

Livestock Notes

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Producers Can Re-File Wool Sales Documents
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Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services (ASCS) will soon announce that all producers will be given the opportunity to obtain substitute replacement sales documents which reflect marketing and non-marketing charges not previously shown on sales documents.

The earlier version of wool-incentive filing changes did not allow producers to re-file receipts with updated information. These new regulations will allow re-submission of updated receipts. ASCS states that affected producers must request their original receipts from their county office and re-submit corrected documents by March 1, or the incentive will be paid on the original document.

ASCS offices will review corrected documents to ensure that the commission charges are eligible consignment sales (sales on behalf of the producer to market the wool). Strict cash sales, where the title immediately passes to the first buyer (typically includes shearer buyers, mill buyers and order buyers), are ineligible.

In line with a directive issued by its Board of Directors, the American Sheep Industry Association has worked on the issue with ASCS daily in recent weeks to secure this opportunity for interested producers to re-file regardless of the original filing date. It is urgent to get the word out to all producers. This is a very short window of time, so phone calls and radio spots may be appropriate to inform wool growers in your area of this change. Please call your local ASCS office for more information.

New Feeder-Lamb Grading System Being Reported
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Frame score	Body weight (lbs)	Back fat (inches)
Small	< 100	0.25
Medium	100-125	0.25

Large > 120 0.25

Preliminary feeder-lamb grading standards are now in use, according to USDA Market News Service representatives.

"In a few months, we expect to have an official set of grade standards published in the Federal Register," said Pleas Childress, chair for the American Sheep Industry Association's Production Education and Research Council. "The intent is that both buyers and producers will be able to more accurately assess the yield-grade potential of feeder lambs at a given slaughter weight."

USDA's Market News Service began using the preliminary set of standards in January to report its feeder lambs. The above three frame scores, combined with three conformation scores, are used to create nine feeder grades with corresponding body weight and back fat thickness.

A carcass conformation score of Number 1 is equal to what is now considered prime or thick conformation, while the Number 2 conformation will refer to choice or moderately thick. The Number 3 conformation will refer to less-than-choice, or thin conformation. A large-frame conformation score Number 1 is expected to be optimally finished at 120 pounds or more with prime or thick conformation.

The project is sponsored through a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, ASI, and Colorado State and Oregon State Universities cooperating. A final set of feeder lamb standards for public comment likely will be published by mid-year.

A Lamb Feeding Facility For The Pennsylvania Producer
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Any successful lamb feeder will tell you that short cuts in management, nutrition, and health can spell disaster. Another area often overlooked is adequate lamb-feeding facilities. Without proper facilities, two major and costly health problems plague the best of feeders — chronic pneumonia and

an insidious internal parasite/coccidiosis infestation.

Midwest feeder pig and sheep producers came up with an ingenious and practical idea for feeding facilities some twenty years ago. Lamb feeders at the Dixon Springs Research Center in Illinois started performance-testing rams on an elevated and slotted floor structure in the early 1970s. The facility was nothing more than a modified farm utility wagon bed, equipped with a pen structure, roof, a slotted floor, a self-feeder, and an all-weather spigot pig waterer.

In central Pennsylvania, commercial structures are being built for the small to medium commercial feeder pig producer. These facilities also will work well for the lamb feeder, but you can most likely save money and have a facility customized to your specific needs by constructing your own. If you are serious, start looking for an abandoned house trailer frame.

Construction details are very important, especially the floor materials and proper supporting structures necessary for a sturdy, elevated feeding platform. More information can be found in the new revised Midwest Plan Booklet No. MWPS-3, 4th edition, 1994. Check with your county extension office about purchasing a copy of this publication, or contact the Publications Department in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences (814) 865-5486.

Next time you get serious about feeding small groups of lambs (60 to 100 hd), take another look at your existing lamb feeding facility. If labor, manure handling, a ventilation, sanitation, health, and lamb performance need improvement, may be time to re-evaluate your existing facility and invest some planning time and money into a modest, portable, elevated/slotted-floor lamb feeding facility. An old bank barn or shed with a dirt or concrete floor is just not good enough.

Lamb Council Offers Educational Materials
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A retail merchandising guide and a meat-cutting demonstration video recently released by the American Sheep Industry Association's Lamb Council are drawing

equal interest from the target audience of retail meat directors and sheep producers.

Both items, which debuted at the American Sheep Industry Convention in late January, were produced with a straightforward objective — to sell more American lamb. The manual includes photographs, marketing ideas, product illustrations, and procedures to help retailers sell more

Farrowing Performance In Alternative Housing Systems

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Comparison of farrowing performance under various housing systems

	Confinement	Open	Huts/no buildings
Herds surveyed	734	90	28
Born alive, pigs/litter	9.8	9.7	9.8
Weaned, pig/litter	8.1	7.4*	7.9
Prewaning mortality, %	15.8	25.4*	18.9
Losses from crushing, %	6.7	9.7	13.0
Losses from starvation, %	3.1	6.9	1.5
Losses from scours, %	1.9	3.7	1.0

Nearly 90 percent of U.S. hog producers with sows have confinement farrowing facilities. These systems have evolved through a need for year-round climate control and ease of animal management. Although these issues are also important in Europe, the hog industry there is showing a clear trend toward outdoor rearing facilities. Impending animal welfare regulations against housing gestating sows in crates or tethers are probably their major reason for the shift away from confinement.

As U.S. producers consider farrowing facility options, one important issue is the expected survival rate of the baby pig under various housing systems. Controlled comparisons of these systems are few. However, data recently collected by USDA: APHIS: VS through the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) provide some insights.

More than 1,600 randomly selected producers from 18 states participated in the NAHMS survey. Data were collected and grouped into three housing categories:

Confinement — enclosed building, with flooring other than

cuts of lamb. The video is a step-by-step demonstration on how to get different and better cuts of lamb from a carcass. It was developed for producers who direct-market their lambs, or for those who use such services.

The manual sells for \$24.95 and the video for \$10, including shipping and handling. To place an order, contact ASI's distribution department at (303) 771-3500.

dirt.

Open building — open on one or more sides year-round. Pigs may have access to outside lots and pastures.

Huts/no buildings — portable hut or shed situated in a pasture or dirt lot.

Data on farrowing performance, preweaning mortality, and suspected causes of baby pig deaths were collected over a three-month period.

Conclusions

(The authors caution readers against drawing strong conclusions based on causes of death, and therefore, the statistical analyses are not presented. However, the data listing number born, weaned, etc. should be considered valid.)

Number of pigs born alive is almost identical across the three housing systems.

Death losses appear to be higher in open facilities, leading to a significant drop in number weaned per litter in that housing system.

Although the number of farms farrowing in huts or no buildings was small, it appears that producers under those conditions can wean nearly as many pigs as those in confinement.

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