

J-DSANA

Journal of the Dairy Sheep Association of North America
Le Journal de l'Association des Producteurs d'Ovins Laitiers d'Amérique du Nord

Fall 2003

Volume II Number 1

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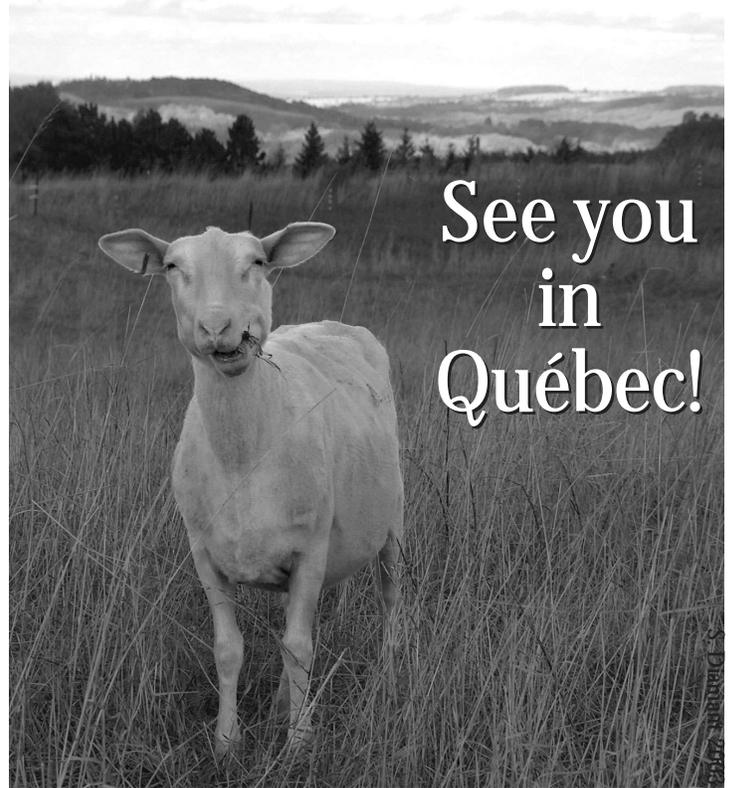
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See you
in
Québec!

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J-DSANA is the official publication of the
Dairy Sheep Association of North America

www.dsana.org

Editor's Space

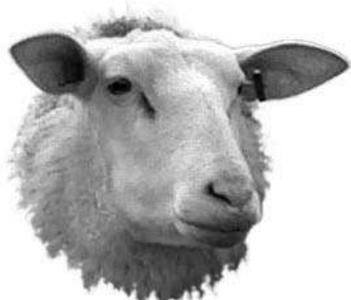
Dr. Pat Elliott

This is our third issue. We are interested in hearing from each of you—tell us about your operation and hopes/plans, and how we can help with information. Did you notice Michael Haynes article on “Goals and Goal Setting” was reproduced in the July, 2003 edition of The Shepherd Magazine? Pretty neat—and a good article!

I mentioned last time that it is a good idea to look at cow dairy ideas for tips. This evening, I read an article by Scott Greiner and John Hall, Extension Animal Scientists at Virginia Tech in the Mid Atlantic Farm Chronicle for Oct. 13, 2003. They were discussing proper management and nutrition of the carefully selected young bull to get good performance. They suggested a little reserve but not fat as young bulls lose a little weight during the breeding season, and a young animal is still growing. Purchases should be made prior to the breeding season to allow the new animal to become accustomed to the feed and farm and to the other bulls. An adequate area for exercise should be provided so the sire is fit. They stressed yearly breeding soundness exams, not overusing the young bull, and monitoring his progress (females coming back into estrus, nutrition, lameness, and injury). A rule of thumb for the number of cows for a young bull can be expected to breed is equal to his age in months. The young animal cannot compete in a breeding situation with an older animal and should not be housed with them after the breeding season if possible because they still need extra nutrition. I think most or all of these suggestions would apply to the ram lamb.

In an excellent review article on increasing (cow) milk production by more frequent milking that appeared in the Spring 2002 issue of the University of Maryland's Dairy Newsletter, they found that milk yield increases remained increased after returning to 2x daily milking from more frequent regimens at the start of lactation.

Pat Elliott



Le JOURNAL de l'Association des Producteurs d'Ovins Laitiers d'Amérique du Nord

Novembre 2003

À l'aube du 9^{ème} Symposium des Grands Lacs sur la Brebis Laitière, l'organisation de ce symposium en traduction simultanée fut un défi qu'il a fallu relever pour tenir cette rencontre annuelle au cœur de la francophonie canadienne. L'association, (DSANA) qui a vu le jour il y a un an, presque jour pour jour, essaie de rassembler tous les acteurs de l'industrie ovine laitière, partout en Amérique.

Je ne saurais mieux expliquer l'importance de joindre toutes les énergies disponibles pour maintenir un dynamisme et un sentiment d'appartenance dans un secteur d'activité longtemps et encore considéré très marginal. La reconnaissance du travail accompli par tous dans cette production, est à mon avis primordiale pour maintenir l'intérêt autant des producteurs et des transformateurs, que des chercheurs.

Tous, nous avons eu le sentiment que notre production avait une énorme tâche sur les bras, en ce qui concerne la reconnaissance de l'existence même de la production; que ce soit auprès de la population en général, des agriculteurs, des institutions financières que des agronomes.

