

Gather and Evaluate Industry Research, Will Disseminate It

Sheep Producers Report Progress

More products and more profits through new management methods is the course the sheep industry is steering these days in a robust attempt to reverse a trend of declining sheep numbers.

M. Joseph Burke, of Casper, Wyoming, chairman of the Steering Committee of the Sheep Industry Development Program, told the five-man committee and advisors, meeting in Denver, Co. in late June, that the sheep industry is teetering on the brink between the opportunity for renewed growth and prosperity and eventual extinction.

The sheep industry is perhaps in a better position to succeed now than it has for years. The Sheep Industry Development, Burke said, has managed in three short years to gather and evaluate all sheep industry research.

Now we are developing the tools of communication to help those who serve the sheep industry to bring the new techniques and information to sheepmen across the country, Burke said.

We must have a change in attitude in the sheep industry, Burke said, so that producers will adjust their sheep raising to a business basis and not continue to think of ourselves as just individual ranchers and farmers.

Burke said that livestock men have for too long competed among themselves instead of working with each other to sell a better product at a better price.

The Steering Committee heard final reports from coordinators of the production and marketing projects, George Scott, of Colorado State University and Dr. Jack Armstrong, of Purdue University. In making their reports, these men suggested that the sheep industry should follow a strong course of action which would help provide a greater profit to sheepmen throughout the country by solving some basic problems in production, management and marketing.

One of the programs currently under way, in cooperation with the Federal Extension Service, is a development of information to show the profit potential in various types of sheep operations. Dick Biglin, managing director, said this is one of the most important elements of the program at present. "We have always known that sheep production can be profitable, but unfortunately, we have not always had the facts and figures to prove this."

Biglin said that SID will now encourage the formation of advisory groups to the sheep industry from various allied industries associated with sheep production. He said that SID will also ask allied industries, as well as sheep groups, to participate in the SID program.

By August 1, the Sheep Producers Handbook is expected to be off the press and available through SID. A similar booklet is already available on marketing and covers the 10 basic issues in lamb and sheep marketing. This fall, it is hoped that a textbook on sheep production and marketing will be available through SID.

SID will, through sheep organizations, attempt to establish priority projects that will be solved as rapidly as possible, including such things as sheep disease that cause a major loss to the industry and such problems as predators.

Ralph Grimshaw, speaking on the prospects for the sheep industry, said that because of its adaptability to many types of production practices, the sheep industry has a tremendous potential. Grimshaw said that the larger, leaner lamb, weighing 120 to 140 pounds, that there is the possibility of reducing the cost of feeding lambs by 25 to 40 per cent and thus help lower unit cost, that sheep compete less for food which man consumes directly than any other red meat, and that the amount of concentrates required per pound of dressed carcass is 87 per cent lower for sheep than for beef.

The sheep extension specialist from Ohio State University said that if the producers want to market lamb and wool dif-

ferently, it is up to them to change. No one else will do it for them, Grimshaw added.

George Scott recommended in his report that further study of lamb marketing be made to help solve some critical problems in this area. He said that the industry should involve the young producers in their plans and programs and that one of the most important needs is for all segments of the industry to communicate with each other.

Armstrong recommended to the committee further exploration of opportunities for yield grading; that the industry look for ways to increase competition; that it explore possibilities for coordination of efforts with lamb importing countries, be aware of the situation in central cutting of meat; develop carcass testing and seek opportuni-

ties to attract new capital into the industry.

Dr. Clair Terrill, chief of the fur animal research at Beltsville, said that the industry's research needs should be quickly established, based on the

needs of the industry and the funds and facilities needed. Dr.

Terrill said that communication is most important now so that research information reaches its maximum effectiveness.

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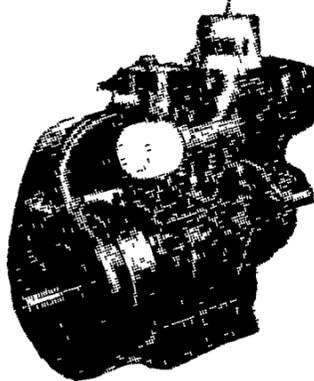
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