

Ewe and Lamb Project for 4-H Clubs

CIRCULAR NO. 296



UNIVERSITY of KENTUCKY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION DIVISION

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REQUIREMENTS

1. Boys and girls from 10 to 18 years of age, inclusive, are eligible to take this project.
2. This project will start when sheep have been procured, preferably in July.
3. Each member must own three or more sheep or lambs and will follow the advice of his county agent and project leader in the feeding and care of them.
4. Each member must keep a record on the forms in this circular, of all work done on the project. The record must be approved and signed by the county agent.
5. Each member should make an exhibit of his sheep at some fair or show.
6. Each member should receive the net return from his project.
7. To get the most development out of 4-H club work, a member should attend all meetings of his club and take part in its activities.

PROJECT PLANS

Note here, in advance, what you plan to do each month.

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

Circular No. 296

Ewe and Lamb Project
for 4-H Clubs

By L. J. HORLACHER and G. J. MCKENNEY

STARTING THE PROJECT
(July, August, September)

Ewes for this project may be purchased either before or after they are bred. July and August are the months in which to select unbred ewes. If you prefer to start with bred ewes, buy them in the fall.

Select ewes that are:

- One to four years of age.
- Strong, vigorous, healthy.
- Large, weighing 100 pounds as yearlings or 130 pounds when mature.
- Good milk producers.
- The kind that frequently produce two lambs.
- Straight in body lines, showing plenty of capacity.
- Covered with dense wool of good length.
- Sound in udders and teeth.

The age of a sheep can be determined by looking at the teeth. There are eight front teeth in the lower jaw and none in the upper jaw. Lamb teeth are small, white and narrow. The lamb teeth are replaced by larger, wider, permanent teeth at yearly intervals as follows:

- 1 year, 2 permanent teeth (center pair)
- 2 years, 4 permanent teeth
- 3 years, 6 permanent teeth
- 4 years, 8 permanent teeth (full mouth)

After 4 years there is no definite method of telling the age by the teeth. Do not buy sheep that are older than 4 years. See Kentucky Extension Circular 286, Ewes for Commercial Flocks.

A ram for this project may be purchased, leased, or borrowed. Unless there are 10 or more ewes it is cheaper to lease a ram than to buy one.

Select a ram that is:

A purebred Southdown, Hampshire, Shropshire, Cheviot, or Dorset Horn.

One to three years old.

Active, vigorous and sound.

Blocky and symmetrical, with plenty of quality.

Thickly covered with firm flesh.

Covered with an even, dense fleece of good quality.

The kind that sires lambs of the type the market wants.

See Kentucky Extension Circular 285, Rams for Commercial Flocks.

CARE FROM BREEDING TO LAMBING

(August to January)

To prepare the ewes for breeding, feed them well for two weeks before turning the ram with the flock, starting August 15. The best feed is good pasture. Clip all tags of wool from the hind-quarters of the ewes. Trim the toes. If your project leader thinks it necessary, drench the ewes for stomach worms. See Kentucky Extension Circular 152, "Stomach Worms in Sheep," for complete directions.

During the breeding season:

Turn the rams with the ewes September 1.

Keep the ewes gaining weight.

Feed the ram from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound of grain daily.

Keep salt before the sheep at all times.

Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.

Take the ram from the ewes November 1.

During the gestation period (147 days).

Keep the ram away from the ewes.

Keep the ewes on good pasture.

When pasture gets short or the weather is bad, feed a good legume hay, 2 to 3 pounds per head per day (December).

Start feeding grain, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound per head per day, one month before lambing (January 1).

Keep the ewes gaining weight.

Provide shelter from cold, winter rains.

Provide plenty of clean, fresh water.

Keep salt before the sheep at all times.

Give the ewes plenty of exercise.

Watch for the first lambs about the last week in January.

Rye or barley sown in August or September will be ready for fall, winter, and spring pasture. Sow eight to ten pecks to the acre. Wheat also makes a good pasture.

Ewes properly fed will produce plenty of milk when their lambs arrive. Each ewe should gain 20 to 30 pounds from the time she weans her lambs until her next lambs are dropt. If the ewes are in good flesh they can be carried nearly to lambing time without grain. Start feeding hay in December and grain in January. Some of the feeds that are good for sheep are oats, barley, corn, soybeans, wheat bran, linseed oil meal, cottonseed meal, alfalfa hay, clover hay, lespedeza hay, soybean hay, early-cut timothy hay, corn silage, corn fodder, molasses, mangel beets, and distillers' dried grains. Other feeds may be used.

