



## **Northwest Alabama Small Ruminant Newsletter** **Summer 2010**

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Greetings Everyone,

Summer has arrived and brought along with it all the heat and humidity the wind currents could carry. So far this summer there has been plenty of rain which is good for growing forages and browse, and looking like another good year for hay production. As everyone also knows a combination of rain, heat, and humidity provides ideal conditions for another prolific year of gastrointestinal worm (stomach worms) problems; with our primary concern being the “Barberpole” worm. Increased health care costs, productivity impairment, increased mortality rates, and economic losses are all associated with the challenges of small ruminant production and parasite prolificacy, not just in the Southeast U.S., but throughout the world! I hope the ideas shared in this newsletter will be beneficial to your farm situation, and help reduce parasite associated expenditures and potential for economic losses.

In this issue you will find the following information. (1) An update on upcoming small ruminant activities and events. (2) Know Your Farmer; Know Your Food is a new program being implemented by USDA. One component of the program is addressing the location of abattoirs (slaughter facilities) that can serve small-scale producers and provide local consumers with locally grown meat products. (3) A reminder about local marketing opportunities. (4) For Your Information, an in-depth discussion on parasite management. (5) Take note of the enclosed flyer regarding the Southern States Dorper Show and Sale, especially the part about educational seminar on Friday. Hair Sheep are gaining popularity as an alternative to meat goats, or as part of an integrated approach to livestock production. I highly encourage you to consider attending some portion of this event.

As always I appreciate your interest and input regarding my outreach efforts with Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

*Robert Spencer*

Robert Spencer  
Urban Regional Extension Specialist

## PAST EVENTS

### **Marketing Conference**

In April the West Alabama Marketing Conference for Small Ruminant Producers took place in Livingston, AL. Despite ominous weather conditions it was well attended. There were over thirty attendees and speakers from Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. Goat burgers, goat meat tamales, side dishes and lots of tasty cakes were served for lunch.

### **Recent Market Prices**

Prices for goats and sheep are down compared to spring highs, but very good for this time of the year. Prices for almost all stages of animals remain at or above one dollar per pound. Below is a recent USDA/AMS marketing report for the Columbia Sale Barn, the report is from the sale on June 11, 2010. If you have been keeping up with prices you will notice the recent report shows a decrease in prices, up till recently prices have peaked at highs near \$2.00 /lb for prime animals in the fifty to sixty pound range. I would expect prices to rise slightly in anticipation of 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday sales, then to remain conservative for the remainder of the summer. Of particular interest are lamb prices, with prices like this Hair Sheep will continue to draw interest from potential producers.

#### Selection 1

25-35 lbs 153.00-181.00  
36-50 lbs 170.50-179.00  
51-65 lbs 168.00-174.50  
66-80 lbs 134.00-141.50  
81-100 lbs 121.00

#### Selection 2

25-35 lbs 129.00-130.00  
36-50 lbs 137.00-151.50  
51-65 lbs 161.75-168.75  
66-80 lbs 124.50  
81-100 lbs 91-114.50

#### Selection 3

25-35 lbs 111.00-119.00  
36-50 lbs 118.00-120.00  
51-62 lbs 115-135.00  
66-80 lbs 94.50-114.00

Keep in mind the Columbia Sale Barn is a considerable drive from the North Alabama area. In order to justify this additional drive, a considerable number of animals will need to be transported.

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## **WORKSHOPS & ETC.**



### **Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program 2010**

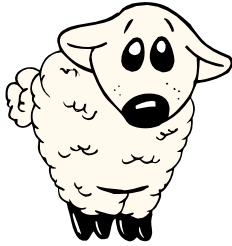
Alabama Cooperative Extension System is proud to offer this program for 2010. This state-wide educational program consists of three days intensive training on major aspects of goat production including nutrition, marketing, economics, reproduction, health management, facilities and fencing, and etc. Sessions are offered across the State on a regional basis. The program is designed to serve potential goat producers (meat and dairy) who are trying to acquire extensive training, and existing goat producers who are trying to improve their management, production, and marketing strategies.

