



Pipestone Lambing Time Shortcourse

The Pipestone Minnesota area has long been known for its progressive, successful sheep producers; expanding sheep numbers and developing new management concepts. The successful practices these producers use will be shared at the 31st Annual Pipestone Lambing Time Shortcourse and Bus Tour on Friday, February 5th and Saturday, February 6th, 2010 at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Pipestone.

The intensive system of the Pipestone sheep production focuses on producing and marketing a high lambing percentage while keeping the cost of production as low as possible. All of this must be accomplished with the least possible labor input. The kind of job we do prior to, during and after lambing will greatly affect lamb losses, pounds of lamb marketed, input costs, and ultimately profit.

This years' shortcourse will feature Friday night and Saturday morning sessions that will address: Dealing with light test weight and mold in this years' corn crop; current sheep health issues; ask a vet; sheep care practices and why we do them; economic and production challenges of the sheep industry; handling common problems with ewes at lambing time; what four years of feeding soybean hulls and DDGS has taught us; and the critical first three weeks of a lamb's life. These topics will be presented by Dr. J. D. Bobb and Dr. Larry Goelz from the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and Philip Berg and Mike Caskey, instructors in the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program.

Saturday afternoon features a tour of two successful 600 ewe sheep operations that will be in the process of lambing. The farms that will be visited are Russ Gundermann's farm and Bruce and Karla Gundermann's farm. Both operations lamb out about 600 ewes annually and use a multiple lambing period system to most efficiently utilize their facilities and labor. They have done an excellent job of combining older barns with newer buildings to make their sheep operation as low labor as possible. Both operations produce and market a high lambing percentage because of their ability to save, manage and care for a large number of newborn lambs. Their operations include many labor saving concepts to enable them to handle a large number of sheep with minimal effort.

The goal of this shortcourse is to learn from four nationally recognized sheep experts who will share leading edge sheep management practices and sheep health information and to tour two outstanding sheep farms to see firsthand how other producers recognize, manage and effectively deal with lambing time concerns.

For more information on the shortcourse and bus tour, contact Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program at Minnesota West Community & Technical College in Pipestone, Minnesota at 800-658-2330 or 507-825-6806 or visit www.pipestonesheep.com



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Straight Talk

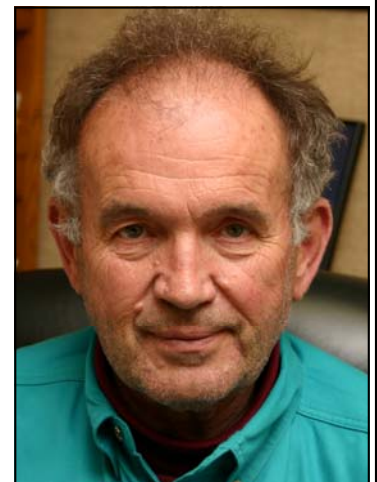
Dr. G.F. Kennedy

Maybe at the beginning of this article I should state this column is properly named "Straight Talk". I never had trouble relating to people that told me what their thoughts were. Out of conflict comes resolution.

Remember the Wes Limesand story? Many of us in the industry tried to help save Limesands position and preserve a long standing tradition initiated by the late Merle Light. Steve Church helped lead the charge. We lost the fight and the long standing highly successful program is being dismantled as I write.

One of the most unreasonable people in the fight will also be gone. North Dakota State University President, Joseph Chapman, stung by criticism of the ballooning cost of his new home and a \$22,000 trip to President Barak Obama's inauguration for himself and family, announced that he is resigning.

The Board of Higher Education says it will likely ask for an audit on spending for the presidents' house which originally was estimated to cost \$900,000 and to be paid for with private money. The price ballooned to over two million, forcing foundation members to agree to cover most of the extra costs.



Continued →

Wes didn't get his job back, but there is some satisfaction that one of the guys that caused the pain is gone.

Many have read or heard me advise tramisol, levamisole, as one of the best wormers available. Problem has been it has not been available. The product was used for years successfully in cattle, sheep, goats and swine. Patent rights have expired and the last product we received was manufactured in China. I was curious when all of a sudden it has disappeared. Now I think I have discovered the answer.

In an AP story out of Little Rock, AR, quote: "Nearly a third of all cocaine seized in the United States is laced with a dangerous veterinary medicine - a livestock deworming drug that might enhance cocaine's effects but has been blamed in at least three deaths and scores of serious illness."

Authorities believe cocaine manufacturers are adding the Levamisole in Columbia before the cocaine is to be sold as white powder or crack. Thanks to the reader that sent me the AP article. It explains a lot.