The amount of feed to give to one ewe in one day varies. The following are suggested winter rations:

- (1) Oats or shelled corn, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound.
Alfalfa, clover, lespedeza, or soybean hay, 2 pounds.
- (2) Grain mixture: $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound
Molasses, 1 ounce
Legume hay, 2 pounds

{	Shelled corn, 5 parts by weight
	Oats, 3 parts by weight
	Wheat bran, 2 parts by weight
	Linseed oil meal, 1 part by weight
- (3) Grain mixture: $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound
Molasses, 1 ounce
Corn silage, 1 to 2 pounds
Legume hay, 2 pounds

{	Shelled corn, 6 parts by weight
	Wheat bran, 3 parts by weight
	Linseed oil meal, 1 part by weight
- (4) Grain mixture: $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound
Molasses, 1 ounce
Early-cut timothy or mixed hay, 2 pounds

{	Oats, 3 parts by weight
	Wheat bran, 3 parts by weight
	Linseed oil meal, 1 part by weight

Before feeding any other ration or grain mixture consult the county agent or club leader or some successful sheep breeder.

Sheep prefer to be in the open most of the time, but shelter must be provided to be used during the winter. They must be protected from cold rains. A desirable barn has plenty of ventilation, without drafts. Keep it clean and well-bedded. Do not crowd the ewes or some of them may be injured and lose their lambs. Place feed racks and troughs in the barn.

Give the ewes fresh water every day. One ewe will drink a gallon of water a day. Water aids digestion and is necessary for all vital functions of the animal.

Keep salt before the sheep at all times. Build a small box inside the barn where the salt will be protected from the weather. Use loose, barrel salt. If the sheep have not had salt, *accustom them to it gradually*. One ewe will eat about $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of salt each day.

Exercise helps keep the ewes healthy. Ewes that are kept closely housed come thru the winter in run-down condition and produce weak lambs. Let the ewes out on pasture whenever possible. Feeding roughage at some distance from the barn forces the ewes to take exercise.

Pregnancy disease, common just before lambing (January to March), can be prevented if the recommendations concerning feed, salt, water, shelter, and exercise are followed. Molasses seems to be a good feed to include in the ration. See Kentucky Extension Circular 274, "Pregnancy Disease of Sheep."

CARE OF EWES AND LAMBS

Save as many lambs as you can. Lambs can be saved by:

Preparing the lambing shed or barn in January, before the first lambs come.

Staying on the job day and night during lambing time.

Reducing the feed of the ewe for several days before and after lambing, feeding little or no grain.

Using lambing pens.

Seeing that the young lambs nurse and do not freeze.

Not disturbing the ewe during lambing unless she needs help.

Being certain that every ewe owns her lambs.

Carefully observing all ewes and lambs for trouble of any kind.

During lambing time house the ewes at night and watch carefully during the day in order to save the lambs. A warm place in which to have the lambs born is essential. For this purpose use a part of the barn that is closed. This prevents loss of lambs from cold.

If a lamb gets chilled, take it to a warm room and put it into water as warm as your elbow can bear. After the lamb is warm, dry and place it in a warm spot. Do not permit it to lie on the floor or it will become chilled again.

At lambing time go to the barn and examine the sheep just before you go to bed and again the first thing in the morning. Every new-born lamb should have some of its mother's milk as soon as

possible. If the ewe does not have any milk for a day or two, catch another ewe and hold her while the lamb nurses. If cow's milk is fed to the lamb, give it one ounce of fresh milk every two hours.

GROWING AND FATTENING THE LAMBS

(March to July)

Top market lambs may be produced by:

- Feeding them thru the ewes — plenty of milk.
- Feeding grain in creeps.
- Providing plenty of good pasture.
- Docking and castrating.
- Controlling parasites and diseases.

Milk is the best food for the young lamb. The lamb that gets the most milk gains the fastest. Sometimes, however, the lambs do not get enough milk and grain and must be fed if they are to gain as they should. Build a creep where the lambs can go and eat by themselves. Inside this creep place a trough for grain and put into it a grain mixture of 5 pounds coarsely ground corn, 3 pounds rolled oats, 3 pounds wheat bran, and 1 pound linseed oil meal. Cheaper feeds which give good results are corn alone and a mixture of corn and oats.