The following location and dates have are about to take place, you still have time to register: Northeast Alabama - Northwest Alabama, June 25 & 26 and July 9 & 10; contact Robert Spencer (256) 766-6223. The first weekend will take place at the Lauderdale County Extension Office. Second weekend will take place at the Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center near Madison (Belle Mina).

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## **IN THE NEWS**

*The following two articles were taken from the American Sheep Institute Weekly Newsletter*



### **USDA Asked to Include Lamb Slaughter Companies**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it wants to help increase the availability of slaughterhouses to small livestock and poultry producers. The effort is part of the agency's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative, which seeks to rebuild rural economies and bridge a gap between food producers and consumers.

Maps developed by the agency show that high densities of small cattle, pork and chicken producers lack access to federally and state-inspected slaughterhouses across the United States. USDA wants to help existing and new facilities increase slaughter availability in these regions to benefit local food systems and the public health. The maps showing cattle, pork and chicken facilities are available at [www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/KYF\\_maps-050410\\_FOR\\_RELEASE.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/KYF_maps-050410_FOR_RELEASE.pdf).

Glen Fisher (Texas), president of the American Sheep Industry Association, recently requested USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service update its report to include processing facilities for lamb and sheep.

"One-third of the lamb produced in the United States is marketed through nontraditional routes including farmers markets and on-farm sales direct to consumers, as well as through smaller meat facilities to grocery stores and restaurant trade," commented Fisher. "It is estimated that 1.2 million lambs are marketed in the nontraditional channels with perhaps 300,000 of those being processed by major lamb companies.

"Given the importance of the smaller processing facilities to the sheep business, we hope USDA will agree to provide updated reports and maps that will offer more information to sheep operations that are seeking out the nontraditional marketing route," concluded Fisher.

The slaughterhouse initiative comes as small and very small slaughterhouses contend that USDA's call for updated Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) validation would put them out of business. Since the lamb industry utilizes many multiple species and multiple product plants, Fisher urged every consideration be taken to ensure the validation process accommodate the concerns that expenses could force the plants the sheep industry depends upon to go out of business or choose to not process lamb.

Comments on the compliance guide are being accepted through June 19 by writing to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Room 2-2127, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Mailstop 5474, Beltsville, MD 20705-5474. To review the document, go to [www.aamp.com/documents/HACCPValidationLetters-3-19-2010.pdf](http://www.aamp.com/documents/HACCPValidationLetters-3-19-2010.pdf). A series of public meetings to discuss and receive public input on the HACCP draft proposed guidance were announced with the first meeting taking place on June 14 at the USDA South Building, Jefferson Auditorium, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

### **Mobile Slaughter Information Session Set**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service announced it will be hosting a red meat mobile slaughter unit information session on June 24. The goals of this meeting are to educate farmers, ranchers and processors on how to set up mobile slaughter units, receive the federal grant of inspection and meet USDA food safety requirements.

The red meat mobile slaughter unit information session will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. EDT at the Washington County

Agricultural Education Center in Boonsboro, Md. Livestock for these mobile units include cattle, hogs, sheep and goats.

To view the meeting agenda, go to [www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events).

It would greatly benefit local sheep and goat producers if we had a mobile slaughter facility for North Alabama; and possibly rabbit producers.

### **Market Report**



#### **Recent Market Prices**

Prices for goats and sheep are down compared to spring highs, but very good for this time of year. Prices for most stages of animals remain at or above one dollar per pound, basically range from .60/lb to \$1.50/lb. Below is a recent USDA/AMS marketing report for the Columbia Sale Barn, the report is from the sale on June 11, 2010. If you have been keeping up with prices you will notice the recent report shows a decrease in prices, up till recently prices have peaked at highs near \$2/00/lb for prime animals in the fifty to sixty pound range. I would expect prices to rise slightly in anticipation of 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday sales, then to remain conservative for the remainder of summer. Of particular interest are lamb prices, with prices like this Hair Sheep will continue to draw interest from potential producers.