Not hard to believe that government officials are making it difficult to import Levamisole for approved livestock use.

I am no longer a member of the Dorper Board so I am free to have an opinion. I got into the Dorper breed because they appeared to offer some common sense factors to the sheep business. I think they still do. They never have caught on well in the upper Midwest where before you would run lambs on grass and would add another ewe and keep the lambs in intensive management. They did work well in range situations which I would call extensive practices.

In the show ring nothing changed. They were easy to get ready if you had a good feed bucket. South Africa being worse than the U.S., a high priority was placed on white meat. No different than when I raised Suffolk's when I found out neck meat was the highest price cut on the animal.

Over the years, I have had Cheviots, South Downs, Dorsets, Finns, Suffolks, Rambouillets, Dorpers and now Katahdins. I liked them all. I have never owned a goat, had practice experience with Angoras and Boers. I like goats, but don't know that I want to own one in the upper Midwest. They are browsers, not grazers. I have now settled on Katahdins that I often refer to as sheep in goats clothing. My limited experience would suggest Dorper Katahdin cross ewes would make outstanding commercial ewes. These crossbred ewe lambs, when handled properly, will push close to a 200% lamb crop at a year of age and are excellent milkers.

Another reader called me and was concerned about what the industry could do about wool. It would be my opinion that in the Midwest, the wool is no longer an asset, but a liability. If you have a small flock and you find a shearer you are still in the negative position after paying the shearer and selling the wool.

Wool guys are worried about hair type sheep contaminating the clip. Pretty simple, if you run them together or cross them, it's a problem. A Dorper Rambouillet cross is going to have a bad fleece.

If I send a Rambouillet ram to slaughter the pelt is worth about seven dollars as hair sheep pelt will return you zero. The hide is worth more but until there is volume you probably won't get paid for it.

Another tip on hair sheep; better to have electric fences, they like to rub. They will take out a woven wire fence.

If you decide on Katahdins you need the big thick ones, not frail spindly ones and there are still some of them around. The flock book is open and this should help this situation.

New subject, finally they will become legally available. CIDRS will become available from Pfizer in December. They have been used via Canada and Australia for years in a limited fashion in this country, these countries have used them successfully for years. Credit Pfizer for finally getting them approved for use in this country.

I have studied the New Animal Drug Application. It appears extensive and conclusive. They found no difference between five day insertion and twelve day insertion periods. The twelve day insertion has been extensively used along with pregnant mare serum upon removal for AI work and is the recommendation in Canada.

I guess we will wait and see. The trials were run in Virginia. Ewes breed easier out of season, the closer they are to the equator. There are breed differences as well. I don't know what breed they were but I would have used hair sheep to insure success in the trial.

In any event, we now have a tool for out of season lambing. That should help spread out the supply of American Lamb by reducing seasonality. Time will tell, but I think this is the first tool to come a long in a long time to help intensive lambing programs.

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Veterinary services, procedures, biologicals, and drugs mentioned in this publication represent the personal opinions and clinical observations of the contributing author. They are in no way intended to be interpreted as recommendations without the consent of the producer's own practicing Veterinarian. We strongly urge that producers establish a patient-client-veterinarian relationship that allows extra-label use when there are no drugs approved for treatment or if approved drugs are not effective. This procedure allows veterinarians to go beyond label directions when "prudent use" is necessary. The limited availability of drugs and biologics in this country is a major factor in restricting the growth of the sheep industry and allowing producers to compete in the world Market place.

FDA Announces the Approval of CIDRS

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today is announcing the approval of EAZI-Breed CIDR Sheep Insert (progesterone solid matrix) for induction of estrus in ewes (sheep) during seasonal anestrus. This progesterone Controlled Intravaginal Drug Release (CIDR) is a steroid hormone that allows out-of-season breeding in sheep.

The data to support this approval were gathered in collaboration with the National Research Support Project-7 (NRSP-7), a USDA program intended to support the approval of new animal drugs for minor species of agricultural importance.

"Members of the U.S. sheep industry have long cited this type of product as their top priority need," said, Dr. Meg Oeller, Director, Center for Veterinary Medicine, Office of Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Drug Development. "And through efforts with our partners at NSRP-7 and the pharmaceutical firm, the FDA can now point to an approved drug product that is fulfilling a real need in the sheep industry. It represents the true spirit of the MUMS Act."

Clinical researchers funded by NRSP-7 grants conducted the studies to support the effectiveness, target animal safety, human food safety, and environmental safety of the progesterone CIDR. These data were made available in a Public Master File in March of 2009. The pharmaceutical company was able to use these data in conjunction with its own manufacturing, labeling, and other information to complete the new animal drug application.

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