



Northwest Alabama Small Ruminant Newsletter Fall 2010

Greetings Everyone,

Fall and cooler temperatures are just around the corner. After the record-setting number of days above ninety degrees I'm sure everyone is ready for a reprieve. As many of you are well aware it has been another prolific year for gastrointestinal worm (stomach worms) problems. With our primary concern being the "Barberpole" worm. The extreme heat and humidity combined with early summer rains allowed the Barberpole worm population to explode; causing problems for goats and sheep and their owners. This is the first year I can remember sheep producers have vocalized problems with parasite overloads in their herds. Generally speaking health care and feed expenses tend to be the two primary costs associated with small ruminant production.

Latest estimates from National Agricultural Statistics Service show a decrease in the meat goat and sheep population for the second year in a row. This applies to Alabama and across the United States. Both are down something like two percent. This may explain why market reports show prices at reporting sale barns continue to remain above average. While the increasing popularity of dairy goats is evident as their number continues to rise.

In this issue you will find the following information. (1) An update on upcoming small ruminant activities and events. (2) Fall is an ideal time to establish forages for grazing this winter and into next year. (3) A reminder about local marketing opportunities. (4) Scrapie and scrapie tags. Almost every summer I get quite a few phone calls about the need to order scrapie tags on short notice. Why not order them now and have it taken care of for future needs. Included is some basic information on the Scrapie program and a tag order form. Almost all livestock sale barns require sheep and goats be tagged prior to delivery at each sale barn. The best part, tags and applicator pliers are free! See application at the end of this newsletter. (5) Also, there is another USDA program offered to benefit farmers with Blackface/Mottled Face Sheep. (6) At the end of summer and into early fall I receive calls about plant toxicity in livestock. Although the plant has been present since early summer animals do not bother it until late summer. It is called **Perilla Mint** and can be very deadly to all forms of livestock. Some people call it purple mint. It tends to grow under shade trees and at the edge of pastures near woodland areas. I have included a fact sheet on it at the end of this newsletter.

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

Educational Programs

National Goat Conference

Although less than two weeks away, it is not too late to register. The four day program has an awesome line up of topics and speakers! The host institution is Florida A&M University Cooperative Extension Program. The event will take place September 12-15th in Tallahassee, FL. The overall goal of the National Goat Conference is to provide educational and training opportunities for producers, agricultural professionals, and students on goat production, management and marketing to help enhance the viability of the goat industry in the U.S. There will be lectures, discussions, displays, a farm tour and on site demonstrations. For more information visit <http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?goats&GeneralConferenceInformation> or call Ms. Joy Dixon at the Florida A&M University Research & Extension Center, 850-875-8555. Dr. Jacqueline Johnson with Alabama A&M University has some scholarships available; contact her at (256) 372-5031.

Parasite Workshop

A Small Ruminant Gastro-Intestinal (GI) Parasite Identification and FAMACHA Training Workshop will take place Saturday October 16, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center located at 13112 Alabama Highway 68 in Crossville, AL. This workshop is free to the public; however for planning purposes everyone is asked to please pre-register. For more information or to register, please contact the Marshall County Extension office at (256) 582-2009.

Direct Marketing Opportunities

Beef and hog producers have been doing it for a long time, some goat and sheep producers have too. “Freezer Meats” is the new term, and there are some upcoming opportunities to learn more about this innovative marketing opportunity. Extension will be offering these trainings via video conference format at various Extension locations. Later they will host a

comprehensive field day on the campus of Auburn University. The two video conference dates are set for Tuesday November 9 and 16 from 6:30-8:30 pm.

The two sessions are titled “The ABCs of Raising and Marketing Freezer Meats: A Primer”. The information in these sessions should benefit all forms of livestock producers, including those who raise rabbits.

Topics to address: Myths and facts of raising freezer meat, feeding, economics, marketing, carcass breakdown, cut sheets, communicating with your slaughter facility, how much meat will each animal producer and necessary freezer space, and proper labeling.

Keep in mind most of this will primarily address beef and pork, but much can be applied to other forms of livestock.

The follow-up field day will be held in January at Auburn University. More details on this event will be forthcoming.

