

# Sheep Researchers Report Progress

DENVER, Co. — Increasing lambing rates and feeding ewes with high reproductive rates are the major sheep research issues being addressed by U.S. animal scientists. Several researchers reported on current studies during the annual meeting here of the NC-111 Technical Committee for Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production at the Stapleton Plaza Hotel.

The NC-111 Technical Committee is composed of animal scientists involved in sheep research and education at state and federal facilities throughout the nation. The major emphasis of research currently underway is on improving embryonic survival and reducing seasonality breeding in sheep. A second area of emphasis is the development of feeding strategies for sheep with high reproductive rates.

Several methods are being researched to increase prolificacy and embryonic survival in addition to the reduction of seasonality in sheep. One method is the proper

use of light to set conditions for sheep to breed out of season.

A method currently being tested is the use of malatonin. Rambouillet, Dorset, Finnsheep and combinations of these breeds are being tested with malatonin to control sheep seasonality.

Several stations reported work with the Booroola/Merino breeds to improve their prolificacy. Scientists have isolated a gene in the Booroola that will improve the average lambing rate to 1.7 or more lambs. This is a single gene trait.

"Fecundin," a drug developed in Australia, was reported to increase prolificacy 30 percent. Further investigation with this drug is continuing in the United States.

Work is being done to increase lambing rates. Understanding the importance of the position of the embryo and its migration through the uterus will aid in increasing lamb survival.

New tools, such as the use of Protein-B, are being tested as methods to diagnose early pregnancy.

In developing feeding strategies for sheep with a high productive rate, research is being conducted combining range management technology and animal combinations including cattle, sheep, goats and now camels! They are grazing together on the Jornada Range in New Mexico.

Value added bi-product feeds, such as ammoniated wheat straw, are being evaluated as alternative forage legumes. Investigators have found that legumes used in finishing diets improve lamb performance, especially when emphasis is placed on the production of lean yield.

Ram lamb carcasses have been shown to have a more favorable ratio of unsaturated fatty acids; therefore meat from young ram lambs came closer to approaching current human dietary guidelines than meat from ewes or wethers.

Evaluations on how ram lambs fit into modern production systems showed no difficulties in pelt removal of ram lambs versus ewes or wethers.

# Government Funds To Help Promote US Pork Sales In Japan

DES MOINES, IA. — America's pork producers will get \$1.8 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Targeted Export Assistance Fund (TEA) this year to help promote more U.S. pork sales in Japan. Deputy USDA Secretary Peter Myers, during a news conference at World Pork Expo in Des Moines, announced an additional \$382,000 in TEA funds will go into the promotion program to bring it up to the \$1.8-million level.

The TEA program is designed to counter unfair foreign trade practices that have an adverse effect on U.S. agricultural products.

Secretary Myers, in making the announcement that additional TEA funds would be made available, said, "We want to show the Japanese housewife we have a

superior product - that U.S. pork is the best buy!"

Total U.S. pork exports to Japan in 1987 were approximately 43.8 million pounds. That was a 62 percent increase over 1986. A number of factors, including increased promotion provided by the Meat Export Federation in association with the National Pork Producers Council, is expected to substantially increase U.S. pork exports to Japan again this year. The promotional effort to identify U.S. pork as a quality product to Japanese consumers is funded with 100% pork producer checkoff dollars. The government TEA funds will be used to supplement and strengthen the program according to Gerald Martens, Director of Foreign Trade for the National Pork Producers Council.

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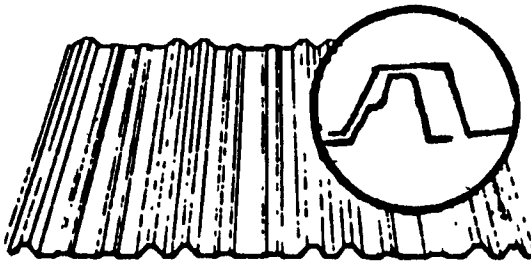
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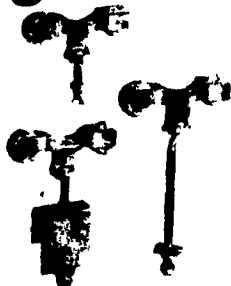
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