Nous espérons que la tenue d'un événement tel que le « Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium » au Québec, aura un effet sur l'adhésion de nouveaux membres au sein de l'association. Il est vrai que de réussir à faire circuler l'information également en français, au sein d'une association qui a vu le jour au États-Unis, nécessitera un effort supplémentaire de la part de tous les membres francophones et bilingues qui veulent s'impliquer pour dynamiser les échanges outre-frontières. L'appel est donné, nous sollicitons, tous et toutes pour participer activement au développement du secteur « brebis laitières » et espérons que de nouveaux membres s'impliqueront dans les divers comités mis en place en novembre 2002. Que ce soit l'instauration d'un schéma génétique, la promotion générique des produits, la communication entre les producteurs et les transformateurs, le développement de marché pour le lait comme pour les produits transformés, le travail à faire ne manque pas... l'adhésion à l'Association permettra de supporter et de maintenir ses comités actifs, son site web à jour et l'intérêt de tous rehaussé par cette belle énergie cumulée.

Lucille Giroux

Our Mission • Notre Mission

DSANA will promote effective dairy sheep management by educating, supporting and encouraging new and established sheep milk dairies, farmstead and artisanal sheep milk cheese-makers.

DSANA fera la promotion de la gestion efficace des troupeaux de brebis laitières par la formation, l'encouragement et le soutien des producteurs(trices) de lait de brebis (autant les débutants que les plus expérimentés), ainsi que les fromageries fermières et artisanales.

DSANA will promote cooperation and exchange of information among producers of sheep milk and cheese makers.

DSANA incitera la coopération et l'échange d'idées entre producteurs(trices) et transformateurs(trices) de lait de brebis.

DSANA will also promote the products manufactured from sheep milk.

DSANA fera la promotion des produits fabriqués à partir du lait de brebis.

DSANA will help producers organize activities for the genetic improvement of dairy sheep.

DSANA soutiendra les producteurs/trices pour les aider à organiser des activités visant l'amélioration génétique des ovins laitiers.

DSANA will endeavor to inform and educate the public as to the merits and availability of sheep dairy products.

DSANA s'efforcera d'informer et d'éduquer le public quant (aux mérites) à la valeur nutritive et à la disponibilité des produits fait à partir du lait de brebis.

DSANA will strive to help foster international understanding and the free exchange of ideas between North American based producers and producers abroad.

DSANA s'efforcera de favoriser une meilleure entente internationale et soutiendra l'échange libre des idées entre les producteurs d'Amérique du Nord, ainsi qu'ailleurs dans le monde.

Vet Corner

Josef Regli

Question

How to manage a ewe pregnant with a litter to avoid ketosis. I have had several who had 4 or 5 lambs and did get not up afterwards or died in 3 to 4 days in spite of maximum treatment?

Once a ewe is seriously sick because of pregnancy toxaemia the chances for a cure are minimal. Therefore the best and most economical way to fight this disease is through prevention, but before you can prevent a problem you have to know what caused it.

Causes of pregnancy toxaemia

As commonly described pregnancy toxaemia or twin lamb disease is primarily caused by an insufficient supply of dietary energy in the late gestation of ewes with mostly multiple foetuses.

However experience has shown that pregnancy toxaemia is rather a multifactorial caused disease than just a simple feeding problem. This would explain the fact that some farmers have extensive problems with pregnancy toxaemia despite feeding their ewes accordingly.

There are so far several different known factors that can contribute to the development of pregnancy toxaemia in ewes with multiple foetuses (see listing below):

- sun on pasture and barn: use wind brakes, shelter belts, dry and clean bedding, choose suitable pastures
- avoid re-grouping of ewes, otherwise you change the social order, which results in additional stress
- avoid excessive handling, if you need to do it let ewes adapt
- avoid chasing ewes on pasture or in barn, hold back aggressive sheep dogs
- be prepared for sudden weather changes: bring ewes in a dry, clean, spacious and draft free environment

Prevention of feeding problems

- whenever you are feeding according to a calculated feed ration plan or a restricted feed system: you should know the number of foetal lambs in the ewes, group the ewes according those foetal numbers, do all your calculations very careful (use professional help), analyze your feed and pay attention to the body scores of the ewes
- if you're feeding the more classical way (free-choice roughage or pasture, balanced with concentrate): monitor body score carefully [a body score of 2 is still acceptable for East Friesian dairy sheep, Lacaune or dairy crosses should have a score of 2.5 to 3]; if you are inexperienced with grading feed quality, then have the roughage analyzed to determine the amount of concentrate you need to feed
- let ewes graze or eat roughage for at least 18 hours a day

Known causes of pregnancy toxaemia

I.Environment in which the ewe lives

- lack of space / overcrowding
- lack of appropriate shelter on pasture and in barn
- social stress in the ewe group
- stress caused by management problems
- sudden weather changes

II.Feeding management

- total feed amount too low
- energy in ration too low
- bad or poor quality feed
- too much silage in ration
- feed trough width too small
- overfeeding: ewes are too fat

III.Secondary problems

- [chronic] mastitis
- parasite infestation [worms]
- Footrot
- OPP/maedi visna disease
- other health problems

IV. Genetic factors and age

- some genetic lines within a breed seem to be more susceptible
- pure dairy breeds are in average less susceptible than meat breeds
- the older the ewe is the more she is at risk

Prevention of pregnancy toxaemia

Sometimes it can be quite tricky and difficult to locate the cause(s) of pregnancy toxaemia in a flock, but once the exact cause(s) is (are) known than it is normally easy to prevent by correcting these problems:

Environmental problems

Environmental problems are the most common causes of pregnancy toxaemia. It is therefore very important to improve the environment of the ewe in late pregnancy:

- ewes in high gestation need quite a bit more space and even more when they are in full fleece
- dairy ewes need shelter against excessive draft, moisture and

- feed only good quality forages (no molds, not too coarse or too premature)
- avoid feeding pure alfalfa hay alone, try to feed a legume/grass mix or feed a grassy hay to pure alfalfa
- feed good quality hay to pasture fed ewes in the last 6-4 weeks
- avoid feeding silage rations only, don't exceed 60% of silage in ration
- avoid grazing pure clover stands
- give grain twice rather than once daily
- feed trough width has to be wide enough so that each ewe can eat grain at the same time (about 16 inches)
- ewes always need access to clean water; check and clean waterers daily
- supply ration accordingly with salt and minerals

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Calculation of Yield of Milk, Fat, and Protein in Dairy Sheep

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Accurate selection of replacement animals and culling of current ewes based upon lactation production requires the accurate measurement of the lactation yield of each ewe each year. If measurement devices are present in the milking parlor to automatically measure the amount of milk produced by a ewe at each milking, lactation yield is easily calculated by adding together each of these milk production records. However, most dairy sheep producers do not have such equipment, or, even if the equipment is available, they do not want to spend the time necessary to record milk yield at every milking. Therefore, total milk produced during the lactation generally is approximated from the recording of a few milk production records taken throughout the lactation.

Estimating Milk Yield

The following guidelines come from the publication "International Regulations For Milk Recording in Sheep" from the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR, 1992). The first test day of the flock should take place 4 to 15 days after the start of milking for that year or season. Subsequent test days should take place at 28 to 34 day (monthly) intervals until all ewes are dried off. Two choices are given for recording milk:

1. On each test day, milk yield can be recorded at both milkings and added together to determine daily yield.
2. Individual milk yield can be recorded at only one milking, and total flock milk yield is determined at the other milking. The total amount of milk produced by the flock at the other milking is prorated to each individual ewe using the following formulae. This procedure eliminates the need to individually record ewes a second time on the test day, but it does require the ability to accurately determine the total amount of milk produced by the flock at the unrecorded milking.

$$\text{Estimated individual milk yield at unrecorded milking} = \frac{\text{IR}}{\text{FR}} \times \text{FU}$$

$$\text{Estimated individual test day milk yield} = \text{IR} \left(1 + \frac{\text{FU}}{\text{FR}} \right)$$

Where:

IR = individual milk production at the recorded milking,

FR = total flock milk production at the recorded milking, and

FU = total flock milk production at the unrecorded milking.

Milk yield can be recorded by weight or volume. Since the rest of the sheep dairy world uses metric measurements, it would be desirable to use the weight measures of grams or kilograms or the volume measures of milliliters or liters. The volume to weight conversion for normal sheep milk is: 1 liter = 1.036 kilograms, or 1 liter = 2.28 pounds, or 1 gallon (U.S.) = 8.64 pounds. Individual machine milk production per lactation (milk consumed by nursing lambs is not estimated) can be estimated using the centering date method using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} [1] \text{ Estimated machine milk yield} = & \\ & [\text{production 1st test day} \times \text{no. days between start of milking and} \\ & \text{1st test day}] \\ & + [((\text{prod. 1st test day} + \text{prod. 2nd test day})/2) \times \text{no. days between} \\ & \text{1st and 2nd test days}] \\ & + [((\text{prod. 2nd test day} + \text{prod. 3rd test day})/2) \times \text{no. days between} \\ & \text{2nd and 3rd test days}] \\ & + \dots \\ & + [((\text{prod. next to last test day} + \text{prod. last test day})/2) \times \text{no. days} \\ & \text{between next to last and last test days}] \\ & + [\text{prod. last test day} \times \text{no. days between last test day and end of} \\ & \text{milking}] \end{aligned}$$

The above formula assumes that milk production changes in a linear fashion between milk recording days, i.e. that milk production goes up or down by the same amount each day of the period. While this probably is not exactly true, over a month period, the assumption of a linear change is a close approximation to reality.

Estimating Fat and Protein Yield

A sample of milk should be collected from each ewe at the morning or evening milking at the time of each monthly milk recording and submitted to a certified laboratory for determination of the percentage of fat and protein.

Simply multiplying the average of the fat and protein percentages recorded for a ewe over her lactation by the estimated amount of milk produced during the lactation will result in a slight overestimate of the true yield of fat and protein. This is because milk yield, fat percentage, and protein percentage all tend to decrease as lactation progresses. The fat or protein percentage taken early in a lactation when more milk was being produced generally is more important in determining total yield of fat and protein in the lactation than is the percentage of fat and protein taken later in the lactation when less milk is produced. Therefore the fat and protein percentage measurements need to be weighted by the amount of milk that was produced at the time the sample was taken. The following formula shows the calculation for estimated fat yield, and is very similar to the formula used to calculate estimated milk yield. To calculate estimated protein yield, substitute protein percentages for fat percentages.