Please contact your local Extension office and inquire about location availability. We need you to make advance reservations so we have an idea of how many people to expect. Call Randall Armstrong or myself at 256-766-6223 for more information in the Shoals area. And, for much of North-central Alabama, including Lawrence and Cullman Counties contact Gerry Thompson at (256) 353-8702.

Forages

Pasture Renovation

Fall is an ideal time to consider pasture renovation for winter grazing and establishing new forages for next year. Winter grazing options might include annual rye grass and chicory. For next year consider Orchard Grass and Red or White Clover. However,



evaluate what might work best for your farm and your animals grazing preference. Once you have an idea what you want to plant visit your local Extension office, obtain a soil sample kit, and follow the instructions. Then fill out the form, list possible forages you intend to plant, and mail it off to the lab at Auburn University. Wait for results and follow instructions. It will guide you to become more efficient with your application of fertilizer.

Remember, it is best (more efficient) to apply agricultural lime in the fall and fertilizer in the spring! Call your local Extension office and ask to talk with someone about forage establishment and soil testing if you have any questions or need for publications. Or, you can visit www.aces.edu and search for more information.

Marketing

Marketing Options

When choosing marketing options always consider practical economics; consider travel costs associated with trips to various locations in comparison to potential prices and number of animals to be delivered. Anticipation of higher prices do not always justify lengthy travels.



In North Alabama producers have the following options, listed alphabetically:

Alabama Goat Auction
Boaz, AL
Sale: 1st Saturday of each month
Phone: 256-878-0739

Cullman Stockyard
Cullman, AL
Sale: Tuesdays of each week
Phone: 256-734-4531

Northwest Alabama Livestock Auction
Russellville, AL
Sales: Monday of each week. Special sales on Saturdays, every other month, call for dates. Phone: 256- 332-3323

While most sale barns will accept and sell goats, the fore mentioned three are known for their specific goat and sheep sales.

Market Report

Prices for goats and sheep are back up and should be expected to remain at above average prices. The following information is strictly provided as a reference and by no means an endorsement. The following report is a recent USDA/AMS marketing report for the Columbia Sale Barn.

This report was issued Monday, Aug 30, 2010 by USDA/TDA Dept Ag Market News

Tennessee Sheep and Goat Auction
Tennessee Livestock Producers
Graded Goat and Sheep Sale.
Columbia TN, August 27, 2010

Receipts: 1065 (745 Goats; 320 Sheep) Last Sale 1000
Next Sale September 10, 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 ---
36-50 lbs 166.50-175.00
51-65 lbs 174.00-177.50
66-80 lbs 165.00-176.00
80-100 lbs 142.00-143.00

Selection 2
25-35 lbs 131.00-140.00
36-50 lbs 151.50-173.50
51-65 lbs 163.50-168.00
66-80 lbs 118.50-135.00
81-100 lbs 113.00

Selection 3
25-35 lbs 143.00-147.00
36-50 lbs 135.00-160.00
51-65 lbs 145.00-150.00
66-80 lbs 100.00

Yearlings Selection 2-3
66-74 lbs 99.00-144.00

Slaughter Bucks/Billies
All Wgts 88.00-100.00

Slaughter Nannies/Does
All Wgts 73.00-90.00

Kids; Feeders Selection 3
26-39 lbs 112.00-133.00

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

Choice and Prime 40-60 lbs ---
Good
135.00-137.00
Choice and Prime 61-80 lbs
140.50-144.00
Good
116.00-131.50
Choice and Prime 81-100 lbs
116.00-147.00
Good
117.00-142.00
Choice and Prime 100-120 lbs
117.50-128.00

Slaughter Ewes Utility and Good:
68.50-81.00

Slaughter Rams:
All Wgts 72.00-74.00

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

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Scrapie Eradication Program

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is among a number of diseases classified as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE). Infected flocks that contain a high percentage of susceptible animals can experience significant production losses. Over a period of several years the number of infected animals increases, and the age at onset of clinical signs decreases making these flocks economically unviable. Animals sold from infected flocks spread scrapie to other flocks.

The presence of scrapie in the United States also prevents the export of breeding stock, semen, and embryos to many other countries. TSEs are the subject of increased attention and concern because of the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, the link between BSE and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in people, and feline spongiform encephalopathy (FSE) in cats in Europe.

