

# Wild & Woolly

Maryland's Sheep & Goat Producer Newsletter



Volume XV Issue III

Summer 2021

## Small Ruminant & Pasture Field Day

A Small Ruminant & Pasture Field Day will be held on Thursday, August 12, 4 to 7 pm, at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Boonsboro, Maryland. The field day will include wagon tours of the research site. There will be four stops on the wagon tours. Topics will include what to plant (Jeff Semler), setting up a rotational grazing system (Charlie Sasscer), managing seasonal fluctuations in forage (Amanda Grev) and an overview of the research program (Susan Schoenian). Tour stops will leave at 4:30 and 5:30 pm. Refreshments will be provided



Field day sponsors include University of Maryland Extension, Future Harvest CASA, Maryland Grazers Network, and Northeast SARE. The field day is free to attend, but registration is required by August 5. To register, go to <https://go.umd.edu/2021fieldday>.

## Come to Katahdin Day

A second event will be held in conjunction with this year's sheep research program at WMREC. A Katahdin Day will be held on Monday, September 27, 3 to 8 pm, at the Washington County Agricultural Education Center in Boonsboro, Maryland. The Ag Center is adjacent to the research center where the lambs are grazed.

Katahdin Day will feature an educational program and sale of performance tested Katahdin ram lambs. Educational topics will focus on genetic improvement of small ruminants. The ram lambs will sell with a copious amount of data. In addition to the data collected in the research project, they will have EBVs. EBV is the acronym for

"estimated breeding value." It is an estimate of the genetic value of an animal. EBVs are provided by the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) and calculated by Sheep Genetics in Australia.

All of the ram lambs being sold are owned by Ewe Lamb Right Farm ([ewelambright.com](http://ewelambright.com)). The farm has provided lambs for research for the past two years. Katahdins are an American breed of hair sheep.



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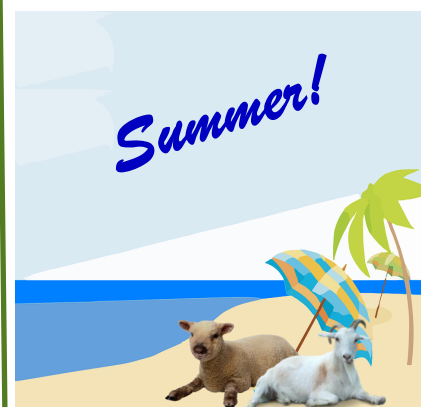
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# New: Small Ruminant Q & A

A Small Ruminant Q & A has been added to the Sheep 101/201 web site at <https://www.sheep101.info/QandA/>. Currently, there are more than 45 commonly asked questions and answers. Questions/answers are organized by category: breeding, facilities, feeding and nutrition, health, internal parasites, lambing/kidding, management, marketing, and pasture and forages. If you have question you would like addressed, send it to Susan Schoenian at [sschoen@umd.edu](mailto:sschoen@umd.edu).

<https://www.sheep101.info/QandA/>.



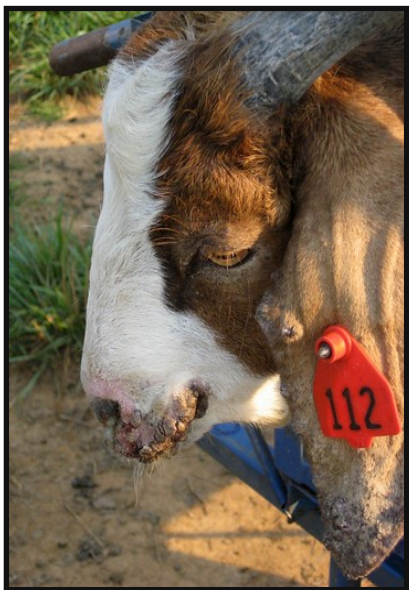
## Q. Can you get diseases from sheep/goats?

A. There are several.

A zoonotic disease is an infectious disease which can be transmitted from animals to people. Zoonotic diseases are becoming increasingly important.

There are several diseases which you can get from sheep/goats. Most you get from direct contact with the animal(s) and/or their environment. Thus, farmers, veterinarians, and others who work directly with sheep/goats are most at risk. Some zoonotic diseases are foodborne and come from consuming contaminated food or drink.

Soremouth (orf) is a skin disease caused by a virus in the pox family. It is a common disease of sheep/goats. While self-limiting, it is highly contagious and can be transmitted to people. In people it causes painful lesions, usually on the hands, that can last for several months. Secondary bacterial infections can also occur, including MRSA. People get soremouth when they handle infected animals or use the live vaccine.



