

Management can make or

By JOAN LIESAU

LEESPORT—"I contend that is you aren't getting 150 per cent lamb crop, there are some weak links in your program" said Dr. Clair Engle, sheep Extension specialist at the Pennsylvania State University.

Engle was one of three speakers at the Berks County Sheep and Wool Growers Sheep Producers Evening, held April 3, at the Berks County Agriculture Center. Dr. Larry Hutchinson, Penn State Extension Veterinarian and Jack Price, a purebred Hampshire sheep breeder from Westminster, Md. also highlighted the evening.

Engle stated that when your looking for a ram to "look at performance. You can talk alot about pedigree and breeds, but performance is where it counts. Don't short change yourself when looking for a ram" he emphasized.

Engle showed the producers a video tape, recently released by the American Sheep Producers Council, Denver, Colo., titled "Is There Profit in Commercial Flocks." Production records and expense sheets were suggested by the producers of the tape.

Engle said you should figure it costs \$50 per year to take care of one ewe and her lamb. Therefore with a 100 per cent lamb crop, if the producer sold his lambs at \$50, he would just be breaking even. An annual expense detail and annual budget summary (see below) was given to the producers. Engle said costs such as shearing (which is listed as 75 cents per head) will vary according to your area. A space is left blank on the right side of the sheets so each producer can fill in his own expenses.

Sore mouth is a highly contagious virus which causes a mild infection in weaned lambs and older sheep stated Dr. Larry Hutchinson. One of the problems with sore mouth, he said, was that when a ewe gets the virus, her teats get sore and she doesn't want her lamb to nurse. Because it is so highly contagious, if a sheep is exposed to any other sheep with sore mouth, you can get a sore mouth problem.

Hutchinson said there was a vaccine available, with the use depending on "what your doing with your sheep." If you are showing your sheep and there is a "fair amount of traffic moving in and out of your flock" the vaccine was advisable. Hutchinson said if you have a "basically closed flock" you could "probably get away without it." Hutchinson stressed that you have to give the vaccination when

there are not any lambs around The best time, he suggested, was when the lambs were weaned

Hutchinson said that if naturally exposed, sheep will become immunized to sore mouth. This immunity will last for about one year. "But if you count on this you will get a chronic situation" he said, explaining that a few of the sheep won't get the virus, and then it spreads.

Stringent regulations should be place on show flocks" he said. Not only the ones being shown but the sheep still on the farm, because show sheep can be carriers of the virus.

Foot rot is contagious organism that's "not too hard to buy on to your farm" Hutchinson said. The foot rot organism in sheep is not the same as in cattle. The cattle

organism can live a long time in the soil. Whereas, the two organisms causing foot rot in sheep are not able to live away from the host animals, even under the most favorable conditions, for more than two weeks. This fact makes it possible to eradicate foot rot of sheep from a flock and from a farm.

The first sign of foot rot infection is lameness. Sheep show soreness in one or more feet when they walk, and they take their weight off the affected foot at rest. When both forefeet are affected, sheep may feed on their knees. As the disease progresses it will rapidly spread underneath the thin horn at the top of the foot, and after a few weeks it will penetrate to the sole and wall of the foot, where it can live for months. Because it is beneath the sole and wall of the foot, surface medication without removing the protective diseased horn is worthless.

Hutchinson gave several suggestions to avoid foot rot. They were to buy clean sheep and to know the flock that you are buying from. See how the sheep move, he said, look at all four feet, trim them out, look again and smell. New sheep coming into the flock should be hand treated with one of the foot rot treatments. If there is a sign of foot rot, keep the new sheep strictly isolated and retreat until they are safe for your own flock, or can be returned to the seller. "It is a whole lot easier to be precautions and keep it off the farm then trying to get rid of it once you have it" Hutchinson said.

If you do have problems with foot rot, Hutchinson suggested you immediatly separate the infected sheep from the rest of the flock. "Check it out" he said, "it could be a lot of other things, but suspect foot rot first." Use a sharp hoof knife, pen knife, and a good sharp pair of foot shear to do the foot trimming. Disinfect your knives before moving on to the next sheep. Trim all feet of all sheep.

Those that show any lameness or have overgrown feet and evidence of dead tissue should have their feet trimmed. Trim to the point where all the dead tissue is removed. This may necessarily require severe trimming down to the living tissue when heavily infected. A medication should then be applied with a paint brush or spray bottle, thoroughly covering all areas of the foot.