The Scrapie Eradication Program continues to be mandatory. This federal disease control program is designed to accelerate the eradication of the fatal brain disease, Scrapie, from the nation's sheep flocks and goat herds began November 19, 2001. The program requires ear tags to be placed in all sheep and some types of goats by their owners before they are sold by private treaty or transported to a sale, show, or exhibition.

Flocks enrolled in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program will not need to make any changes. Slaughter surveillance programs are under way now to determine the prevalence of Scrapie in the United States. The presence of the ear tags will allow trace back to the flock of origin of animals whose brains test positive for Scrapie. A plan can then be instituted in

these flocks to eliminate the Scrapie infection. An indemnity program is in place to compensate owners for the financial loss that may incur from live animals that have to be destroyed due to Scrapie infection or exposure.

The contact person for this program is:
Dr. Cindy Brasfield
Veterinary Medical Officer
Designated Scrapie Epidemiologist
USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
Division in Alabama

For more information and to order tags send enclosed form at the end of this letter to Scrapie Program, 1441 Federal Drive, Room 228, Montgomery, AL 36107-1123. To expedite the order consider faxing the form to the fax number listed on the order form.

Consider visiting:
<http://www.agi.state.al.us/scrapie> for more details.

Blackface/Mottled Face Scrapie Surveillance Project

This project allows a \$75 payment to a producer to reimburse costs associated with carcass disposal of any blackface or mottle faced wool sheep that is 14 months of age (evidenced by eruption at gum line of one or both permanent central incisors) or older if the animal dies on the farm and samples are collected for Scrapie testing. The project is aimed at increasing our surveillance of targeted (BF, MF) sheep in Alabama. State and Federal Animal Health Technicians will be 'on call' for farm visits

to collect samples and sign up producers for payment.

Producers can call their local federal or state AHT directly or they can phone (334) 223-7141 and an AHT will be dispatched to their farm for sample collection. The entire head of the sheep will be collected by the AHT and delivered to one of our state diagnostic labs where brain samples are taken for submission to our National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa. It is important that samples be collected soon enough after death that the tissues have not deteriorated in the heat to an extent that they are not testable.

A maximum of 5 samples can be collected per "Scrapie Flock ID" or "Scrapie AL number" per fiscal year. They have been authorized to collect 40 samples for FY2010 and 40 samples for FY 2011. A Scrapie tag does not have to be installed in the ear if the animal dies on the farm but the "Scrapie flock ID" must be provided to the AHT or an application for a flock ID number must be submitted at the time of sampling. If producers have any specific questions about the Blackface Scrapie Surveillance Project contact:

Dr. Cindy Brasfield
Veterinary Medical Officer
Designated Scrapie Epidemiologist
USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
Division
Alabama
cell: 334-657-5549
email: cynthia.m.brasfield@aphis.usda.gov

Alabama Scrapie Eradication Program

Flock ID application/Tag Order/Tattoo Registration Form

For Scrapie Questions Contact Dr. Cindy Brasfield

Cynthia.M.Brasfield@aphis.usda.gov

(334)657-5549

Owner Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Physical Street Address: _____
(where sheep and goats are located)

Mailing Address: _____
(if different than above)

City: _____, Alabama Zip code: _____

Phone Number: Home: _____ Work: _____

Email Address: _____

Species on Farm: Sheep Goats Both County: _____

Primary Breed: _____ Flock Size (adults) _____

Have you ordered Scrapie Eradication Tags previously? Yes No

If yes, what is your USDA assigned Flock ID: _____

If you have been assigned one, what is your National Premise ID? _____

Number of tags requested: 10 20 40 60 80 100 other amount _____

Send me information on the Scrapie Flock Certification Program

My goats are identified with a registered tattoo. My tattoo is _____

Send me information on purchasing other types of approved tags.

Return this form to the following address:

USDA, APHIS, VS

1445 Federal Drive, Room 228

Montgomery, AL 36107-1123

Or you may fax this form to 334-223-7352

Updated 7/9/2010

Perilla Mint

Larry Steckel, Assistant Professor, Plant Sciences
 Neil Rhodes, Professor and Department Head, Plant Sciences

Perilla Mint *Perilla frutescens* (L.) Britt.