People can get Soremouth

Club lamb fungus is a highly contagious fungal infection of the skin. It is caused by many of the practices that are common to showing sheep: frequent washing, close shearing, and blanket-ing. The disease is spread by contact and sharing of contaminated equipment. It can easily be transmitted to people, causing nasty ringworm infections.

Most of the organisms that cause abortion (termination of pregnancy) in sheep/goats are zoonotic: cache valley virus, border disease, brucellosis, campylobacter, chlamydia, leptospirosis, listeriosis, Q fever, salmonella, and toxoplasmosis. Most cause influenza-like symptoms. Some can cause miscarriage. The most common causes of abortion in sheep/goats are chlamydia (enzootic), toxoplasmosis, and campylobacter (vibrio).

Pregnant women should not handle aborted fetuses, placentas, or other birth fluids. Gloves or sleeves should always be worn when handling these materials or assisting with births. Aborting females should be isolated. All aborted material and bedding should be destroyed to prevent spread of the disease-causing organisms. Afterbirth should be discarded.

While you're more likely to get *e. coli* and salmonella from eating raw foods, you can also get infected

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# 2021 WMREC Research Update

One hundred Katahdin ram lambs began grazing at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville on June 15. After a 10 day acclimation period, the lambs were sorted into two groups based on weight, age, birth type, and fecal egg count.

The PASTURE group (n=50) is rotationally grazing 5 acres of mixed pasture. They are moved to a new paddock every 7 days. Forage samples are collected at the beginning of each grazing period. The SUPPLEMENTED group (n=49) is receiving a daily supplement of energy (whole barley). The goal is to feed 1 lb. of barley per head per day. It will take several weeks to get them to that amount. They are grazing similarly as the lambs in the PASTURE group.



The research utilizes Katahdin ram lambs

At the start of the study, the lambs ranged in weight from 30 to 107 lbs. and averaged  $62.4 \pm 13.3$  lbs. FAMACHA© scores averaged 2.2. Body condition averaged 2.6. The average fecal egg count was only 112 EPG.

| Group   | Number | Birth | Age  | Weight | BCS | FAM | FEC |
|---------|--------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Pasture | 50     | 2.2   | 88.5 | 62.8   | 2.7 | 2.1 | 99  |
| Suppl.  | 49     | 2.3   | 87.3 | 62.0   | 2.6 | 2.2 | 126 |
| ALL     | 99     | 2.3   | 87.9 | 62.4   | 2.6 | 2.2 | 112 |

During the grazing period, the lambs will be handled every two weeks to determine body weights, FAMACHA©, body condition, dag, and fecal consistency scores. FAMACHA© and the Five Point Check© will be used to make deworming decisions. Fecal samples will be collected again in mid-August. At the end of the study, some of the lambs will be slaughtered to collect carcass data. Meat samples (15 from each group) will be analyzed to determine fatty acid content. The top 20 ram lambs will be offered for sale online and during Katahdin Day (September 27).

This is a repeat of last year's study. Last year's results were inconclusive. This year's lambs are provided by the same farm as last year: Ewe Lamb Right Farm (Dan/Jan Turner, Shippensburg, PA). Last year's study was funded by the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board, which has given a one year extension due to Covid. Last year's field day was virtual. This year's is in-person.

The small ruminant research team includes Susan Schoenian, Amanda Grev, Jeff Semler, Mary Beth Bennett, Charlie Sasscer, Ashley Travis, Chris Anderson, and Pam Thomas.

## Come to Katahdin Day (continued from page 1)

They do not require shearing, crutching, or docking. The breed is a leader in performance testing, including selection for parasite (worm) resistance. They are one of the most popular breeds in the US.

Registration is required for Katahdin Day. The registration fee is \$11 per person. It includes bottled water and a boxed meal from Subway. The registration link is <https://go.umd.edu/Kday>. Please register by August 22.

<https://go.umd.edu/Kday>



# Which Ones To Keep

By Susan Schoenian

Each year, sheep/goat producers need to decide which female offspring to keep. For most producers, it is customary to breed with outside rams/bucks, but to select their own female replacements. Restricting introductions to males limits the risk of introducing new diseases and is a good biosecurity practice.

Hopefully, sheep/goats are individually identified, and good records are kept. For meat production, female offspring from the dams that wean the heaviest litters should be favored. Ewe lambs and doe kids with heavier individual weaning weights should be considered. Even if you don't get weaning weights, you can usually figure out which ones these are.



