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A Second Round Of Covid Payments

By Susan Schoenian

It has been more than six months since Covid-19 turned our lives upside down. Agriculture has been particularly impacted. Some farms and businesses more than others. Some places more than others. Some commodities more than others.

Sheep and goat producers have been affected in different ways. Sheep producers in the West have been hardest hit, as most big lambs go into food service, and wool prices have declined enough to trigger LDPs. The government has announced a second round of CFAP payments to help farmers, including sheep and goat producers, cope with the market disruptions and other problems caused by the pandemic.

Price-trigger commodities

Beef cattle, swine, and sheep are categorized as "price trigger" commodities. These are commodities that have suffered a 5 percent or greater national price decline during certain weeks of the pandemic. For price-trigger commodities, there are per head payments for the maximum-owned inventory on a date specified by the producer (between April 15 and August 31, 2020).

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Maryland Farmer Covid-19 Relief Program

On October 19, Governor Larry Hogan announced a new $10 million initiative to provide critical support to thousands of Maryland farmers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Maryland Farmer COVID-19 Relief Program will offer direct assistance to contract poultry growers and a bonus payment to any farm operation that received funding through the first round of the federal Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

Any Maryland farmer who received federal funding through the first round of CFAP payments will be eligible to receive a 15% bonus payment. For example: if you received a payment of $1000, you are eligible for a bonus payment of $150 from the state of Maryland: $1000 x 15%. Goat producers did not qualify for the first round of Covid payments, so only sheep and wool producers who received first round CFAP payments are eligible for the Maryland Relief Program.

For more information or to apply online for the Maryland Farmer COVID-19 Relief Program, please visit https://mda.maryland.gov/pages/farmer-relief.aspx. The application period began on October 19 and ends on December 1, 2020.

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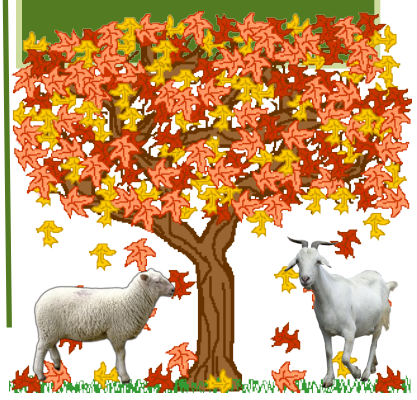

Role Of Fecal Egg Counts In Sheep/Goat Health

By Susan Schoenian

A fecal egg count (FEC) is a quantitative measure of how many worm eggs a sheep/goat is passing in each gram (g) of its manure. You get a number like 1000 EPG (eggs per gram of feces). Fecal egg counts are generally determined by veterinarians, state diagnostic labs, and independent laboratories. You should only be willing to pay for a quantitative fecal test that gives you eggs per gram. A simple fecal flotation, as is done for dogs/cats, is of limited value in sheep/goat health.

Fecal egg counts, while very useful, are not necessarily indicative of the worm load a sheep/goat is carrying. Thus, by themselves fecal egg counts should not be used to make individual deworming decisions, especially in barber pole worm prevalent areas. Rather the decision to deworm a sheep/goat should be based on the observation of clinical signs, such as bottle jaw and/or a high FAMACHA© score. Usually only clinically-parasitized animals should be dewormed, and it is recommended that they be given combination treatments (dewormers from multiple classes).

Instead fecal egg counts should be used to determine dewormer efficacy, identify resistant animals, and monitor pasture contamination. The most common use of fecal egg counts is to determine efficacy of deworming treatments. Since worms have developed resistance to all of the dewormers and dewormer classes, it is important to know which dewormers work on a farm. FAMACHA© doesn't work well as a decision-making tool, if clinically-parasitized sheep/goats are not given effective treatments.

To test the efficacy of a dewormer, you need at least 10 to 15 animals. Testing one or two will tell you if the treatment was effective in those animals, but it won't necessarily tell you if you have resistance to the drug. Fecal samples taken before and after treatment (10 to 14 days) are compared. You need to get samples from the same animals each time. Each sheep/goat needs to have a fecal egg count of at least 250 EPG. Higher is better. There is resistance to the dewormer if treatment fails to reduce fecal egg count by 95% or more. A fecal egg reduction of less than 70% is of great concern.

