.pa.us.

Sad News

Ron Hare, 4-H volunteer in Allegany County and Superintendent of the 4-H Dairy Goat Show at the Maryland State Fair passed away suddenly on January 29 from an apparent sudden massive coronary.

Don Schwartz, Agricultural Extension Agent in Washington County, lost his battle with cancer on January 29. Don was an expert on pasture and forages and was a frequent presenter at small ruminant meetings.

We will miss both of these fine men and extend our condolences to their families.

Featured Web Sites

New Record Keeping Software

A producer and computer consultant from Frederick County, Virginia has developed a new record keeping program for sheep. The program is called "FlockFiler." It is available in a "lite" version. A Pro version will be available in early 2005. The web site (www.flockfiler.com) shows screen shots of the program and contains full documentation in a downloadable PDF format, a searchable online discussion forum, and tutorial QuickTime movies. A demo version of Flockfiler Lite can

be downloaded from the web site.

www.flockfiler.com

Sheep and Goat Calendar of Events

The web site of the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing program (sheepgoatmarketing.org) is in the process of being redesigned and developed as a national resource for sheep and goat marketing. The new url is www.sheepgoatmarketing.info. One of the new resources added to the new web site is an interactive Calendar of Events whereby anyone can add an event to the on-line calendar. The web site will be a great place to visit to see what events are happening in the sheep and goat industry.

www.sheepgoatmarketing.info
Click on CALENDAR

Calendar of Events

Jan 31-Feb 28

Voting period for American Lamb Checkoff
Local FSA Offices

March 18-19 and April 2

MD-DE Shearing Schools
Thompson Sheep Farm, Westminster, MD
Info: David Greene at greelamb@bcpl.net
or (401) 329-6241.

March 22-24

Appalachian Grazing Conference
Morgantown, West Virginia
Info: (304) 293-6131 ext. 4231

March 26

Spring Meat Goat Conference
Garrett Community College, McHenry, MD.
Info: Willie Lantz at (301) 334-6960 or
wlantz@umd.edu. Web site: meatgoat.biz.

May 7-8

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival
Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship,
MD. Info: (410) 531-3647 or sheepandwool.org.

June 3-5

Meat Goat Judging School and USBGA Eastern
Region National Boer Goat Show (June 4)
Garrett County Fairgrounds, McHenry, MD.
Info: Willie Lantz at (301) 334-6960 or
wlantz@umd.edu. Web site: meatgoat.biz.



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