$$\begin{aligned} [2] \text{ Estimated machine fat yield} = & \\ & [((\text{milk production 1st test day} \times \% \text{ fat 1st test day})/100) \times \text{no.} \\ & \text{days between start of milking and 1st test day}] \\ & + [(((\text{prod. 1st test day} \times \% \text{ fat 1st test day})/100) + ((\text{prod. 2nd} \\ & \text{test day} \times \% \text{ fat 2nd test day})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days between 1st and} \\ & \text{2nd test days}] \\ & + [(((\text{prod. 2nd test day} \times \% \text{ fat 2nd test day})/100) + ((\text{prod. 3rd} \\ & \text{test day} \times \% \text{ fat 3rd test day})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days between 2nd and} \\ & \text{3rd test days}] \\ & + \dots \\ & + [(((\text{prod. next to last test day} \times \% \text{ fat next to last test day})/100) \\ & + ((\text{prod. last test day} \times \% \text{ fat last test day})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days} \\ & \text{between next to last and last test days}] \\ & + [((\text{prod. last test day} \times \% \text{ fat last test day})/100) \times \text{no. days between} \\ & \text{last test day and end of milking}] \end{aligned}$$

Adjustments

Lactation Length

On average, ewes that lactate for more days after lambing will produce more milk than ewes that lactate for fewer days. Therefore, long lactation length is a desirable trait. When selection and culling decisions are based on high milk production during a lactation where ewes are dried off when they cease to give milk, selection is being placed on both high daily milk production and long lactation length. However, there may be situations where some ewes are unfairly evaluated for this trait. For example, if a producer lambs ewes in two groups – one group in February and one group in March – and quits milking all ewes in September, the ewes in the February group have had the opportunity to lactate a month longer than the March group. This situation requires the evaluation of the two groups of ewes as if they both had an opportunity to lactate for the same number of days.

The U.S. dairy sheep industry will need to select a standard lactation length that is consistent with a majority of the management systems in use by dairy sheep producers. I'll suggest a standard 180-day lactation period since this is close to the average length of lactation of 2- and 3-year-old East Friesian-cross ewes at the Spooner station in a study we published in 2001. The 180-day period starts on the day of lambing, but milk consumed by the lambs is not estimated.

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Ewes that dry-off prior to 180 days post lambing should not be credited with any milk from the date of dry-off until 180 days post milking.

For ewes that dry-off prior to 180 days post lambing, 180-day estimated machine milk, fat, and protein production is calculated using the same formulae [1] and [2] above. If a ewe lactates for longer than 180 days post lambing, the milk production produced after 180 days is not estimated, and her 180-day estimated machine milk production is calculated with the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 [3] \text{ 180-day estimated machine milk yield} = & \\
 & [\text{production 1st test day} \times \text{no. days between start of milking and 1st test day}] \\
 & + [((\text{prod. 1st test day} + \text{prod. 2nd test day})/2) \times \text{no. days between 1st and 2nd test days}] \\
 & + [((\text{prod. 2nd test day} + \text{prod. 3rd test day})/2) \times \text{no. days between 2nd and 3rd test days}] \\
 & + \dots \\
 & + [((\text{prod. next to last test day prior to 180 days post lambing} + \text{prod. last test day prior to 180 days post lambing})/2) \times \text{no. days between next to last test day prior to 180 days post lambing and last test day prior to 180 days post lambing}] \\
 & + [\text{prod. last test day prior to 180 days post lambing} \times \text{no. days between last test day and 180 days post lambing}].
 \end{aligned}$$

Estimated 180-day machine fat yield for ewes that lactate longer than 180 days is:

$$\begin{aligned}
 [4] \text{ 180-day estimated machine fat yield} = & \\
 & [((\text{milk production 1st test day} \times \% \text{ fat 1st test day})/100) \times \text{no. days between start of milking and 1st test day}] \\
 & + [(((\text{prod. 1st test day} \times \% \text{ fat 1st test day})/100) + ((\text{prod. 2nd test day} \times \% \text{ fat 2nd test day})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days between 1st and 2nd test days}] \\
 & + [(((\text{prod. 2nd test day} \times \% \text{ fat 2nd test day})/100) + ((\text{prod. 3rd test day} \times \% \text{ fat 3rd test day})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days between 2nd and 3rd test days}] \\
 & + \dots \\
 & + [(((\text{prod. next to last test day prior to 180 days post lambing} \times \% \text{ fat next to last test day prior to 180 days post lambing})/100) + ((\text{prod. last test day prior to 180 days post lambing} \times \% \text{ fat last test day prior to 180 days post lambing})/100))/2) \times \text{no. days between next to last test day prior to 180 days post lambing and last test day prior to 180 days post lambing}] \\
 & + [((\text{prod. last test day prior to 180 days post lambing} \times \% \text{ fat last test day prior to 180 days post lambing})/100) \times \text{no. days between last test day prior to 180 days post lambing and 180 days post lambing}].
 \end{aligned}$$

To calculate 180-day estimated machine protein yield, substitute protein percentages for fat percentages in formula [4].

Weaning system

Ewes that nurse their lambs for extended periods of time before the start of machine milking produce less milk on the average than ewes that are milked from shortly after lambing. Therefore, machine milk yield needs to be adjusted in some manner for the weaning system imposed on each ewe. There are a myriad of weaning systems, and it is impossible to develop adjustments for all possible systems.

At the Spooner station we have characterized the milk, fat, and protein production of East Friesian-cross ewes subjected to three weaning systems that are in fairly common use in the industry:

DY1 – Ewes weaned from their lambs 24 hours post lambing, ewes machine milked twice daily after weaning their lambs, and their lambs raised on milk replacer. 180-day post lambing machine lactation production: 572.0 lb. milk, 29.0 lb. fat, 30.0 lb. protein.

