



Focus On Red Meat

For months, Pennsylvania red meat producers have been paying into a special statewide account to promote their product in a "check-off" program. They'll see what their money is accomplishing, when they visit Ag Progress Days August 18-20.

A special tent will feature exhibits and demonstrations about red meat and the way it is being advertised and promoted to the consumer, according to Bill Henning, assistant professor of animal science, who is coordinating this tent and the dairy and livestock tent at Ag Progress Days along with Jud Heinrichs, assistant professor of dairy and animal science.

There will be exhibits from the Pennsylvania Beef Council, the Pennsylvania Pork Producers, the Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers, the Pennsylvania Meat Marketing Program, the Pennsylvania Veal Council and Penn State Cooperative Extension.

The tent will also offer red meat preparation and cooking demonstrations. Samples will be given away and there will be drawings

for red meat products, Henning says.

The traditional dairy and livestock tent will return this year, complete with commercial exhibits, breed association exhibits and educational exhibits from Penn State's departments of dairy and animal science, veterinary science and food science. One large exhibit this year will demonstrate different milk quality tests.

Dairy and livestock specialists from Penn State will be on hand to answer questions from producers about nutrition, disease and livestock management.

As always, different breeds of cattle will be in pens at the tent, along with white-tailed deer used for ruminant studies at Penn State.

Ag Progress Days is one of the largest outdoor showcases of university programs and agricultural technology in the East. It is held at the Rock Springs Agricultural Research Center, nine miles southwest of State College on Route 45, August 18-20 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission and parking are free.



Glenn Eberly (left) and Dale Rossman of the Meat Animal Evaluation Center check on some of the boars to be sold at the Performance-Tested Boar Sale scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, at 6:00 p.m. at the Penn State Ag Arena.

Performance Tested Boar Sale


BY MARY MAXWELL
Centre Co. Correspondent
STATE COLLEGE — Fifty-three performance-tested boars will go on sale Wednesday, August 19 at the Penn State Ag Arena according to Glenn Eberly, Director of the Meat Animal Evaluation Center. "It's an exceptional group," says Eberly, "the best over-all group we've seen at the Evaluation Center."

Listed for sale will be 22 Yorkshires, 18 Durocs, 10 Hampshires, 2 Berkshires and 1 Landrace. The boars have been evaluated on feed efficiency, average daily gain on test, fat thickness, percent of lean cuts, with their loin eye areas measured ultrasonically. A committee scored the boars on structural soundness plus underline and the University veterinarian staff exam-

ined the animals for breeding soundness.

The boar sale will begin at 6:00 p.m., the Wednesday of Ag Progress Days. Food and trucking will be available.


For more information or to request a sale catalog contact: Glenn Eberly, Director, Meat Animal Evaluation Center, 651 Fox Hollow Road, State College, PA 16803. 814/238-2527.



Flock Forum

by
Clair Engle

Penn State Extension Sheep Specialist



BY MELANIE HEMMINGER
Graduate Extension
Education

Are your ewes ready for the breeding season? The leaves on the trees will soon change colors and the days will become shorter, signaling the start of the fall breeding season. However, between now and the start of the breeding season, several items should be accomplished.

First, check the condition of the ewes. They should be in good condition, but not overly fat or excessively thin. In the past, experiments have shown that for every 10 pounds or above or below an optimum weight, twinning rate decreases by six percent. This can mean a lot of money next spring when you sell the lambs.

Second, ewes should be drenched about two to three weeks before the breeding season starts to control parasites. In addition, you may want to trim the ewes' feet at this time. After drenching, the ewes should be moved to a new pasture. This also helps control parasites, but choose the pasture species carefully. Clovers and trefoil have an estrogenic effect on the ewes and can cause a decreased ovulation rate which will mean fewer lambs born in the spring.

About two weeks before the ram is turned out, the ewes should be flushed. The cheapest way to flush

is to turn the ewes out in a high quality pasture. This extra nutrition flushes the ewe by increasing her ovulation rate. The most common way to flush ewes is by feeding ½ to 1 pound of grain per head per day for the two weeks before the breeding season. However, if your ewes are over-conditioned, flushing has little benefit toward increasing production.

Heat stress can be a big factor in decreasing production. Heat affects the number of lambs born and the size of the lamb. You can prevent heat stress by keeping your ewes in proper condition and avoiding obesity, providing shade and avoiding excessive exercise. Shearing in early August will also help prevent heat stress.