The best guides as to the quantity to feed are the appetites of the lambs and the judgment of the feeder. Keep the trough clean. At one month of age a lamb will eat $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of grain daily. As the pasture improves the lambs eat less grain. Bear in mind that if the pasture is poor, more grain will be required than if it is good. On good pasture no grain need be fed. The best hay to feed is alfalfa.

Pasture is necessary for both ewes and lambs. Pasture rye as long as it lasts. Clover and alfalfa pastures are good, tho they sometimes cause bloat. A mixture of rape and oats sown in March or April makes excellent pasture in May and June. Sow 10 pounds of rape and 6 pecks of oats on each acre. Lespedeza makes good pasture from June until frost.

Lambs kept for breeding should be docked. The tails may be cut off when the lambs are about 2 weeks old. Docking improves the appearance of a lamb but does not increase its value for the butcher. At the same time castrate all grade ram lambs and all purebred ram lambs that are not to be kept for breeding. See Kentucky Extension Circular 85, Docking and Castrating Lambs.

Young lambs have many troubles. Digestive troubles may be relieved by giving the lamb a teaspoonful of castor oil or a table-

spoonful of milk of magnesia. For sore eyes use boric acid solution and for sore mouth use tincture of iodine.

Stomach worms cause serious losses among lambs and sheep. Worms do the most damage during the summer. Prevent worms by changing to fresh pasture as often as possible. When sheep have worms the only way to get rid of them is to drench. See Kentucky Extension Circular 152, "Stomach Worms in Sheep" for methods of diagnosing, preventing, and controlling stomach worms.

Ticks, lice, and scab are prevented and eradicated by dipping. Soon after shearing, in May or June, is the best time to dip. Some sheepmen dip again in August or September. Any standard sheep dip is effective in controlling ticks and lice. For scab it is best to use nicotine or lime-sulfur dip. Whatever dip is used, follow the directions given by the manufacturer.

Foot trouble is common during wet weather. With a sharp knife cut away the excess growth of hoof and clean out all dirt. One good treatment is to stand the sheep for 10 or 15 minutes in a strong solution made by dissolving 2½ pounds of bluestone in 1 gallon of water. See Kentucky Extension Circular 286, "Ewes for Commercial Flocks" for other treatments.

SHEARING AND HANDLING THE WOOL

(April to June)

Sheep usually are shorn in April or May, after there has been enough warm weather to start a flow of wool grease. Keep in mind the following points:

- Handle the sheep carefully.
- Use either hand or machine shears.
- Pick burs from the fleece before shearing.
- Keep the shearing floor clean.
- Get the fleece off in good condition.

Make the fleece as attractive as possible. To do this:

- Fold, roll, and tie with the clean side out.
- Tie with paper twine.

See Kentucky Extension Circular 72, Handling the Wool Clip, for more complete directions.

PREPARING LAMBS FOR SHOW

(May to September)

Select the best lambs to show. Good show lambs are:

- Close to the ground.
- Square and blocky in build.

Straight on top.
Thickly fleshed.
Plump in the leg.
Firmly fleshed — not flabby.

Feed the lambs, for a lamb must be fat if it is to win or is to sell for the top price. If lambs are to be shown and sold at weaning time:

Feed the ewe so she will produce plenty of milk.
Feed each lamb $\frac{1}{2}$ pound daily of the following grain mixture:

Cracked corn, 3 pounds
Crushed or rolled oats, 1 pound
Wheat bran, 1 pound
Linseed oil meal, 1 pound

If the lambs have been weaned, feed $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound of grain or more daily.

Trimming the fleece makes the lamb more attractive in the show ring and helps it to win. Proceed as follows:

Dip the lamb 6 weeks before the show. This cleans the fleece.
Start trimming 4 weeks before the show.

Get the proper equipment — sheep shears, stiff brush, wool card, curry comb, bucket, halter and sheep dip.

Dampen the lamb all over with water containing a little dip.
Brush the fleece thoroly.

Use the curry comb and rake the fleece well.

Hold the shears level and at right angles to the back. Begin at the top of the shoulder and clip off the wool so that the back appears flat and broad.

Straighten the sides by holding the shears perpendicular and cutting excess wool from each side.

Round off the sharp edges by clipping from the sides toward the back.

Trim the dock and square the hindquarters.

Dampen the fleece, brush vigorously, card thoroly, and clip off the loose ends. This gives the lamb a smooth appearance. Repeat this just before showing.