MIX – From 24 hours post lambing through 30 days post lambing: ewes separated from their lambs for 15 hours during the evening,

ewes machine milked once daily the following morning, and their lambs allowed to suckle for 9 hours during the day. After 30 days post lambing: lambs weaned to concentrate diets and ewes milked twice daily. 180-day post lambing machine lactation production: 519.0 lb. milk, 24.0 lb. fat, 26.5 lb. protein.

DY30 – From 24 hours post lambing through 30 days post lambing: ewes not machine milked and exclusively suckled by their lambs. After 30 days post lambing: lambs weaned to concentrate diets and ewes milked twice daily. 180-day post lambing machine lactation production: 378.0 lb. milk, 18.5 lb. fat, 20.0 lb. protein.

Using the above production figures, the set of multiplicative adjustment factors in Table 1 were developed to adjust the production of ewes on the MIX and DY30 weaning systems to a DY1 weaning system.

Table 1. Multiplicative factors to adjust milk, fat, and protein production to a DY1 weaning system

Yield of:	Weaning system		
	DY1	MIX	DY30
Milk	1.00	1.10	1.51
Fat	1.00	1.21	1.57
Protein	1.00	1.13	1.50

Example: A MIX ewe has a milk yield of 220 liters. Her DY1-adjusted milk yield is 242 liters (220 liters x 1.10 = 242 liters).

Ewe Age

It is well known that age of ewe has an effect on milk, fat, and protein yield. Therefore, estimated yields should be adjusted for this non-genetic effect so ewes of different ages can be compared fairly. Estimated lactation yields should be multiplied by the appropriate adjustment factor in Table 2 to adjust estimated yields to that expected from a 4 to 7 year old ewe.

Table 2. Multiplicative adjustment factors to adjust milk, fat, and protein yields to a mature ewe (4 to 7 years of age) equivalent.

Ewe age, years	Adjustment factor
1	1.44
2	1.24
3	1.13
4 to 7	1.00
8 and older	1.04

Example: A 2-year-old ewe has a milk yield of 206 liters. Her age-adjusted milk yield is 255 liters (206 liters x 1.24 = 255 liters).

The age of ewe adjustment factors in Table 2 are based on a limited amount of European data and may be different for U.S. breeds of sheep and under U.S. production conditions. To date, we have not been able to establish good age of ewe adjustment factors from the yield data collected at the Spooner station. Due to our grading-up breeding program to the East Friesian and Lacaune breeds and several experiments that have been run each year, we have not had a large population of uniformly treated ewes of different ages from which to estimate the effects of ewe age on lactation yields. Hopefully, we can do this in the near future. In the interim, use of these adjustment factors is preferable over not using any age of ewe adjustment factors.

Putting it all together

The above information allows us to take milk yield, fat percentage, and protein percentage data collected at monthly intervals on individual ewes that differ in age, the weaning system they were managed under, and the number of days over 180 that they lactated and to calculate an estimated weight of milk, fat, and protein they would have been expected to produce during a lactation of 180 days in length as a mature ewe (4 to 7 years of age) on the DY1 weaning system. Following are the milk production records of 3 ewes with their adjusted values. This data illustrates the use of the adjustments and can be used as a trial data set for producers to practice making these calculations.

Calculation of Yield of Milk, Fat, and Protein in Dairy Sheep con't

Table 3. Examples of using test-day milk production records to calculate machine milk yield and adjustment of machine milk yield for length of lactation, weaning system, and age of ewe.

Item	Ewe identification		
	99023	01067	02102
Ewe age, yr.	4	2	1
Weaning system	DY1	MIX	DY30
Lambing date	2/23/2003	2/25/2003	1/25/2003
Lamb weaning date	2/24/2003	3/26/2003	2/25/2003
Start of milking date	2/24/2003	2/27/2003	2/26/2003
Testing dates:			
Milk on 3/1/2003, kg	3.0	1.5	1.5
Milk on 3/15/2003, kg	3.5	2.0	1.0
Milk on 4/1/2003, kg	2.5	2.5	1.0
Milk on 5/1/2003, kg	2.0	1.5	0.6
Milk on 6/1/2003, kg	2.0	1.5	0.2
Milk on 7/1/2003, kg	1.5	1.0	
Milk on 8/1/2003, kg	0.7	0.4	
Milk on 9/1/2003, kg	0.4	0.2	
Milk on 10/1/2003, kg	0.2		
End of milking date	10/1/2003	9/1/2003	6/1/2003
Calculated values:			
Lactation length, days	220	188	127
Total machine milk, kg	353.65	240.75	75.40
180-day machine milk, kg	342.30	240.65	75.40
180-day, DY1 machine milk, kg	342.30 x 1.00 = 342.30	240.65 x 1.10 = 264.72	75.40 x 1.51 = 113.85
180-day, DY1, mature ewe, machine milk, kg	342.30 x 1.00 = 342.30	264.65 x 1.24 = 328.25	113.85 x 1.44 = 163.95

Young Ram Development Breeding Program

The Dairy Sheep Association of North America is seeking farmers to participate in a Young Ram Development Breeding Program to start this Fall.

As chairman of the DSANA Breeding Committee, I met last week with Cornell Professors Dr. Mike Thonney, and Dr. Toni Oltenacu to begin sketching out a Young Ram Development Program for sheep dairy producers in North America. Dr. Oltenacu has been instrumental in developing a similar program for sheep dairy farmers in Sicily, Italy. There is much work to be done in developing a precise program for sharing genetics among farms, as well as developing a central computer database to calculate Estimated Breeding Values (EBV) for rams in the program. However it was agreed at the meeting that we need to start at least a limited sharing of genetics for this year's breeding season. As we discussed it, farms wanting to participate in the program would need to meet several criteria.

