

Penn State Specialist Warns

Sheep Producers Must Overcome Problems

Dramatic changes are needed in Pennsylvania sheep production, or the state will be out of the sheep business, Frank Cruzberger, Penn State specialist, told Lancaster County Sheepmen Thursday.

Cruzberger was relaying sentiments of top state sheep producers who met recently to discuss problems in the industry. The number of sheep in Pennsylvania in 1969 was 124,000 head, down 3,000 from a year earlier and 4,000 from 1967.

A major problem, he said, is that US sheep growers just are not selling their product. In the 1930's the individual consumption of lamb averaged 7.5 pounds per person. By the early 1960's, he said, that figure dropped to five pounds, and is expected to dip even lower in 1970, to 3.4 pounds per person.

Parasite Control

Dr Sam Guss, extension veterinarian, also spoke on the program on controlling parasites.

He particularly emphasized that any Lancaster County sheep producers whose flocks were not yet inspected during the winter for sheep scabies should contact the Extension office here.

"Pennsylvania had more cases of sheep scabies last year than the rest of the nation," he said.

Some flocks in the county had scabies last year he said.

Major problems facing veteran sheep raisers Cruzberger said, included:

AGE—Younger people appear to be entering other fields or raising other animals such as steers. Getting young men and women interested in raising sheep would be an important step in increasing sheep production.

MANAGEMENT — Despite a general opinion of farmers who raise both sheep and steers that the sheep make them greater profit per animal, fewer sheep and more steers are being raised.

Management may be the reason, Cruzberger said, because sheep will require more attention than cattle. More information from Penn State on sheep raising and management also was cited.

Record keeping which will allow the farmer to keep track of good producers also is a part of management.

FLOCKS—The size of the flock, averaging about 20 head, creates problems. Sheep raising is mostly a sideline since only 20 head can't provide a living, and those few don't receive the attention they should have.

Along these same lines, Cruzberger said that there has been too much attention focused on purebreds and not enough on commercial production.

He stated that lamb producers have to be able to provide the type of meaty carcass packers want and in a steady supply. It doesn't do any good to have lamb on the market one week, but off the next, he said. Lamb customers turn somewhere else when they can't find lamb and the packer loses when he has no lamb to sell.

Cruzberger urged careful consideration when choosing ewes for breeding stock, emphasizing the importance of selecting meaty qualities, length and strength and soundness.

The speaker also urged producers not skimp when buying rams, stating that the ram should have good meaty qualities and scale. He said a good ram should require a good price.

Ram To Ewe Ratio

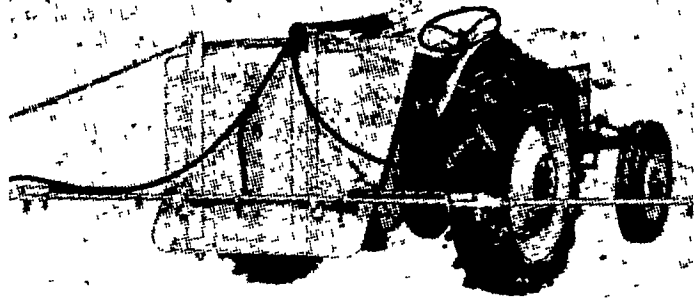
A good ram to ewe ratio also is important, he said, with 30 to 35 ewes per ram. Production will not be as good with a higher ratio, he said.

Cruzberger also listed the 12 per cent protein feed ration used by Penn State which has provided the best results.

The ration should include 250 pounds of soy bean oil meal; 200 pounds of alfalfa meal; 1,400 pounds of finely ground ear corn and cob, which provides both nutrients and roughage; 150

pounds of molasses; 20 pounds of ground limestone; and two of salt per ton of feed; 20 poundpounds of Aurofac 40.

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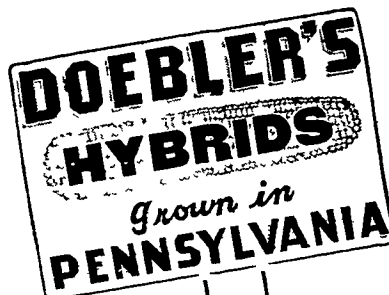
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