Blanket the lamb to keep the fleece in good shape.

Train the lamb to stand properly. This is important so that the judge may have no difficulty in handling it.

Stand or kneel on the left side of the lamb.

With your left hand hold the lamb under the jaw.

Keep your right hand free to use in making the lamb stand properly.

Keep the lamb standing squarely on all four feet, with its back up.

Do not hold the head too high.

Handle the lamb gently at all times.

GROWING INTO THE BUSINESS

At the close of this project you will have several ewes and lambs. If you have enjoyed and profited by this project you may wish to continue in the sheep business and build up a flock of your own. This can be done by saving the ewe lambs and breeding them when they are yearlings. A quicker way to increase the size of the flock is to purchase a few more ewes. The sale of ram and wether lambs and of wool helps pay the expenses of getting started. Any club member who is really interested can soon build up a small flock of good quality.

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RECORD

This record must be in club member's own handwriting.

Answer the following questions when the project is started.

Date record began Age of ewes or lambs at that time

Number of ewes and lambs Breed

Grade or purebred

If registered give registry numbers

Are you growing your lambs for breeding or for market?

Cost of value of ewes or lambs when record began

Weight of ewes or lambs when record began

Answer the following questions when the project is completed.

Date record closed Age of lambs

Weight of lambs Value

Number days fed and pastured

Total gain Average daily gain

Did you exhibit your animal at any fairs or shows?

.....

What premiums did you win?

.....

PRICE LIST FOR COMPUTING COST OF FEEDS

Prices to be inserted by County Agent

Every club member will use these prices regardless of the cost of his feeds:

Value	Cracked corn	\$ _____	per cwt.
	Corn	_____	per bushel
	Oats	_____	per bushel
	Barley	_____	per bushel
	Wheat bran	_____	per cwt.
	Shipstuff (mixed wheat feed)	_____	per cwt.
	Shorts	_____	per cwt.
	Middlings	_____	per cwt.
	Linseed oil meal	_____	per cwt.
	Hominy meal	_____	per cwt.
	Soybean hay	_____	per cwt.
	Alfalfa hay	_____	per cwt.
	Sweet clover hay	_____	per cwt.
	Red or alsike clover hay	_____	per cwt.
	Lespedeza hay	_____	per cwt.
	Cowpea hay	_____	per cwt.
	Mixed hay, part legumes	_____	per cwt.
	Mixed hay, all grasses	_____	per cwt.
	Corn fodder	_____	per cwt.
	Sorghum fodder	_____	per cwt.
	Silage	_____	per cwt.
	Molasses	_____	per gallon
	Whole milk	_____	12c per gallon

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PASTURE RECORD

Kind of pasture	Date turned on pasture	Date removed	No. days on pasture	Value	
				\$	Cts.
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Total cost or value of pasture

COST OR VALUE OF PASTURE PER DAY

Prices to be inserted by County Agent

	Ewe	Lamb after 4 months
Bluegrass		
Alfalfa		
Red clover		
Sweet clover		
Rape		
Wheat		
Rye		
Oats		
Barley		

Names or numbers of ewes bred

Date born

BUSINESS RECORD

Expenses

Value of sheep at beginning of project\$ _____

Value or cost of concentrates (grain feeds) _____

Value or cost of roughage (hay, etc.) _____

Value or cost of pasture _____

Value or cost of miscellaneous feeds _____

Other expenses (veterinary, registration, etc.) _____

Total expenses _____

Receipts

Value of sheep at close of project\$ _____

Value of lambs produced during project, and on hand at
close of project _____

Value of lambs produced and sold during project _____

Value of products sold (wool, meat, etc.) _____

Receipts from other sources _____

Total receipts _____

Total receipts\$ _____

Total expenses _____

Net income _____

No charge is made for labor or credit given for manure produced. It is assumed that one offsets the other.

I hereby certify that this is a true record of my project, and is written in my own handwriting.

.....
Club member's signature

Approved:

Leader's signature

Date

STORY OF MY PROJECT

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STORY (Continued)

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STORY (Continued)

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS

Show by drawings the plan or location of barn, pen, silo, feed troughs, pastures, etc. Also photographs of your sheep and yourself, taken together if possible. If you have made or provided any equipment for feeding or caring for your sheep, illustrate it by a drawing.

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EWE AND LAMB PROJECT OF

Name Age

County Date

Post Office R. F. D.

Years in club work Years in this project

Approved
County Agent

Date

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