The other common use of fecal egg counts is to determine which sheep/goats are more resistant (and susceptible) to worms. Sheep/goats with good FAMACHA© scores that don't require deworming may still be shedding a lot of eggs onto the pasture. You need to do fecal egg counts to identify them, as well as the ones that are low shedders. It is estimated that 30% of the flock/herd sheds 70% of the eggs. Selecting breeding stock (especially sires) that shed fewer eggs will go a long way towards controlling worms in a flock/herd.

When selecting sheep/goats on the basis of fecal egg counts, it is very important to compare "apples to apples," i.e. animals that are of similar age and being raised the same (together). Selecting for parasite resistance is not for the faint-hearted. In order to accurately select for parasite resistance, you need significant exposure to worms: a group average of 500 or more EPG and a significant range in counts, e.g. 0 to 4000 or 250 to 6000 EPG. Grazing too little, deworming too much, and using BioWorma® will all hinder selection efforts.

Several universities are now offering low cost ($5/sample) fecal egg counting for the purpose of genetic selection and fecal egg count reductions (www.wormx.info/lowcostfec). You can also learn to do your own fecal egg counts. The biggest expense is a microscope and special slide for counting eggs (McMaster).

Editor's note: This article was originally published in the Delmarva Farmer and Lancaster Farming. It was also developed as a Timely Topic for the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC; wormx.info) and can be downloaded as a PDF file from https://www.wormx.info/fecaleggcounts.

World's Most Expensive Sheep

Recently a Texel ram lamb sold for an equivalent of about $490,000 at auction in Scotland, according to the (UK) Texel Sheep Society. There was a "bidding war." The ram, named "Double Diamond" comes from a very respectable lineage of sheep. He was bred via artificial insemination using semen from a ram valued at more than $86,000 and a ewe valued at more than $46,000. The previous record of more than $300,000 was set in 2009.

Image source: West Virginia University Texel Project

The Texel breed originates in the Netherlands. It is known for its high degree of muscling. It is one of the most popular terminal sire breeds in the World. US producers are increasingly using Texel rams to sire crossbred lambs with more muscling. West Virginia University has established a Texel flock for research purposes, as preliminary research showed that Texel lambs had some level of resistance to internal parasites, making them the ideal terminal sire for grass-fed lambs. To learn more about WVU's Texel flock and research program, go to https://bowdridge.davis.wvu.edu/wvu-texel-project.

Lamb Processing Update

Soon after Covid hit, Mountain States Rosen (in Colorado), one of the nation's largest lamb processing plants filed for bankruptcy. Mountain States Rosen is a co-op owned by more than 150 ranch families. The co-op was forced to file for bankruptcy when Colorado Bank called in their loan, despite being current on all payments. The plant was purchased by a Brazilian company (JBS USA) that plans to process beef (not lamb), leaving many western producers without a place to take their lambs. The purchase of the plant is being challenged for various reasons but will likely be approved.

There is good news, too. A new lamb processing plant recently opened in nearby Brush, Colorado. Colorado Lamb Producers (cololamb.com) will be able to process 1800 lambs per day. Its penning facilities were designed by Temple Grandin. Unfortunately, Colorado Lamb lacks the further processing capabilities of Mountain States Rosen, meaning there may still be bottle-necks in lamb processing.

In more recent news, it was learned that the old Ranchers Lamb plant (in Texas) will be coming back online to process sheep (and goats). When the plant was originally opened in 2004, it was considered state-of-the-art, with a capacity of 1800 lambs per day. The last lambs were killed in 2005, and the plant has been used more recently for beef processing. Unlike Colorado Lamb, the Texas plant (to be known as Double-J Lamb, Inc. of Texas) will be able to fabricate carcasses. Both of these new plants are family-owned and are welcomed news for the sheep industry.