- Must have four to five purebred East Friesian rams
- Must be able to collect 100 straws of semen per year on two of those rams
- Must have at least 80 to 100 high percentage EF ewes (7/8 and higher)
- Must be able to AI those ewes with semen from other farms.
- Must, have reliable milk recording ability and computerized milk production records, at least by the time the offspring from the initial matings are lactating
- Must have a reliable animal identification system
- Must be able to maintain a group of ram lambs for two years

The basics of the program are as follows:

Each farmer would select four or five rams to participate in the program. Sufficient semen would be collected from two of those rams to share 25 straws each with two other farmers in the program. Each farmer would

also receive 25 straws each from two rams from two other farmers. The program would be structured to insure maximum genetic links among the participating farms.

Each farmer would use his or her rams on at least 20 ewes, each, and would inseminate at least 20 ewes with semen from each of the two rams from other farms. All healthy ewes, and four or five ram lambs from each ram would be kept.

In Dr. Oltenacu's words

In the initial phase (first 3 years of the program) the farmers need to keep all daughters and 4-5 sons from each ram undergoing evaluation. The process will be repeated in year 2 and 3 with 20 new young rams, not the ones used in the previous year. In other words, the base ram population consists of about 60 rams. Each year you need to go through the process of linking flocks using AI or moving rams. In the third year, you will evaluate the first batch of rams based on the production of their daughters. The sons of the top 5 rams represents the group of 20 young rams to be evaluated in year 4. At this point, the 20 young rams are related (they are sons of only 5 rams) so we can assign related young rams (half brothers) in different flocks so that we don't need to worry about linking flocks genetically. In other words, at this point we may not need to use rams in two farms in the same breeding season, or use AI. Also, starting in year 4, the farmers need to keep all sons and all daughters of the rams being evaluated because now all rams are genetically superior and they should be raised and used as breeding rams in the cooperating flocks or sold to other farms. Although the program as outlined above would be ideal, Dr. Oltenacu also said that if we can not find enough farms that meet the above criteria, there are some alternative ways of creating genetic links among farms. For instance we could use semen from only one or two rams across all farms, and that way each farm would only have to AI five to eight ewes.

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Breeding program, con't

It would also be possible with some farms to use natural service with common rams if disease management issues were addressed. Another possibility, a bit different than the one outlined above, is that semen from rams from various farms could be collected and sent for use at two or three large farms, like the University of Wisconsin and Old Chatham Shepherding Company. All AI and record keeping would be done at these farms. Then, the young sires would be distributed among the participating farms. Dr. Thonney was kind enough to diagram the breeding scheme for us. His breeding scheme diagram can be found by clicking on the link or typing the following URL into your browser.

<http://www.sheep.cornell.edu/sheep/dairysheep/breedingscheme/>

Clearly this is a long-term process, and there are many details to be clarified. However, we need to start now. I welcome any comments, or ideas from any of you.

Thanks,
Ken Kleinpeter

DSANA Annual General Meeting

The DSANA AGM will be held during the 9th Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium at 4pm on Friday November 7th, 2003 following the Friday session of the Symposium and prior to the Banquet.

The election of officers will be an important part of this meeting.

Holiday Inn Select
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Rams, Lambs and Ewes (pure and percentage)

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Farmstead cheeses,
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Membership • L'Adhésion

DSANA welcomes all current or future sheep dairy producers, artisanal farmstead cheese producers, sellers, suppliers, industry professional, academic researchers with an interest in sheep dairying, dairy genetics, sheep milk cheese production, and sheep milk based product development. DSANA also welcomes any individual who is a friend of the sheep dairy industry.

DSANA accueille tous les producteurs (trices) de lait de brebis, les transformateurs artisanaux, les fromagers de ferme, les vendeurs, les fournisseurs, les professionnels dans la filière des ovins laitiers, les chercheurs académiques... enfin, tous et toutes qui s'intéressent vivement à la production et à la transformation du lait de brebis. Nous accueillons également les ami(e)s de l'industrie laitière ovine.

Benefits of membership • Bénéfices de l'adhésion à DSANA:

- ▶ Quarterly DSANA Newsletter • *Journal aux trois mois*
- ▶ DSANA web site • *Site web de DSANA*
- ▶ Discount admission to the Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium • *Tarif réduit pour le symposium annuel des Grands Lacs sur la brebis laitière*
- ▶ Voting rights to help determine the future of the association in the industry • *Droit de vote pour déterminer les orientations de l'Association au sein de l'industrie*

Annual Dues:

A Principal Member is one who is *currently* milking sheep in a state/province licensed facility, or is *actively* involved in getting milk to market, brokering milk sales, producing or distributing sheep milk based products

Un membre principal producer du lait de brebis avec un agrément provincial ou d'état, ou êtes-vous activement impliqué dans l'achat ou la vente de lait de brebis aux transformateurs, la productions de produits à base de lait de brebis.

Principal Member/Membre principal\$50 US/ \$70 cdn

Associate Member/Membre associé\$50 US/ \$70 cdn

Additional voting members from\$ 25 US/ \$35 cdn
the same farm or organization • *autres personnes sur votre ferme ou dans votre entreprise qui désiraient devenir membres votants*

Please make your check payable to
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of North America, Inc.