Selecting on weights is good because weight is a composite trait whereas birth type is a single trait (and not very heritable). At the same time, it's important not to select lambs/kids just because they have environmental advantages. Weights should be adjusted for age, sex, type of birth and rearing, and age of dam.

Deciding which ewes/does to remove from the flock/herd is equally important as selecting replacements. The primary reason to get rid of a ewe/doe is age. Personally, I would keep a ewe/doe as long as she is profitable (productive and sound). Some ewes/does are productive past 7 years of age; others develop soundness issues or decline noticeably in production before that.

With some exceptions, I would cull ewes/does that fail to raise a good lamb/kid. Unsound females should definitely be culled. The most common reason for this is a spoiled udder. You should never keep a ewe/doe that has had mastitis or only has one half functioning. Some reproductive failures have a genetic component and should be the basis for culling. These include vaginal prolapse and ringwomb. I would cull animals with hoof or other reoccurring health issues, too. Speaking from personal experience keeping unsound females causes nothing but headache and heartache.

Parasite resistance is another trait that might be considered when making selection and culling decisions, especially if lambs/kids are pasture-reared. While using resistant males is most important, you should not keep or select females that are at the other end of the spectrum: most susceptible. You can do this by favoring the females that don't require deworming, but a more accurate better method is to use fecal egg counts to make selection/culling decisions. Similar to selecting on weight, you need to be careful not to discriminate against higher reproductive performance, as this is a reason for lower immunity to parasites.

While performance should be the most important selection criteria in a commercial enterprise, it still matters what animals look like. You don't always need to keep the "prettiest" lambs/kids (unless you show), but you should avoid keeping females with structural defaults or other soundness issues (e.g., bad jaw, extra teats). Hair sheep producers should have a minimum standard for shedding. Wool growers obviously need to add selection criteria for fleece traits.

*This article was originally published in the Delmarva Farmer and Lancaster Farming.*

# Quality Assurance Training

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) developed an industry-wide quality assurance program in 1991. Participation in the Sheep Safety & Quality Assurance (SSQA) program is voluntary and consists of three levels of certification. The third level requires third party verification. Materials have been updated several times and the program is in the process of being updated.

The new program will be available in 2022. Updates will include information on production management, product quality consistency practices, animal well-being, sustainability and biosecurity. The new SSQA module will also offer a user



## For Wool Producers

More recently, ASI launched the American Wool Assurance (AWA) program, which narrows the focus to shearing and wool production. It is also a voluntary program. Sheep producers interested in getting certification should go to [AmericanWoolAssurance.org](http://AmericanWoolAssurance.org) and sign up as soon as possible. The program is only for those involved in wool production. Level 1 certification requires completion of the SSQA module. A temporary version is currently available to producers on the AWA web site.

The mission of these quality assurance programs is to maximize consumer confidence in, and acceptance of, sheep products by using research and education to improve management during the production of safe and high-quality sheep products.

Langston University offers similar certification programs for goat producers at <http://www.luresext.edu/?q=Online%20Certification>.

## Online FAMACHA® Certification Continues

Last year, due to Covid 19, University of Maryland Extension began offering online FAMACHA® certification. Certification consists of watching a presentation (YouTube video), passing a quiz (75%), and providing a video demonstrating proper FAMACHA® scoring technique. Online certification continues, but registration is now required. The registration fee is \$15 per person. It includes a certificate and FAMACHA® card (once requirements are met).

FAMACHA® is a system for determining the need to deworm (or not) small ruminants for barber pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*) infections. The barber pole worm is the primary parasite affecting small ruminants in warm, moist climates like Maryland. FAMACHA® has been around for almost 20 years. It was developed in South Africa and validated for sheep, goats, and camelids by US researchers. Unless you are a veterinarian, you cannot get a FAMACHA® card without completing an approved training.



# Virtual Skillathon Draws 125 participants



Caroline and Preston Clark

One hundred and twenty-five youth and adults participated in the virtual Maryland Sheep & Goat Skillathon, held May 1-2 in conjunction with the virtual Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. One hundred and twelve completed all five sections of the skillathon: meat, fiber, equipment, feed, and breeds. The skillathon drew participants from 21 states and 13 Maryland counties. Twenty percent of the participants were Marylanders.