Producers in the East may wonder what this has to do with them. Lambs produced in the West are different (usually bigger and fatter) from lambs in the East, and they usually go into different market channels (mostly food service). But anything that affects the US sheep industry affects all producers. Infrastructure is important to all producers. If the sheep/goat industry continues to condense (or fail to grow), important infrastructure will continue to be lost, affecting demand for our products. If western production continues to decline, imports will continue to fill the gap. Imports account for more than 50 percent of domestic consumption of both sheep and goat meat

Using Small Ruminants to Instill Life Skills in Youth

By Ashley Travis

The summer of 2018 was the first year for the University of Maryland Extension (UME) 4-H Small Ruminant Research Academy at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC), and the summer of 2019 was the first year for the UME 4-H Entrepreneurship Program. These two programs were developed to meet the growing need of college and workforce readiness skills in youth.

4-H Small Ruminant Research Academy

The 4-H Small Ruminant Research Academy gives youth ages 16 to 18 the opportunity to observe and learn about applied research and careers within the field of applied research. Youth are engaged in the lamb study being conducted at WMREC and follow the scientific process along with the Maryland Small Ruminant Team.

This program traditionally has been an in-person program where youth met with Ashley Travis, University of Maryland Extension 4-H Educator in Washington County and Chris Anderson, University of Maryland Extension 4-H Animal Science specialist. Due to COVID-19, this program was converted to a completely online and virtual platform this year. As with many situations due to COVID-19 there are always great things that come out of change.

This year, by converting the program to a completely virtual platform youth were able to participate in the program that otherwise would not have had the opportunity due to living too far away from Washington County and WMREC. The program this year concluded with eight youth, representing two states and several counties within Maryland.

The youth met with Ashley, Chris, and Susan bi-weekly from July to the end of September. At the conclusion of the study the youth gave either a poster presentation or a PowerPoint presentation on their interpretation of the study.

4-H Entrepreneurship Program

The 4-H Entrepreneurship Program exposed youth ages 14 to18 to animal science focused entrepreneurship by giving them the opportunity to build a small business. Last year youth sold sheep pelts from the lambs that were used in the research study at WMREC. This year youth are selling wool blankets from MacAusland Wool Mill in Canada, along with felted bead wool coasters and wool dryer balls.

Just as with the Small Ruminant Research Academy, the 4-H Entrepreneurship Program was converted to a completely virtual platform this year due to COVID-19. Eight youth participated that represented three states and several counties within Maryland. Again, typically this program is offered as an in-person program, with lesson sessions being taught at the Washington County Extension Office. By converting the program to virtual youth from anywhere were able to participate and engage in learning about entrepreneurship.

It is expected that youth will be ready to start marketing their wool blankets, felted bead wool coasters, and wool dryer balls around the holidays.

As always, a special thank you to Susan Schoenian and the entire Maryland Small Ruminant Team for assisting and making these programs possible for 4-H youth.

Editor's note: Ashley Travis is the 4-H Educator in Washington County, Maryland. She can be reached at (301) 791-1304 or ashley90@umd.edu.

A Second Round Of Covid Payments (continued from page 1)

To determine payment, multiply your maximum inventory by $27. Exclude breeding stock. They are not eligible because their value is less likely to be impacted by temporary price declines. If you had 100 lambs in inventory, you would be eligible to receive a payment of $2,700: 100 lambs x $27 per lamb. Someone with only 20 lambs is still eligible for a payment of $540 ($27 x 20), so it is worth applying for.

Sales Commodities

While goats were not included in the first round, they are included in the second round of CFAP payments. However, they are classified as specialty livestock. Their payments are similar to those for wool and goat milk. All are categorized as sales commodities, and a sales-based approach is used to calculate payment eligibility. To determine payment, multiply 2019 sales by the payment factor. For sales under $50,000, the payment factor is 10.6 percent. For sales over $50,000, the payment factor declines.

Payments are for raw product sales only and do not cover the value that may have been added during processing and/or packaging. If you sold $10,000 worth of goats, wool, or milk, you would be eligible to receive a payment of $1,060: $10,000 x 0.106. A small meat goat farm that sold 30 kids for an average of $150/head is still eligible for a payment of $477 (30 x $150 x 0.106), so it is worth applying for.