Also known as: beefsteak plant, common perilla, purple perilla, purple mint, shiso, Chinese basil, wild basil, blueweed, Joseph's coat, wild coleus, rattlesnake weed

Classification and Description

Perilla mint is a member of the Lamiaceae or mint family. About 200 genera and 3200 species make up the mint plant family. Perilla mint is an erect, herbaceous annual that can grow to heights of 2 feet. It is native to East Asia. The cotyledons are longer than they are broad, with the broadest portion near the tip. The leaves are simple, opposite and can be purple or green tinged with purple, making it an attractive plant. Leaves have coarsely serrated (toothed) leaf margins pointed toward the tip and can be up to 5 inches wide and 7 inches long. Leaves are egg-shaped, with the largest part nearest the base. The stems of perilla mint are square in cross section, erect, hairy, somewhat branched and green or purple. Many small, white to purplish-white flowers with a ring of hairs in the throat are clustered in the terminals of these plants. Reproduction is by seed. Perilla mint has a shallow taproot and fibrous roots.

Weed Status and Injury

Perilla mint causes more cattle deaths in Tennessee than any other toxic plant. Perilla is very poisonous to cattle and other ruminants, as well as horses. All plant parts are toxic, especially the flowering structures. Dried plants in hay can be toxic, but the greatest risk is associated with consumption of fresh plant material, especially if flowers and fruit are present. Perilla mint contains ketones that cause acute respiratory distress syndrome in cattle (ARDS), also called panting disease. Treatment is often ineffective. Although these plants can occur anywhere in a pasture or feed lot, they typically favor semi-shaded environments, and are most frequently located around farm structures, edges of woods and along fence rows.

Cases of poisoning from these weeds are a concern during the late summer and early fall when other grasses and forages might be in short supply and the perilla mint is flowering. Cattle will normally not feed on these toxic weeds unless there is a shortage of other feed. Therefore, it is crucial to have a ready supply of quality feed available for farm animals during this time of the year.



Perilla mint



Perilla mint growing along fence line of a pasture

Interesting Facts

The Latin word *frutescens* means shrubby or bushy and refers to this plant's growth habit. Perilla mint is considered an ornamental plant and it is cultivated for its often variegated purple and green foliage. It is an escaped ornamental and that is how it has become a weed pest in Tennessee. These plants give off a distinctive, aromatic, minty odor when the stems and leaves are crushed. It is a



Flowering branches of perilla mint

cultivated crop in East Asia. The seed is used for cooking oil and fuel. It has a square stem that is characteristic of the plants in the mint family. Another interesting fact, though not recommended by the University of Tennessee, is that Native Americans of the Rappahannock tribe used perilla mint (as a drug) as an ingredient of a blood medicine.

Management Considerations

Control of perilla mint in pastures, barn lots and forage fields is very important. The best time to scout for and control perilla mint is late April to early June. It is very difficult to control in late summer and early fall when it also becomes the most dangerous to livestock. If control measures are not taken early, it becomes even more crucial in late summer to maintain an adequate supply of quality feed for cattle and other farm animals so they will not feed on these toxic weeds. Grazing in infested pastures should be limited during late summer when perilla mint is flowering. Avoid harvesting forages in areas infested with these weeds. Mowing perilla mint plants before seed is produced will help prevent further reproduction and spread. Please refer to the *Weed Control Manual for Tennessee Row Crops* (Extension PB 1580) for management recommendations. Another good resource for management of this weed is in the *Hay Crop and Pasture Weed Management Guide* (Extension PB 1521).

References

- Burrows, G. E. and R. J. Tyrl. 2001. Toxic Plants of North America. Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Ave., Ames, Iowa 50014. 1342 p.
- Gleason, H. A. and A. Cronquist. 1963. Manual of vascular plants. PWS Publishers. Boston, MA 02116. Pp 810.
- Moerman, D.E. 1998. Native American Ethnobotany. Timber Press. The Haseltine Bldg., 133 S. W. Second Ave., Suite 450, Portland, OR 97204, U.S.A.
- Rhodes, G. N., G. K. Breeden, G. Bates and S. McElroy. 2006. Hay Crop and Pasture Weed Management Guide. University of Tennessee Extension Publication. PB1521.

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