EWE GOaT NEWS

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I hope that at this writing that everyone had an excellent lambing or kidding season. I thought I would share some thoughts through a news letter. Not sure I will get one written on a monthly basis but will try a few in the future if there is interest. Hopefully we can share it will be of some benefit to our members. I would also welcome any input. reaction or things you would like to hear about.

2011 Lamb and Kid Sale

Thanks goes to Michael Rudy and his committee and the consignors for making the sale a success. Even though we would like to have seen more buyers the sale went well and I am sure we will see some of the animals back with some proud 4-H and FFA members this summer. Thanks, also goes to Mike Steben, Torrington for Essential Show Feeds for donating several bags of feed, Garret Dawes, Milk Specialty Co, Ill Murdochs, Scottsbluff , Bomgaars, Scottsbluff and Tom Tarr, Motive Specialties

April Meeting

We had two excellent speakers at the last meeting. Sarah Pinet gave an excellent power point presentation on her Victory Hills goat dairy and cheese making operation. It is great to have one of our own members that has such great knowledge and experience and is willing to share it with other members. It is great to see her business well started and looking forward to her progress in the future.

Dr. Justin Welsh of Pioneer Animal Clinic, gave an excellent presentation of the use of synchronization programs that could be utilized. He explained some of the advantages, especially of breeding to lamb or kid in a short period of time and when you want them to lamb or kid. This concentrates labor and provides a more uniform lamb or kid crop. Synchronization also makes it much more feasible to utilize artificial insemination especially for sheep which are very difficult to detect estrus. There are a few members that are interested in utilizing A.I. however presently there is no one in the region that can provide laparoscopy service which is almost a necessity to have success in sheep when utilizing frozen semen. At least two veterinarians are looking at the feasibility and hopefully one or both will be able to provide the laparoscopy procedure in the future. If the service is available at an economical level I can visualize several producers coordinating their breeding program so a good number of females could be bred on a given day or two. Dr. Welsh outlined several synchronization programs but it is my opinion that the CIDR's have been the most successful and provide the tightest synchrony providing for the highest conception rate. The program is simple with relative low labor. Simply insert the CIDR and extract the device 12-14 days later. Some recommend giving gonadotropin hormones and/or prostaglandins in conjunction with the CIDR's. This is probably necessary when utilizing AI however may not be as important when utilizing natural service. I have received protocols from the Un of Wisc and Iowa State Un that I would be happy to share if

anyone is interested. Also, those that may be interested in AI'ing if you could please let me know the numbers you would be interested in breeding then I could indicate the potential to the local veterinarians. I realize you will need to know the cost before pursuing. What I read on one web sight they indicate the costs for drugs and services may be around $35-50 plus travel for technician. Semen would be additional. Overall costs would depend on number done at any one time.

Goal for National Sheep Producers
American Sheep Industry (ASI)

Because of dwindling sheep numbers, ASI has established a two PLUS program. They have program to encourage sheep producers (large and small) to: 1) increase number of ewes in flock by 2 ewes (or 2 ewes per 100 in large flocks): 2) Each ewe should produce 2 lambs per year and 3) increase harvest rate by 2% (from 108 - 110%). The first and third goals should be easy to accomplish for most of us however the second will probably not occur in my case unless I incorporate breeds that either increases lambing rate or breed out of season. In reality that may be more profitable but not sure if I want to give up on my Suffolks and Hamps at this time.

Cost of Feed:

I know we all want to have top production and have our animals looking great. Also we know that corn is near an all time high so we look for alternatives. In the following table, I have listed the protein and TDN (energy) in a few feeds that you may be considering. I have also calculated the cost of a pound of protein and TDN. This column gives the relative price of each feed. Sometimes I hear that some feed is very cheap (or expensive) however if we only consider the price per bag (or per pound) it may be misleading.

Cost of a pound of protein and energy

Feed	Cost/cwt	Protein	$/lb Prot	% TDN	$/lb TDN
Corn	14	9	**1.55**	83	**.17**
Oats	16	1-14	**1.15**	60	**.25**
Alfalfa	6	17-19	**.28**	60	**.08**
Sweet feed	15	12	**1.61**	68	**.29**
Grower pellets	21	14	**1.50**	75	**.28**
Lick Tubs	25	20	**1.25**	7	**.36**

As you can see from the calculations alfalfa hay is the cheapest source or both protein and energy with the prices I have assumed. Often time corn provides the cheapest energy, however

in this example with the higher cost of corn that is not the case. As can be seen the lick tubs are much higher in cost of protein and energy. It costs a lot to make these tubs however they offer the advantage of being self fed. Also the commercial feeds are higher but may include such as added vitamins, minerals and in some cases medicated supplement such as Rumensin, Bovatec, Deccox, etc. If I can answer any specific questions or explain what I am presenting I would be happy to try.

Diatomaceous Earth:

At a recent meeting some indicated they have used diatomaceous earth (DE). This is especially popular with those that want to stay with an all natural program. This has caused me to do some research on its effectiveness. I learned that is was formed thousands of years ago from single celled algae called diatoms in lakes and the ocean and was deposited in the bottom of lakes (fresh water) or sea and is now being mined and ground into very small particles. The only clearance I could find from EPA, meaning that research had been presented and accepted, was for the control of fleas. Yet many people use it for external parasite control and worming their animals. Others use it to dust plants, ant hills, etc. The theory is that the very sharp edges that cut the body of the insects and they lose their protection to the environment. I found numerous testimonials, mostly written by people that claimed tremendous results yet a few people indicated they had tried it with no results and felt it was a waste of money. I tried to find non-biased resarch conducted where they had a control.

One study was with mature goats at Texas A&M where they looked at internal parasites (worn egg counts) and level of red blood cells (hematocrit). The test included a control where DE (AgriSafe) was compared to nothing and Iveromec. On a side note, Ivermectin is considered by several groups that promote "save the environment" as an environmentally friendly insecticide and in fact some "all natural" cattle companies approve the use of Ivermectin. In the mature goat study it appeared the DE and Ivermectin goats had about equal but poor control but a slight advantage over nothing. They took fecal samples and blood samples from the goats every two weeks to measure the effect.

The University of Nebraska conducted a large study with over 400 cattle with DE (DiFil) versus nothing and found no differences in gain or feed efficiency. They fecal sampled the cattle and analyzed for worm eggs and coccidia and indicated the counts were relatively low but they found no indication that the DE had any effect on worm eggs or coccidia. So I am not sure of it's effect and no matter what I find I would guess that the "believers" will continue to use it. The good news it does not appear to do any harm. I would be happy to share the controlled research reports if anyone is interested.