Another consideration at breeding time is whether or not to breed the ewe lambs. Breeding ewe lambs increases a ewe's lifetime production, however, bred ewe lambs have special nutrition needs and a higher chance of lambing difficulty compared to older ewes. For the latter reasons most producers breed ewes for the first time as yearlings.

With all these items accomplished, your ewes should be ready for the breeding season. With proper management throughout gestation, these items can increase your lamb crop and ultimately your profits.

Swine Management

Selling Pork

Every now and then a commodity group comes up with a really good idea. In past columns you've heard me criticize pork cuts at the supermarket meat case. Pork chops are too fat, too lean or cut too thin.

The pork industry has just introduced the "America's Cut", a boneless center single-cut chop that's one and one quarter to one and a half inches thick with a maximum one quarter inch of exterior fat.

The whole idea for the "America's Cut" was developed by the National Pork Producer's Council and has a registered trademark. It's the pork industry's answer to inconsistent quality in the meat case.

Consumers can purchase the "America's Cut" with the assurance that each individual boneless chop will be as good as the last one they bought and the next one they'll buy. This is essential for consumer acceptance and repeat buying.

The cut will be available for restaurants in the next few weeks, as well as in food retail stores. The introduction occurred in a Chicago

restaurant owned by Chicago Bear football coach Mike Ditka.

"Why is this such a big deal?" you might ask. Well, the "America's Cut" boneless pork chop guarantees consistency, since criteria describing the cut are specific enough to remove product variability. Currently, the variations that can be found in a package of chops is appalling.

Recently I bought several packages of center cut pork chops to grill. The variability of meatiness, and thickness surprised me. Thickness was about ½ inch or less and unsuitable for grilling.

When you grill a thin pork chop, by the time it's cooked all the way through, the meat has dried out and become tough. There's nothing worse than a tough pork chop.

The "America's Cut" is a chop thick enough to grill without drying out. Without the bone and most of the fat, the entire chop is edible meat, with enough fat for proper cooking.

The concept of the "America's Cut" is a big plus for the pork industry and a wise use of checkoff funds. No other major commodity group has registered a premium cut up to this point but I'm sure we'll

see other groups follow the lead of the pork industry.

Consumers generally don't eat the large quantities of meat that most livestock producers do, and above that they are very nutrition and health conscious. Look in the popular press and you'll always find one or two articles about nutrition, health, fitness or exercise. Some of what you read is fact, some is opinion and some even an educated guess. The sad part is that all these articles are read with keen interest and someone, somewhere believes the information regardless of its validity.

The pork industry needs three things to succeed in this latest dietary development. First and foremost is consistency in its product. Second is a good educational program offering accurate nutritional information about pork. To go with these, we need strong promotional efforts to let the public know what they're getting when they eat today's pork.

It's time we realized that no promotional campaign is likely to increase the total pounds of meat a person eats in a year. All that actually happens with promotion is that a consumer may choose to include more pork and less poultry or beef for their diet. So the problem arises: if one commodity group advertises while another group doesn't, the advertising group is at an advantage.

The pork industry has to stay on top of the advertising game to ensure their share of the market. That's why the checkoff dollars you contribute every time you sell a hog are so important.

The "America's Cut" is a good indication that your dollars are well spent. It addresses one of the major problems that exists in the supermarket meat case—predictable quality.

Consistent products lead to consistent sales, and the "America's Cut" is a step in the right direction.

Sheepman's Symposium Set

"The theme for the Second Annual Sheepman's Symposium will focus on two important topics, sheep health and economics," says PSWGA President, Jim Sheeder. This year's event scheduled for December 4 and 5 will be hosted by the Cumberland County Sheep and Wool Growers Association at the Embers Convention Center, Carlisle.

Present to highlight sheep health concerns will be Dr. Don Bailey, practicing Veterinarian from Rosebud, Oregon. Dr. Bailey has been recognized internationally as a leading authority on sheep diseases, care and management. Cur-

rent control measures of major infectious diseases will be discussed relative to reproductive disorders, Foot Rot, Mastitis Progressive Pneumonia, Ovine (PPO) and internal parasite management. New medicines and their use in sheep health will be a topic of interest to many producers.

So, plan now, come learn and profit from the latest information about topics that will help make you a better informed sheep producer. For more information leave your name and address by calling your county extension office. Program brochures will be available in mid-September.