#### **Tennessee Livestock Producers Graded Goat and Sheep Sale. Columbia TN, June 11, 2010**

Receipts: 1,274 (1025 Goats; 249 Sheep)  
Last Sale 1,100  
Next Sale June 25, 2010, second and fourth Friday each month.

Goats sold per hundred weight (cwt) unless otherwise noted, weights, actual or estimated.

#### **Slaughter Classes:**

Kids

##### **Selection 1**

25-35 lbs 132.00  
36-50 lbs 137.50-145.00  
51-65 lbs 148.50-150.00  
66-80 lbs 126.00-145.00

##### **Selection 2**

25-35 lbs 119.50-130.00  
36-50 lbs 130.00-140.50  
51-65 lbs 135.00-150.00  
66-80 lbs 115.00-121.00  
81-100 lbs

##### **Selection 3**

25-35 lbs 118.00-125.00  
36-50 lbs 115.50-130.00  
51-65 lbs 142.00-143.00  
66-80 lbs 100.00

##### **Yearlings Selection 2-3**

60-128 lbs 95.00-111.00

##### **Slaughter Bucks/Billies**

All Wgts 65.00-106.00, mostly 80.00-92.00

##### **Slaughter Nannies/Does**

All Wgts 60.00-78.00, mostly 71.75-78.00

##### **Kids; Feeders Selection 3**

26-43 lbs 91.00-95.00

#### **SHEEP**

Slaughter Lambs-Includes all breeds, sold per hundred weight (cwt).

Choice and Prime 20-40 lbs

Good

Choice and Prime 40-60 lbs

129.00-147.00

Good

109.00-139.00

Choice and Prime 61-80 lbs

128.50-149.00

Good  
120.00  
Choice and Prime 81-100 lbs  
100.00-135.00  
Good  
Choice and Prime 100-120 lbs  
120-150 lbs

Slaughter Ewes Utility and Good:  
All Wgts 54.00-74.00

Slaughter Rams:  
All Wgts 53.00-63.00

Keep in mind the Columbia Sale Barn is a considerable drive from the North Alabama area. In order to justify this additional drive a considerable number of animals will need to be transported.



#### **Alabama Ag A+ Marketing Assoc.**

Hardly a week goes by without me hearing someone say they wish there was a local market for goats or sheep. Some of you are familiar with Alabama Ag A+ Marketing Association, some not, but here is a local marketing opportunity. All one has to do is contact JC Holt at 256-445-5304, make proper arrangements, and be willing to deliver your goats or sheep to Cox Slaughterhouse. A+ presently has a dire need for lambs and goats. They have a marketing agent who is selling USDA inspected lamb and goat at several Farmer's Markets across Alabama. However, maintaining a steady supply of animals has continued to be a challenge. At present A+ is in need of lambs and goats weighing in excess

of 80 lbs., with a preference of animals weighing 100 lbs. All lambs and goats should be **less** than one year old.

The current price paid to an A+ member is \$2.40 per lb. for processed hanging weight. As most lambs have a dressing percentage of 50%, the price per lb for live animals would be \$1.20 per lb. Goats traditionally have slightly lower dressing percentages of approximately 45%. This translates to \$1.08 per lb. live weight. And, A+ covers the processing fee! Wouldn't you like to help feed Alabama?

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### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

#### **Parasites: Total Management System**

The discussion in this article offers a brief overview of the parasite management strategies utilized over the years. It is written with the intent to encourage you to consider what might work best for your situation; respecting the fact each farm situation is different.

As the heat, humidity, and rains of summer set in so do problems with gastrointestinal worms (stomach worms)! Over the years there have been all kinds of claims being made regarding parasite control, everything from products to strategies for controlling infestation of stomach worms. Their control requires a comprehensive approach.