Application process

CFAP payment application is through local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. It does not need to be in-person. The application period began on September 21 and will end on December 11, 2020. Participation in other USDA programs is not a prerequisite for applying for Covid payments. If you applied for the first round of payments, you still need to apply for the second round, but you don't need to have applied for the first round in order to get the second.

There is no cost to apply and all producers, regardless of flock/herd size are encouraged to apply. For more information, go to farmers.gov/cfap or contact your local FSA office. In the first round, USDA paid out more than $9.9 billion, including almost $100 million to beef, swine, and sheep producers in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

FAMACHA© Update

The FAMACHA© eye anemia system is used to help determine the need for deworming for the barber pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus)* , the primary parasite affecting small ruminants in warm, moist climates. It utilizes a color eye chart for scoring and decision-making. In order to obtain a FAMACHA© card, you must take an approved training. Before Covid, almost all FAMACHA© certification workshops were conducted in-person (which is still the preference), but due to the restrictions of Covid, online FAMACHA© certification opportunities have been expanded.

Image by Cristina Sotomaior

Online FAMACHA© Certification consists of watching a video, completing a survey or passing a test, and making a video of yourself demonstrating proper FAMACHA© technique. For information go to https://www.wormx.info/online-famacha-certification.

On a related topic, the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control is in the process of developing an online certification process for FAMACHA© instructors. It will consist of filling out an application and passing a test (every two years to maintain certification). Certified FAMACHA© instructors will be able to purchase multiple FAMACHA© cards (for teaching purposes only).

Sheep and Goats on the Airwaves

A podcast (from iPod + broadcast) is an episodic series of spoken word digital audio files that the user can download to a personal device for easy listening (Wikipedia). Podcasts differ from live radio and are becoming increasingly popular. Anyone can do their own podcast and build a listenership. There are many podcasts that may interest sheep and goat producers.

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) produces two podcasts. ASI SheepCast debuted three years ago. It is hosted by Chase Adams and covers topics pertaining to market outlook and trade policy. ASI's Sheep Research Update started several months ago in response to Covid. Done in partnership with University Extension, the purpose of the monthly podcast is to share research information and information about relevant production practices. The first episodes have covered ram selection, vaccination programs, and internal parasites.

Sheep Things is hosted by relatively new Katahdin breeders: Robert Walker (Tennessee) and Caleb Pirc (Idaho). So far, their mostly weekly podcasts have been interviews with key people in the Katahdin breed. Sheep Stuff Ewe Should Know is a mostly weekly podcast hosted by two California ranchers: Dan Macon and Ryan Mahoney. The podcast discusses all things sheep. Recent topics have included lambing, livestock handling, and mastitis,

Mike Neary from Purdue University has been doing a podcast about sheep and goat management since 2018. Dr. Neary's podcasts air every couple of months. Recent topics have included ruminal acidosis, urinary calculi, and colostrum. For the Love of Goats is a mostly weekly podcast hosted by Deborah Neimann, a small ruminant producer and author. Deborah's recent topics have included milking, homeschooling, and accounting. Susan Schoenian was interviewed in a recent podcast about proper dewormer use.

Goat Talk with the Goat Doc is hosted by veterinarian Dr. Cara Sammons-Shepard from New Hampshire, who is also the owner of a farmstead creamery. While not always specific to sheep and goats, ATTRA's Voices from the Field podcast covers various topics pertaining to sustainable agriculture. Recent podcasts have discussed native seeds, livestock guardian dogs, and managing internal parasites (in small ruminants).

International podcasts may be of interest to some sheep and goat producers. They offer a different perspective. OviCast Sheep Podcast is an Irish podcast about sheep raising. Recent topics have included mating management, fluke control, and finishing lambs. The Sheep Show is another podcast from the United Kingdom. Recent topics have included getting young people into sheep, sire shopping, and marking lambs.

