



Shepherd's Choice Lamb and Kid Milk Replacer

This year the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and Supply is introducing Shepherd's Choice Lamb Milk Replacer. We have chosen to work with Merrick's, the leader in quality and quality control, to manufacture the product for us. Dr. Kennedy, with his extensive experience in the sheep industry has made some changes in formulation, most notably adding acidification. This results in a product with longer shelf life when mixed and is ideally suited for free choice lamb feeding programs. The product contains 30% fat and 24% protein. It is medicated with a higher rate of Deccox to more effectively control coccidiosis. It is available in eight pound pails or 25 pound bags. Shepherd's Choice Lamb and Kid Milk Replacer mixes into solution easily and can be fed warm or cold, although we recommend cold feeding when fed free choice. We are excited about this new product and feel it set the standard in raising orphan lambs.

Thus far we have sold over 2,000 bags of Shepherd's Choice Lamb and Kid Milk Replacer. It is priced competitively in the market. We offer quantity discounts and can arrange shipping.



First Semi load of Shepherd's Choice Lamb and Kid Milk Replacer.



"Milk Replacer Crew"

End of the Year Thoughts

J.L. Goelz

As we wrap up 2008, now is a good time to take a look at your sheep enterprise from a profitability standpoint. If you are like most sheep producers, you would rather be out doing chores rather than spending time with a calculator. However, your time spent with the calculator at the end of the year can be more productive than saving lambs in the lambing barn.

Before you can determine profitability you need to determine what your expenses are. This usually is the most difficult step. Be sure to account for not only purchased feed, equipment and labor but also allocate non-cash expenses such as depreciation or a reasonable "use fee" for buildings and equipment. While these are not out of pocket expenses, if the sheep were not on your farm you would likely be using the buildings for something else, therefore there is an annual value estimation that needs to be allocated to your sheep enterprise. Reasonable prices for pasture and feed grown on the farm should also be considered. Don't forget about little things such as pasture spray, fence maintenance, etc. These add up.

The revenue item is easy: lambs, wool and culls. Profit is simply revenue minus expenses. However a word of warning – the devil is in the details. If you do not account for all expenses your profit number is skewed and thus meaningless in the real world. Astute managers know that getting the profit number real is the first step in determining how to improve their operation.

Once you have a reasonable profit number calculated, you can determine if the return to labor is reasonable for yourself. There are a number of people who choose to raise sheep because they love sheep. Whether they are profitable or not is not a concern. That is fine and justified, we all have non-profitable hobbies. However, you may be just as happy with fewer sheep or perhaps your hobby is profitable and you choose to move it to a business, for this you need sound business management.

Now, take a hard look at both the revenue and expenses list. Ask yourself basic questions such as:

What can I do to increase revenue by producing more lambs?

Can I manage more ewes to defer labor and facilities across more lambs?

Am I using the right genetics to maximize survivability of the lambs in the environment that I have?

Am I delivering a product to the market at the right weight and time to capitalize on high prices?

What expense can be trimmed **without losing revenue**? Trimming an expense that lowers revenue is usually counterproductive.

What expenses are large and what are small? In most cases, feed expense is by far the largest contributor and focusing on cutting feed costs gives us the most benefit.

What impact will better feed conversion have on my bottom line?

What impact will minimizing feed waste have on my bottom line?

How many lambs per ewe do I need to market to get a reasonable return on my investment and labor?

These are all tough questions. If we answer honestly they allow us to be better managers and our operation more successful. Assembling the numbers is the first step. Asking the questions is the second. The third and most important is determining change and implementing that change.

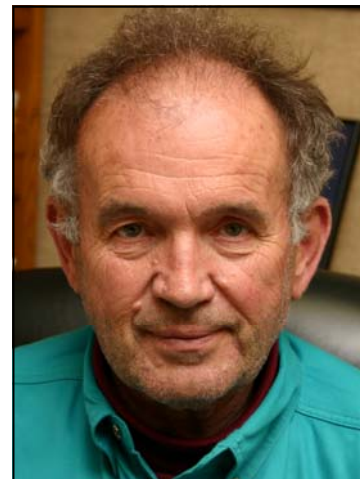
North Star Sale Summary

Over 100 buyers from nine different states attended the 34th Annual North Star Bred Ewe Sale in Pipestone, MN on October 25th, 2008. There were 124 head of Suffolks, Hampshires, Dorsets, Rambouillets and Dorsers that sold for an average of \$434.88. The high selling ewe was sold by Bobendrier Hamps for \$950.00. Thank you to all who attended and made this years sale another success.

There's nothing like working our own sheep to provoke thoughts to share with readers.

Our worming program consists of worming twice a year. We worm off of pasture with Levamisole, (no longer available) and then with Valbazen prior to going to pasture in spring. We also use Valbazen for deworming replacement ewes when they are removed from full feed at about eighty pounds.

We had to use Ivomec Drench this year. We had used Levasole injectable in previous years. Dorper ewes are witches when you try to hold their heads. The white dorpers and katahdins are much easier. I used whatever Levasole I had left for the first group of dorper ewes.



We use Vibrio at the same time. Ewe lambs get vaccinated twice, once earlier.

We don't do the CDT thing, we do that later by using half dose CDT, plus 1cc of penicillin when we process prior to leaving the jugs.

When you are working sheep, always have antibiotics available for an occasional abscess or sheep showing respiratory distress. Fortunately, we didn't find anything this trip through the corral.

I have started to use a couple drugs off label that I like a lot. Excede and Baytril are effective when there is a possible chance of salmonella.

Lamb feeders battle salmonella often. The saying is, "when the sheep are on feed well enough to die from enterotoxemia, the salmonella goes away." I think the organism is often present, ready to take over if an animal is somehow stressed.

Going forward from here, we will need to start thinking about Vitamin E. There are many different approaches, feeding salt, injectable and baby lamb strength oral. Selenium should be provided with salt if necessary. Vitamin E can become a problem as early as January in the north country.

Let's talk a little bit about castration and tail docking. I have decided there is just one way to go. I have used electric tail dockers, emasculators, and burdizzos, but at the end of the day, elastrator bands are the only way to go. CDT and penicillin when the band is applied generally takes care of tetanus, but a repeat in seven days with penicillin for certain will prevent tetanus. I have never experienced a lamb with tetanus when giving the CDT and penicillin at the time of band placement.

Remember, feeding 15mg-30mg of Rumensin per ewe prior to lambing will reduce the chance of toxoplasma abortion and help lessen the exposure to coccidiosis in the lambs.

Happy New Year!!

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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.

Mobile Scanning Available

Mobile Scanning service offered by Gary & Ben Stuart. They use a Bcf Technology Oviscan. This unit is very efficient timewise and accurate for pregnancy diagnosis and determining multiples. Contact Gary at 507-493-5516 or gary@stuartlabs.com.

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