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Carol Delaney – DSANA Treasurer
c/o University of Vermont
27 Main Street
200B Terrill Hall
Burlington, VT 05406
Email: caroldelaney@uvm.edu

Classified

FOR SALE: FORMER SHEEP DAIRY FLOCK and their descendents. Up to 40 adult ewes, 20 ewe lambs, and 1 ram available. Primarily East Friesian-Dorset Cross. Ewes last milked in 2000 had production of 250-450 lbs. Remainder are descendents including up to 20 selected ewe lambs from 2003. Average 210% lambing percentage, good mothers. Nice wool. Excellent graziers-will eat anything. Reasonable Prices including prices for multiples of 10 and the entire flock. Contact Mike at ewetopia@sover.net or (802) 869-1214, Saxtons River, VT.

DSANA Update

Dear DSANA members,

This is a letter to you for several reasons.

To help the board of DSANA we would like to know what feedback or comments you, our members have regarding the committees that were formed at last years symposium. These need to remain relevant as the industry grows and develops.

Communication

The website we have is a great start, but we need to keep adding to it to keep you informed. The virtual farm tour is hopefully going to be restarted in an easier format to view, farms national and international will be included so we hope you visit regularly to see what is new and current. This will make it more appealing to advertisers which will help fund the committee and the association in the direction that will make it prosper.

Also, if you have new information (adverts, links, photos as well) you feel are relevant to add, please send it to us : stephanie@sheepmilk.com

Genetics

The breeding committee has made less progress, as we discuss on: what direction it could take, what is relevant selection criteria, and also which breeds and percentages of breeds it should contain. Plus how big it should be to make it relevant to the industry, so still a long way to go. The proposal put forward by Dr Toni Oltenacu (Cornell University) and Ken Kleinpeter can be viewed here : www.dsana.org/genetics_breeding.htm

Newsletter

The newsletter committee has produced 3 issues this year. If you have stories or data that you would like published, or have suggestions on how the newsletter can better serve members , email Pat Elliott: pelliott@ns.gemlink.com

The last email I sent to you asked, whether you would be happy to receive it in an electronic format, thus saving us considerable expenses and being able to offer you a faster service at the same time. We have not changed it yet, but will be looking closely to doing so soon

The survey results were :

3 replies who wanted to stay with the paper newsletter
12 replies who wanted to switch to email newsletters
We have 72 members.

(For the members who do not have email, or wish to continue to receive it via the post, DSANA will happily do so). Thank you for those who sent in their responses.

Symposium

The symposium this year is shaping up , as we offer a different angle with the theme. "Adding value to production". So many people are having difficulty finding markets for their milk, and this is one direction we have considered beneficial to not only farmers, but processors as well. Remember that there are farm tours, and speakers regarding animal health, plus all the professionals and other farmers to speak with over the 3 days. So don't think this is just for cheesemakers.

Further registration details, and costs can be seen at: www.dsana.org/quebec.html

This is a short report on what the committees have been up to, and we have had some discussion on the direction our committees could take for the next year, and where we should spend our energy..

Remember this is to benefit you, so if you are motivated to join one of the committees it will be welcomed and help speed progress as it is all voluntary work.

Here is the list of other topics that we have come up with that could be relevant to spend time on..... remembering however; that the more we spread ourselves, the slower the progress. If you need to be refreshed about the mission of DSANA it can be viewed here: www.dsana.org

1. Document and collect success stories of small sheep dairies across North America of varying sizes and develop a case study guide for anyone wanting to know how to develop such an operation as well as to educate government personnel, etc to help them understand how this type of thing can be accomplished within a food safety framework that they are comfortable with.
2. Determining/Finding/Initiating research relevant to establish that sheep milk and sheep milk products are superior health wise, with direct health benefits to consumers, which will help to educate the public as to the merits and availability of sheep's milk products.
3. Promote effective dairy sheep management- other than supporting the symposium. Perhaps the virtual farm tour can be adapted to be more effective (this should be effective to be able to view any dairy sheep farm in the world that wished to participate)
4. Promote cooperation and exchange of information among producers and cheese makers

If you have input, other suggestions or ideas, or anything relevant to contribute as to where you think we should be spending time and energy so our industry grows and develops more, please contact Carol Delaney at: carol.delaney@uvm.edu

Its crucial that we know before we get together for the symposium, so we can make a start to planning groups, committees etc.

Slate of Officers

DSANA terms for directors were designed to be rotated. In summary there are :

- two four year terms available (We need a Secretary to be one of the four year terms)
- Treasurer
- One, one year term

These are key positions, but are well supported by the whole board. If you are interested, or have a recommendation of others, please email Carol Delaney: carol.delaney@uvm.edu

DSANA Award for outstanding contribution to the dairy sheep Industry

The board has also passed a motion:

(".... that an award is given to a person, or persons in the dairy sheep industry who are deserving.

That person, or persons should be nominated by any DSANA member, or director of the board, and either the board, or a committee of the board shall decide on the final recipient/s" This year the board will decide who that award goes to, but from 2004 on, we would like input from members as to who could be a recipient of that award .

As an aside, I have been asked if people could advertise (via email), relevant dairy sheep items/animals for sale, (or wanted), direct to our members. This could help DSANA members find relevant information quickly, and boost our bank balance at the same time.....Or it could be more spam in your inbox. If you have any issues as to whether you favour this or not, please email me at mackenzieal@hotmail.com

Hope to see as many of you as possible in Québec, Canada

Alastair MacKenzie

Registry Discussion

Dave Thomas

I think the registry should include all dairy sheep-purebreds and crosses. Purebred East Friesians and Lacaune could be denoted in a special way to indicate they were pure. Our entire dairy sheep population in North America is too small to throw out some potentially good genetics just because the animals are not purebred. If there is an open registry in the beginning, the organization may choose to close it to outside animals after several years, but even this may be a mistake. This should be a performance registry. Only ewes with milk production records, sires of ewes with milk production records, and progeny of ewes with milk production records should be registered.