There are many other podcasts that may interest sheep and goat producers. The best way to find podcasts is to search the app on your phone or other electronic device. Listen Notes (listennotes.com) claims to be the best podcast search engine.

Learn More About Forages On YouTube

The University of Maryland Forage Extension Program now has a YouTube channel. The URL is long, so it's easier to search for the channel on Youtube. Type Maryland Forages into the search box at youtube.com.

Currently, there are six videos on the channel: Virtual Small Ruminant & Pasture Field Day (September 10), Tall Fescue Virtual Field Day (September 3), and four What the Hay webinars (June 2020).

The goal of the University of Maryland Forage Extension Program is to provide forage-related education, programming, resources, and networking opportunities to all those involved in the forage and livestock industries. The program is directed by Dr. Amanda Grev, Extension Specialist, Pasture Management for Livestock Operations.

Pasture Management for the Fall Season

By Amanda Grev

As we move further into the fall season, it may be tempting to continue to use additional forage growth in our pastures to keep animals on pasture longer, extend the grazing season, and delay feeding hay. However, although maximizing use of your grass supply this fall may seem like a good short-term solution, if you aren't careful this can turn into a long-term problem that might have undesirable consequences come next spring.

Throughout the course of a year, cool-season perennial pastures have two primary growing seasons. The majority of forage growth occurs in the spring and early summer, with an additional growth spurt happening in the fall. This fall growth provides us with additional opportunities for accumulating forage growth for grazing livestock. However, careful management of pastures during fall grazing is essential to achieve successful overwintering and maximum potential going into the next growing season.

During the fall, perennial forages are storing up carbohydrates to serve as their energy reserves and ensure survival through the winter months until next spring when the growing season starts again. While some species keep their carbohydrate reserves in below-ground structures, other species store them in the lower 3 to 4 inches of the plant. Removing these storage structures by overgrazing limits the plant's capacity not only to recover and regrow following grazing, but also to persist long-term. Because of this, maintaining an adequate residual, or the amount of plant material remaining after a grazing bout, is vital.

This remains true year-round; however, it is particularly critical to do so at the end of the grazing season. In fact, it is often recommended to leave a slightly higher residual of 4 to 5 inches in the fall to give pasture ample opportunity to replenish depleted carbohydrate reserves prior to winter. Having those stored energy reserves will not only allow for better winter survival but will also give plants a jump start for quicker green-up the following spring. If plants are grazed below this point, nutrient stores will be depleted, decreasing plant survival, and reducing plant vigor and growth the following spring.

To this end, it is important to remain diligent with grazing management and to follow good grazing practices during the fall season. Avoid overgrazing by utilizing a rotational grazing system to move livestock from paddock to paddock, removing them when they have grazed down available forage. Be sure to leave an appropriate residual with sufficient plant height (4 to 5 inches) going into the dormant season. This residual plant matter will provide the plant with the energy it needs to survive the winter, will keep the soil covered to minimize intrusion of weeds and undesirable species, and will also serve to protect the soil surface during the winter months.

Overgrazing and low residual grazing heights exposes more of the soil surface, allowing for a higher degree of runoff, less water infiltration, and more soil erosion. Overgrazing during the fall also inhibits the regeneration of new roots and tillers that will be critical for the next season's growth, whereas leaving sufficient residual material will increase the development of new shoots and buds, readying them for quick growth in the spring. Often, pastures with adequate residual material left over winter will begin growing 10-14 days earlier in the spring.

Finally, fall is also a great time to evaluate the overall condition of your pasture. If you don't have a recent soil analysis, take a soil sample to see where your pasture stands on soil pH, phosphorus, and potassium so you

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Using Whole Grain to Improve the Profitability of Pasture-Raised Lambs: Preliminary Results

By Susan Schoenian, Amanda Grev, and Jeff Semler

"Using whole grain to improve the profitability of pasture-raised lambs" was the title (and hypothesis) of this year's research project conducted at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research & Education Center (WMREC) in Keedysville, Maryland. The project was funded by the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board. The objective was to determine if energy supplementation (in the form of whole barley) would improve the health, growth, and carcass characteristics of pasture-raised lambs. The rationale is that energy (TDN) is often deficient in pasture diets, especially for young, growing animals.