In extreme situations parasite overload can result in mortality among goats and sheep. Internal parasites affect young and old animals, and can impair animal vigor, potential growth, health, and lead to anemia which can lead to mortality. Bottom line these parasites have an economic impact on farm revenue; whether it be in the form of additional health care costs, lost productivity, or animal mortality!

Minimizing problems with gastrointestinal worms requires an understanding of methods and mechanisms! A strong knowledge base and appropriate strategies have potential to work, but require frequent evaluation and adjustments as needed. However, the implementation of

such a comprehensive set of strategies should be considered as a “total management system”. In other words, just one or two strategies will have limited long-term effect, and at the first onset of “bottle jaw” or mortality leave a producer wondering what went wrong.

Over the years sheep and goat producers have utilized an array of broad spectrum anthelmintics (dewormers); some labeled for small ruminants and some not (off-label), except with the recommendation of a veterinarian. These chemical wormers were used to combat all types of gastrointestinal worms, some more commonly known as Brown Stomach Worm, Tapeworm, Barberpole Worm, and etc. Producers were expecting with proper dosage, strategic usage, aggressive treatment, and rotational application they could eliminate problems with these prolific parasites. The most troublesome being the Barberpole Worm (*Hemonchus contortus*) a highly pathogenic blood sucking parasite. Over a decade later it became obvious complete elimination of these parasites was not possible, they were too resilient and were building up tolerances/immunities to various dewormers. Some producers/experts became more aggressive with use of off-label wormers, but to no avail.

Eventually it was recognized switching dewormers for no justifiable reason was actually accelerating parasites tolerance to chemical wormers. The new recommendation has been to utilize a dewormer until it stops working, then switch to another class of dewormer. But this utilizes another approach that will be mentioned in a few paragraphs.

Historically, more experienced livestock producers were familiar with two concepts that help control problems with stomach worms: (1) Allow animals to only graze on pastures where forages are taller than six inches. When forage height nears six inches then move animals to another paddock. (2) Utilize a practice known as rotational grazing, putting lactating and young animals in paddocks ahead of the rest of the herd. This strategy was known for insuring two things (1) properly

done, lactating and young animals are first to benefit from paddocks that have been ungrazed, allowing them initial access to quality forages. (2) Done right, fresh pastures, ungrazed should have minimal presence of gastrointestinal worms; therefore, the most vulnerable animals (lactating and young) would have quality nutrition and minimal exposure to stomach worms. While there are more details to this concept, it works to some extent. (1) It provides quality, high nutrient forages for those who need it. (2) Paddocks must remain fallow at least sixty days prior to being grazed again, then parasite presence should be reduced. But that does not mean these paddocks are clean of parasites. Utilized properly this system works and works fairly well, but is not a cure to problems with stomach worms.

Next strategy is the glamorous Fecal Egg Exam. Basically the process of putting goat manure in solution and examining it under a microscope to determine what type of worm eggs are present in livestock. Thereby determining which wormer would be appropriate for treatment. However, problems with gastrointestinal worms continued to reoccur. But at least people learned what worms they had problems with, and appropriate wormer, rather than a “blind shotgun” approach.

Then an additional concept was added to this practice, a follow-up exam would determine if wormer utilized was properly working, or not. If the original wormer did not significantly reduce the presence of worms, then it was time to switch to another class of dewormers.

Consult with your veterinarian or Extension expert to learn more about the comprehensive approach to the fore mentioned practice.

Next came a strategic treatment known as the FAMACHA system. By examining the inner eyelid and verifying a pale anemic color or healthy pink color, a producer can determine which animals need treatment and which do not. This system is copyrighted by a scientist from South Africa, where goats have been a common form of livestock for years. The

system works when properly utilized as a TOOL to identifying problems with anemia, and when used in conjunction with record-keeping to indentify which animals are vulnerable to parasite infestation and which are tolerant (do not easily become anemic) to parasite infestation. Animals with reoccurring problems/frequent anemia must be culled! Otherwise despite frequent deworming they will shed off worms and continue to be a source of problems for the rest of the herd.