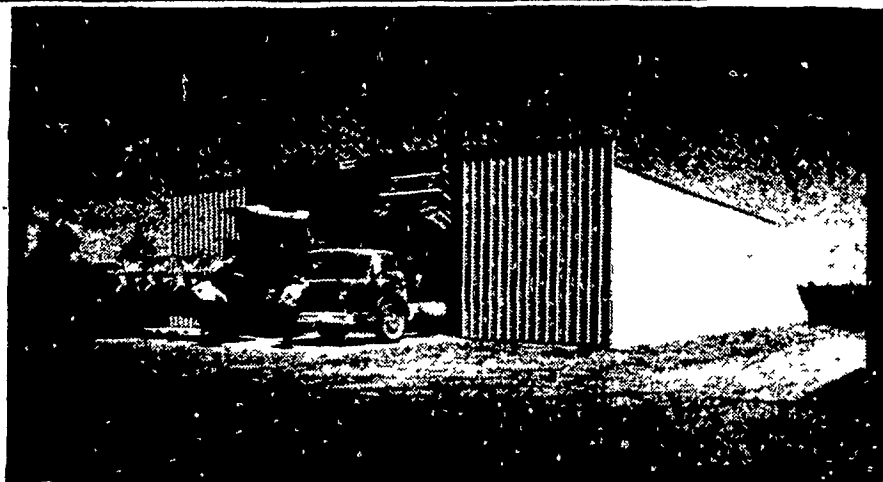
Several suggested specific foot rot medications include:

ANNUAL EXPENSE DETAIL

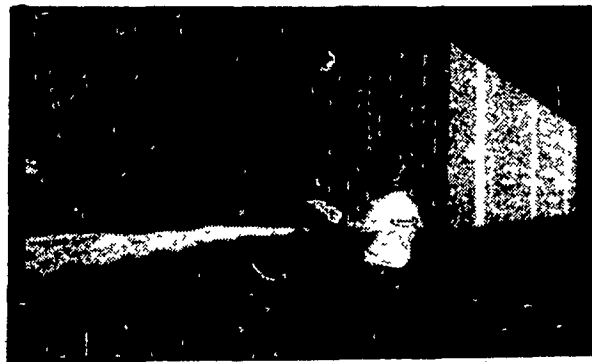
FEED FOR EWE	One lamb	Two lambs	Your Figures
TOTAL FEED FOR EWE	120 08	\$21 58	\$ _____
HEALTH			
TOTAL HEALTH	\$ 2 25	\$ 2 50	\$ _____
SHEARING			
Once a year	\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ _____
UTILITIES AND INSURANCE			
TOTAL UTILITIES AND INSURANCE	\$ 1 00	\$ 1 00	\$ _____
EQUIPMENT AND REPAIRS	One lamb	Two lambs	Your Figures
Local estimate per ewe for maintenance and expendable materials	\$ 1 00	\$ 1 00	\$ _____
BUILDINGS			
16 sq. ft./ewe @ \$2 50			
\$40 - 20 years = \$2 00			
\$40 - 7.5% interest = \$3 00	\$ 5 00	\$ 5 00	\$ _____
RAMS			
1 per 60 ewes per 3 yr			
\$270 - 60 = \$4 50 - 3 = \$1 50			
\$30 maintenance - 60 = \$5 00	\$ 2 00	\$ 2 00	\$ _____
LAMB FEED			
Creep plus post weaning			
360 lbs feed @ 5¢	\$18 00	\$36 00	\$ _____

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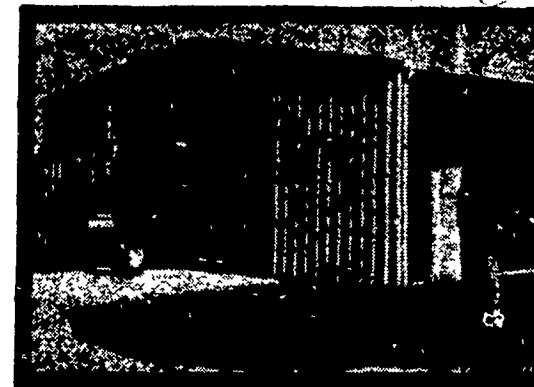
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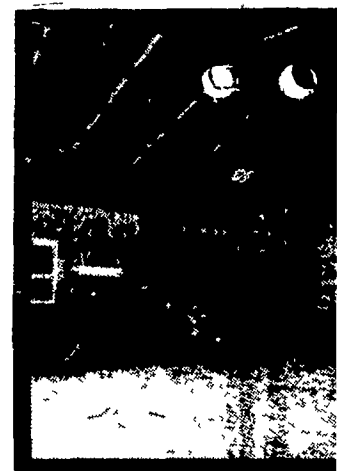


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