Research protocol

Seventy-nine Katahdin ram lambs were delivered to the research center on June 15. The lambs were provided by Ewe Lamb Right Farm (Dan & Janet Turner) from Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. The Turner flock consists of approximately 250 Katahdin ewes. Management is mostly-pasture-based. The flock is enrolled in the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP). NSIP calculates across-flock EBVs (estimated breeding values). EBVs are a numeric estimate of the genetic value of an animal. The Turners submit fecal egg count data to NSIP to get EBVs for parasite resistance.

Beginning of study

Treatment group	Number of lambs	Age Days	Weight Lbs.	Avg. FAMACHA©	Avg. FEC
Pasture	40	107	72.5	1.7	200
Supplemented	39	110	72.8	1.8	200

For the first 11 days, the lambs grazed together in a silvopasture area (grass + forbs). This served as their acclimation period. On June 26, the lambs were sorted according to age, weight, birth type, and fecal egg count, then randomly allocated to two treatment groups: PASTURE and SUPPLEMENTED. The PASTURE group (n=40) grazed only, while the SUPPLEMENTED group (n=39) grazed similar pastures, plus received a daily supplement of energy: 1 lb. of whole barley per head per day. Energy supplementation started on June 26 and took several weeks to reach the 1-lb. threshold.

Both lamb groups were allocated a five-acre grazing area that was sub-divided into four equal-size paddocks (using electric netting). The lambs were rotated to a new paddock every week. The lambs switched pasture areas several times. The pasture mix included various cool season grasses and legumes and chicory (King's Grazing Mix; kingsagriseeds.com/). The lambs consumed their respective diets for 91 days. The study ended on September 25.

Handling

The lambs were handled a minimum of every two weeks to determine body weights, FAMACHA© scores, body condition scores, and dag scores. Deworming decisions were made on the basis of the FAMACHA© system and Five Point Check©, as well as weight gain/loss. Other health treatments were administered as needed to individual lambs. The younger lambs were given their second vaccination for clostridial diseases (Covexin-8) several weeks into the study period.

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Using Whole Grain

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Fecal samples were collected on the day of arrival from each lamb. Random samples were collected from one-third of the lambs on August 3. Samples were collected from all of the lambs on August 17. Fecal egg counts were determined by Dr. Dahlia O'Brien's lab at Virginia State University.


Dr. Amanda Grev

Results

For the two groups, average daily gain (ADG) varied considerably among weigh periods, ranging from less than 0 to over one pound per head per day. Sometimes, the PASTURE group had higher ADG. Sometimes, the SUPPLEMENTED group did. The SUPPLEMENTED lambs tended to gain more consistently than the PASTURE lambs, with the exception of the final weigh period. Within weigh periods, standard deviations were usually quite large, indicating a wide variation in individual performance.

For all the lambs that finished the study, ADG ranged from 0.209 to 0.543 and averaged 0.370 ± 0.061 lbs. per day. Overall, the SUPPLEMENTED lambs had higher ADG than the PASTURE lambs. They ended the study two pounds heavier than the PASTURE lambs.

Internal parasites were not a problem during the study and did not seem to have an impact on the performance of the lambs. Almost all FAMACHA© scores were between 1 and 3. Only two FAMACHA© scores above 3 were observed (4's). Body condition scores fluctuated some between weighings and were slighter higher for the supplemented lambs. Lambs frequently had positive dag scores. A dag score indicates fecal soiling on the hindquarters. It is an indication of scouring (diarrhea). Higher dag scores were usually observed in lambs in the PASTURE group. They were highest after the first 10 days of the study after the lambs began grazing the pasture mix; 37 percent of lambs had positive dag scores (diarrhea).