Most recently worth considering are tannins in the form of graze/browse, as a source of nutrition, and the chemical aspect which suppresses proliferation of gastrointestinal parasites. This probably has as much more appeal from many aspects. Vegetation such as chicory, sericea lespedeza, mimosa, and other browse are high in tannins, high in nutrient value, and fairly easy to establish and grow for harvesting. In particular chicory and sericea lespedeza have been gaining in popularity for grazing material and when sericea is managed and harvested properly it makes good hay for goats, hair sheep, and horses. Producers like it for all the fore mentioned reasons. Plus it tolerates heavy grazing, drought conditions, and is a legume so it fixes nitrogen into the soil. Again, tannins are not a cure all for problems with parasites, but offer several benefits, basically another tool in the tool box.

Most recently experts began to realize: (1) internal parasites are a world-wide problem, and (2) these parasites are ever increasingly becoming resistant to anthelminitics. Now there is a new term, Refugia. No, it is not a program where goat and sheep producers can seek refuge from the headaches of small ruminants and parasites. It is another tool that helps deal with associated challenges. Refugia can simply be defined as a population that is either unexposed to or, in certain circumstances, unaffected by anthelminitics. Refugia can be maintained in parasite populations through several ways; but in the case of goats or sheep being a host for parasites it is facilitated by utilizing selective worming, retaining animals that are resistant to parasite infestation, and culling animals who require repeated treatment.

Implementing this management strategy simply allows for reduction in the frequency of deworming treatments being administered, which minimizes parasite exposure to anthelminitics, with the expectation parasites will be more susceptible to chemical wormers when treatment is applied. Again, this is not a revolutionary concept but has applications in small ruminant production.

Many of you are well aware of the challenges associated with maintaining a healthy herd of sheep or goats. I hope this article gives you some insight as to the importance of developing a total management system that works for your farm. Keep in mind all these concepts and practices are simply a “collection of tools” for parasite management, not elimination. But when implemented as a comprehensive approach it makes for a “tool box”.

Prior to implementing any new concept consult with your veterinarian, an Extension expert, and discuss it with at least two other small ruminant producers whose management practices you strongly respect! Keep in mind the following: (1) your plan will need to be periodically evaluated and revised as needed, and (2) Gastrointestinal worms are not unique to just one region of the U.S., they are a WORLD WIDE problem. Don't feel alone!

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DORPER FLYER!!**

# Southern States Dorper

JUDGE:  
Tim  
Hall

## SHOW & SALE

AUCTIONEER:  
Pit  
Kemmer

Hyder-Burks Agricultural Center  
Tennessee Tech University

Cookeville, Tennessee

*(Located on Interstate 40, just 40 miles East of Nashville)*

Friday, July 23

10:00 a.m. • Educational Seminar

Saturday, July 24

8:00 a.m. • Show 2:00 p.m. • Sale

**Expecting Over 100 Head Consigned**

*Selling:*

- Dorper & White Dorper Rams & Ewes  
*(Yearlings & Lambs)*
- Commercial Rams
- Percentage Dorper & White Dorper Pens of Ewes

### The right breed for a better bottom line!

*Early Maturity • Increased Fertility • Non-Seasonal Breeding  
Excellent Maternal Traits • Newborn Lamb Vigor*



*For further information, contact:*  
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Email: Dorpers@ymail.com



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[www.dorper.org](http://www.dorper.org)

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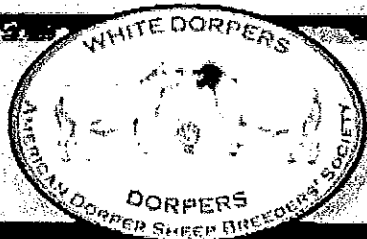
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