Maryland youth did very well. The first place junior and senior were from Maryland and the same family. Caroline Clark was the first place senior. Her brother Preston was the first place junior. Five of the top ten seniors were from Maryland. In addition to Caroline, Philip Herbert, Jessica Martin, Riley Herbert, and Raven Herron all placed in the top 10. Two of the top 10 adults were Maryland ladies: Allison Seyfert and Kristan Latham. The adult winner was a former Maryland 4-Her and previous skillathon participant: Hannah King. The top placing intermediate was first time skillathon participant Holly Howard from Indiana.

No skillathon was held last year. Due to Covid, the festival has been virtual for the past two years. Hopefully, next year will see a return of the actual (in-person) Junior Sheep & Goat Skillathon. The Skillathon is held on the Sunday of the festival. The festival is always held the first full weekend of May at the Howard County Fairgrounds. For more information, go to [www.sheepandgoat.com/skillathon](http://www.sheepandgoat.com/skillathon). For more information about the festival, go to [www.sheepandwool.org](http://www.sheepandwool.org).

The quizzes from the virtual skillathon have been converted to study quizzes @ <https://www.sheepandgoat.com/online-quizzes>.

## Cattle Tales: New Maryland Livestock Newsletter

Cattle Tales is the name of a new newsletter for livestock producers in Maryland and beyond. The goal of the newsletter is to provide science-based recommendations for livestock producers, from the basics of health care to the most intensive and reproductive management. The editor is Charles Sasscer III. "Charlie" is the (relatively) new extension ag educator in Prince George's County. Contributors will include other county educators, as well as livestock and forage specialists.

### A first

While Maryland has a sheep/goat newsletter (this one) for a long time, and our (relatively) new beef/dairy specialist has started a newsletter for dairy cattle, I don't think Maryland has ever had a livestock newsletter. Kudos to Charlie for providing the leadership to make this happen. Most of the newsletter will likely pertain to beef cattle, but I will be a regular contributor, as will Amanda Grev, our pasture specialist.



Here's the link to the first newsletter: <https://go.umd.edu/livestock-news-may-2021>

To subscribe to the newsletter, fill out this online form: <https://go.umd.edu/subscribe-livestock-newsletter>

## New: Small Ruminant Q & A (continued from page 2)

by having direct contact with infected animals or their feces. *E. coli* infections sometimes occur at petting farms or fairs. This is why hand washing stations are now standard at these places. Sheep/goats don't seem to be significant reservoirs for infections with giardia and cryptosporidium.

Caseous lymphadenitis (CL) causes abscesses in sheep/goats. Direct contact with the pus can cause painful skin wounds in people. Johne's disease is currently not classified as a zoonotic disease, but there is increasing evidence that it may be associated with Crohn's disease. While rare in sheep/goats, rabies can be transmitted from any mammal to another.

Most zoonotic diseases can be prevented with common sense, starting with good sanitation and personal hygiene. Gloves, coveralls, and boots should be worn when you are working with livestock. You should always wash your hands thoroughly after contact with livestock and their feces or fluids. Equipment and facilities should be disinfected to prevent the spread of diseases. Be sure to cook meat sufficiently and pasteurize milk.

People with compromised immune systems are most vulnerable to the effects of zoonotic diseases.

<https://www.sheep101.info/QandA/>

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## Test your knowledge with online quizzes

A series of online quizzes has been created (in Qualtrics) to help youth study for skillathons. The quizzes can be used by anyone who wants to test or enhance their knowledge of sheep and goat production and marketing. The quizzes are organized according to subject matter: breeds, equipment, feed, meat, fiber, nutrition, genetics, reproduction, lambing/kidding, welfare, and marketing. All the questions are multiple-choice. Each quiz randomly chooses ten questions from a quiz bank. At the end of each quiz, you can see your score, which questions you answered correctly, and the correct answer for each question. You can take the quizzes as often as you want.

<https://www.sheepandgoat.com/online-quizzes>

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## New Social Media Pages: Wormx Live

The American Consortium Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC) has started a YouTube channel (<https://go.umd.edu/wormxlive!>) and has created the first video in its new video series called WORMX LIVE. The first video is about combination dewormer treatments. It features Dr. Reid Redden from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The host of the video series is Dr. Andrew Weaver, Small Ruminant Extension Specialist at North Carolina State University. To share the videos, a Facebook page was also created at <https://www.facebook.com/>

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## Your Input is Needed

South Dakota State University is spearheading efforts to determine local and national extension needs for the US sheep and goat industry. They've created a survey that is open to all US sheep and goat producers. The deadline to complete the survey is July 31.