Due to Covid, the lambs could not be processed to collect actual carcass data. Samples could not be obtained for fatty acid analysis. Instead, the lambs were scanned (with ultrasound) to determine back fat and loin depth. Melanie Barkley from Penn State University did the scanning. She is certified to scan for NSIP. There were numerical differences in backfat and loin depth, with the SUPPLEMENTED lambs having more backfat and greater loin depth than the PASTURE lambs.

End of study

Treatment group	Number of lambs	Weight lbs.	ADG lbs./day	Back fat mm	Loin depth mm
Pasture	36	106.6	0.353	4.17	22.7
Supplemented	37	108.6	0.386	4.77	23.5

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Pasture Management

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are able to make decisions on fertility management. Having an adequate supply of essential plant nutrients will aid in root regeneration and regrowth and will help pasture stands remain hardier, more persistent, and more productive long-term.

Take a walk through your pastures and note what species are present, whether they are desirable or undesirable species, and if there are any bare areas or other problem spots. Fall is a great time of year to scout pastures and hayfields for current and emerging weed problems. Many perennial, biennial, or winter annual weeds can be controlled in the fall rather than waiting until the following spring. Scouting for weeds now will help you determine potential issues, figure out the best strategy for control, and get a head start on taking corrective action.

In summary, fall is a great time to evaluate your pastures, reflect on things that went well or were a struggle over the grazing season, and make decisions on changes you may want to make moving forward. Follow good grazing management practices this fall and spend some time now before it gets cold preparing your pastures to start off strong next spring.

Editor's note: Amanda Grev is the Extension Specialist for Pasture Management (for Livestock Operations). She can be reached at 301-432-2767 x339 or agrev@umd.edu. Be sure to follow/like her Forages Facebook Page at https://www.facebook.com/MarylandForages/.

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About the forages

Pastures were sampled weekly, each time the lambs were moved to a new paddock. Each paddock was grazed three times. The pastures were understocked and could have accommodated many more lambs. Forage quality and quantity were good to excellent throughout the study and similar for both groups of lambs. Dry matter was the most limiting factor nutritionally, dipping below 20 percent on several occasions. The first time the lambs grazed the paddocks, they selected clover and chicory, leaving the grass. Following a dry period, rains regenerated the clover and chicory in the paddocks.

Forage quality

Treatment group	Avg. % DM	Avg. % TDN	Avg. % CP	Avg. % RFV	Avg TDN:CP
Pasture	29.1	63.2	19.5	114	3.3
Supplemented	27.0	63.9	19.8	113	3.6

DM = dry matter
TDN = total digestible nutrients (energy)
CP = crude protein
RFV = relative feed value (comparable to full-bloom alfalfa)

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Important Dates

December 1
Deadline to apply for Maryland Covid Relief Payments
Info: https://mda.maryland.gov/pages/farmer-relief.aspx

December 11
Deadline to apply for CFAP payments
Info: local FSA offices or farmers.org/cfap

Last week of January 2021
Virtual American Sheep Industry (ASI) Association Annual Convention
Info: sheepusa.org

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Discussion
While the SUPPLEMENTED lambs had higher ADG, the value of the additional gain would not have covered the cost of the supplement feed, about 10 cents per head per day. For most of the study, the SUPPLEMENTED lambs had more consistent gain, whereas ADG ranged from -0.03 to 1.4 in the PASTURE group. The SUPPLEMENTED lambs tended to be cleaner (less positive dag scores) than the PASTURE lambs. They also had higher body condition scores. Four lambs had to be removed from the PASTURE group, whereas only two were removed from the SUPPLEMENTED group.

All data in this article is raw. It will have to be statistically analyzed to see if any of the differences are scientifically significant. For more information, visit the blog at https://wmrecresearch.blogspot.com or contact Susan Schoenian at sschoen@umd.edu.

For more information about sheep and goats, go to:

http://www.sheepandgoat.com

http://www.acsrpc.org or wormx.info

http://wmrecresearch.blogspot.com

http://www.sheep101.info and /201

https://www.facebook.com/MDSmall Ruminant

http://issuu.com/mdsheepgoat

https://www.instagram.com/umesheepgoat/

https://www.youtube.com/c/MarylandExtensionSmallRuminantProgram

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