David L. Thomas,
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e-mail: dlthomas@wiscmail.wisc.edu

Bienvenue aux producteurs ovins laitiers Québécois

La nouvelle association DSANA (Dairy Sheep Association of North America) désire refléter réellement les intérêts et questionnements de tous les producteurs(trices) d'Amérique du Nord.

Répartis à la grandeur de l'Amérique, les producteurs(trices) de brebis laitières sont souvent isolés et marginaux dans leur province, état ou région. Du Nord au Sud et de l'Est à l'Ouest du continent, les éleveurs font face à des difficultés semblables: produire un lait de qualité, vendre ce lait ou transformer et faire la mise en marché de ces produits à base de lait de brebis.

- Les secteurs suivants sont en effervescence.
- production,
- élevage,
- génétique des troupeaux,
- qualité du lait,
- produits à valeur ajoutée,
- mise en marché,
- transformation

Plusieurs comités DSANA se penchent sur ces sujets et essayeront de répertorier ce qui se fait, ce qu'il reste à faire et ce qu'il faut développer pour faire avancer l'industrie laitière ovine Nord-Américaine.

Dans le but de mettre en commun et faire partager ces informations si utiles aux producteurs(trices) un symposium a lieu chaque année. En novembre 2003, le Québec sera l'hôte du 9^e Symposium, et cette fois-ci sous le chapeau de la DSANA. Nous espérons rejoindre tous les gens impliqués ou intéressés à la production laitière ovine.

President's Message

Let us celebrate. We have made it together as an organization to our SECOND annual DSANA meeting where we present our symposium. Our organization is just that, OUR ORGANIZATION OF DAIRY SHEEP FARMERS. There are pockets of us vertically in the North American Continent, and some of us live in an area where we think that we are really doing something no one understands. Therefore, it is vitally important that we consider this organization DSANA precious, as together we try to move dairy sheep farming and the products that it produces, into the realm of everyone's sphere of knowledge. This is hard to do. Sheep cheese has been around in Europe in the form of Roquefort, Manchego and Pecorino for centuries. However, how many times have you heard people say: "What do you do and make? I've never heard of that". Sheep dairying in the North American continent is a relatively new industry, and it is the responsibility of those of us in the industry together to promote ourselves.

In our organization DSANA, we have been promoting dairy sheep farming and cheesemaking. This year we strived to achieve four goals: Produce a Newsletter, Determine methods of communications for our members and our industry, Discuss Breeding schemes and possible registration of our animals, and Present the 9th Annual Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium.

Dr. Pat Elliott and Carol Delaney have beautifully published our J-DSANA, Journal of the Dairy Sheep Association of North America, in three issues. These have delivered valuable information which should be kept to refer to when you have that question in the future which may be answered by an article you read in our Journal. You may participate in the making of our Journal by contributing questions and research to Pat Elliott.

We have delivered our website. through the efforts of Charles Capaldi and now Phillip Collman and Stephanie Diamant. We will continue to update the website with research and information with links to sheep dairying around the world. You too, can help by pointing out new links and research, so it may be shared with others. You may send information for the site to stephanie@sheepmilk.com.

Our discussion of breeding schemes and registration has resulted in quite a bit of discussion within that committee. A Cornell University Plan has been put forth to assist with the breeding of animals, and the discussion goes on. You may consult with Alastair MacKenzie. His last goal was to provide a setting for more discussion at the 9th Annual Symposium where we will also enjoy the fruits of the symposium committees work, chaired by Lucille Giroux.

CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED AND TO WORK ON ONE OF OUR COMMITTEES.

What goes around comes around, and the best way for our organization DSANA to help promote and assist dairy sheep farming and sheep cheese making, is for all of us to work together. Then together, we can make a difference in the marketplace.

Nancy Clark - President, DSANA

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Other preventive measures

Since the general health condition of the ewes determines their level of adaptability and productivity it is very important to eradicate any condition that can lead to poor health or to other diseases:

- in dairy ewes it is very important to monitor udder health and correct problems immediately
- prevent excessive parasite infestations (especially worms) and if necessary treat early on
- prevent foot-rot, treat well before late gestation
- eradicate OPP/maedi-visna in your flock
- cull known susceptible ewes and their offspring

We have been running a medium sized (350 ewes), pasture based, dairy sheep operation for many years now and we have never had a single case of pregnancy toxemia. I strongly believe that's only because we try to provide an optimal environment to the ewes, are feeding ruminant oriented and pay attention to a rigorous biosecurity and disease prevention.

Josef Regli, Canreg Farm, Finch, Ontario
jbreghli@yahoo.com



This newsletter/Dairy Sheep Association of North America will not be responsible for any mishap resulting from an individual(s) following any advice published in this newsletter.

Material submitted for articles or advertisements will be subject to the approval of the DSANA. Views and opinions represented in this newsletter are not necessarily those of DSANA

Submissions

J-DSANA accepts submissions of articles, photos, drawings, etc. Please send to:

Pat Elliott, DSANA Newsletter Chariman
23246 Clark Mountain Road
Rapidan, Virginia 22733
USA
Fax 540-854-6443
pellott@ns.gemlink.com

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