So far, 550 producers from 47 states have completed the survey. More responses are needed from the Mid-Atlantic states. So far, there are only 7 responses from Maryland producers, 10 from Virginia, 6 from West Virginia and 2 from Delaware. Pennsylvania is doing better with 17 responses. If you haven't already completed the survey, please do so. Go to [sheepandgoatneeds.questionpro.com](http://sheepandgoatneeds.questionpro.com).



# Upcoming Events



## **August 7**

Performance Tested Ram & Meat Goat Buck Sale  
Pennsylvania Livestock Evaluation Center, PA Furnace, PA  
Info: [ghubbard@pa.gov](mailto:ghubbard@pa.gov)

## **August 12**

Small Ruminant & Pasture Field Day  
Western Maryland Research & Education Center, Keedysville, MD  
Info: <https://go.umd.edu/2021fieldday>

## **August 28**

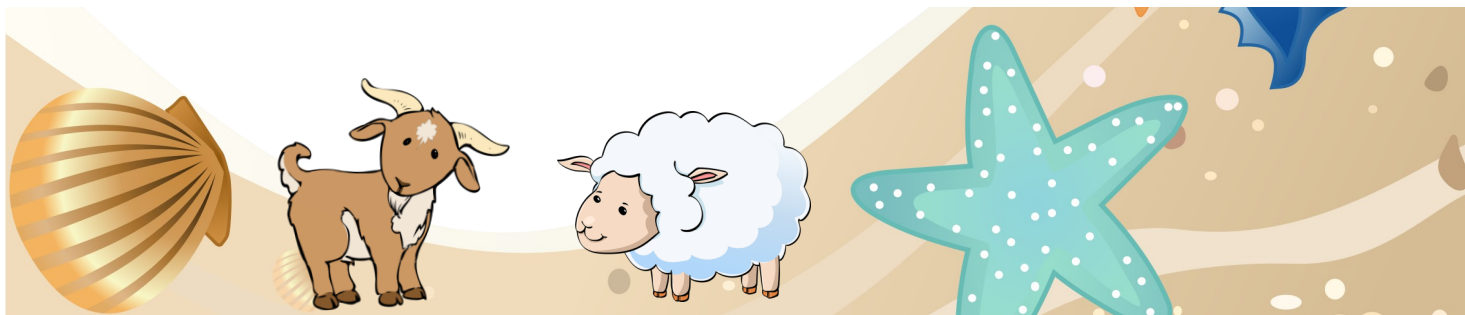
Virginia Performance Test Ram Lamb Test Sale and Ewe Lamb Sale  
Virginia Tech Shenandoah Valley Research & Extension Center, Steele's Tavern, VA  
Info: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

## **September 24**

Field Day & Ram Sale  
Virginia Tech Southwest Ag Research & Extension Center, Glade Spring, VA  
Info: [sgreiner@vt.edu](mailto:sgreiner@vt.edu)

## **September 27**

Katahdin Day  
Washington County Agricultural Education Center, Boonsboro, MD  
Info: <https://go.umd.edu/Kday>



**For more information about sheep and goats, go to:**

<http://www.sheepandgoat.com>

<http://www.acsrpc.org> or [wormx.info](http://wormx.info)

<http://wmrecresearch.blogspot.com>

<http://www.sheep101.info> and /201

[https://www.facebook.com/MDSmall Ruminant](https://www.facebook.com/MDSmallRuminant)

<https://www.instagram.com/umesheepgoat/>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/MarylandExtensionSmallRuminantProgram>



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

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**University of Maryland**  
18330 Keedysville Rd  
Keedysville MD 21756



# Small Ruminant & Pasture Field Day

Western Maryland Research & Education Center  
Thursday, August 12 | 4 to 7 pm

**WAGON TOUR STOPS (WAGONS LEAVE AT 4:30 AND 5:30 PM)**

**Charlie Sasscer**

*Rotational grazing 101: fencing, water, & shade*

**Jeff Semler**

*Things to consider when deciding what to plant*

**Amanda Grev**

*Managing seasonal fluctuations in pasture forage quality*

**Susan Schoenian**

*Research overview: using barley to increase profitability of pasture-raised lamb*

On-going: Forage ID and 4-H Research Academy, refreshments

**Pre-registration is required.**

**Please pre-register by August 5 at <https://go.umd.edu/2021fieldday>**

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Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture



**SARE**  
Sustainable Agriculture  
Research & Education  
[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)



# REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

@ <https://go.umd.edu/Kday>



## KATAHDIN DAY

MONDAY, SEPT 27TH | 3 TO 8 PM

WASHINGTON CO. AG CENTER | BOONSBORO, MARYLAND

"University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class