

# Lamb grading workshops continue

GREENCASTLE — Put 30 sheep producers, eight lambs and 16 carcasses together and a lot starts to happen — as was seen at the second Pennsylvania Lamb Grading Workshop held recently at

Appalachian Lamb Company, Greencastle, Franklin County.

Six seminars are being held throughout the state in cooperation with Penn State Extension Service, Pa. Department of Agriculture's

Bureau of Markets, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The workshops are designed to train sheep producers and industry leaders to improve individual proficiency in both live lamb and

lamb carcass evaluation.

Through the cooperating agencies, Pennsylvania sheep producers and packers, a standardized regional lamb grading program was developed this spring to be implemented by major lamb producing states in the northeastern U.S.

Producers also learned lamb marketing alternatives and factors known to influence market lamb prices. Through hands-on instruction, lambs typical of Pennsylvania are handled and graded. Later, the carcasses are studied and compared with the live lamb evaluation. Wholesale loins are merchandised showing high and low yielding lamb carcasses, giving the Pennsylvania producer greater incentive to produce a finished choice lamb with good conformation.

The new standardized lamb specifications identify size, weight, grade, and conformation of a lamb. An example of the highest quality lamb would be a BLUE O, high choice and prime ewe and wether weighing 95-115 pounds and estimated to dress 50 percent or better hot weight.

Standard discounts, directly affecting dressing percentage include rams, lambs with tails, tags, wet wool, etc. These items can easily be controlled by the producer. However packers can lose up to 15 percent of lamb value through these poor management-marketing practices of producers.

"Producers must learn to

identify what market they are producing for—feeder lambs or market lambs," according to John Zimmerman, Chief of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Livestock Division. "You can't sell a feeder lamb in the finished market lamb market and expect to get a good price. You must identify your lambs for what they really are."

Zimmerman also stressed the importance of properly managing and marketing lambs. "Rams which will be commercially marketed at the heavier weights (95-115 pounds) should be castrated soon after birth. Producers who bring in rams, lambs with tails, clumps of manure or tags, or wet wool are only hurting themselves," Zimmerman stressed. "With just a little time and care, the ideal market or feeder lamb can be grown, giving the producer maximum return for the investment."

Three more lamb grading workshops are scheduled this year, at Greensburg - October 5 & 6; Trout Run - October 12-13; and Danville - November 9-10. For more information, contact Clair Engle, 324 Wm. Henning Building, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, or the local county extension office. Pre-registration is required. Due to limited training facilities a maximum of 30 attendees will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. A pre-registration fee of \$8.00 is required.

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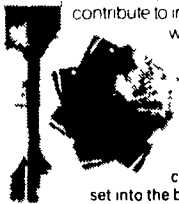
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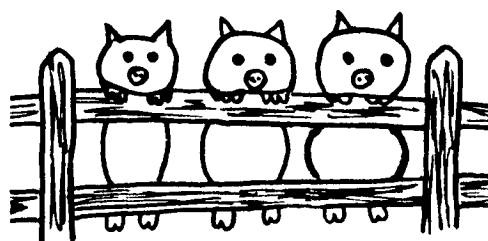
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