



Mountain States Lamb Cooperative

December/January 2015 Newsletter

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CELEBRATING A NEW RECORD AND A NEW YEAR!



For the third year in a row, MSLC set a delivery record with 268,482 head. This beat last year by 772 head proving once again the value of the nation's only vertically integrated lamb company in a volatile industry. Thank you for your continuing support of your Co-op and meat company.

We hope your New Year is off to a good start! 2014 was certainly a challenging year in a lot of ways, but we are looking forward to new opportunities for our producers and our exceptional product in 2015.

Here are a few important reminders for 2015:

- Colorado Sheep and Wool Authority requests that December 2014 Check-off Refund requests be submitted timely (no later than 30 days following sale date).
- Requests to put shares in the lease pool need to be submitted in writing for each specific year. You are eligible to put any extra shares in the lease pool only if all your lambs are marketed through the Co-op.
- Only B shareholders will be receiving a 2014 1099 DIV.
- If you would like a report on the number of your lambs marketed in 2014 and a listing of proceeds, please contact the office. We are happy to forward this report to you on request at no charge.
- All producers marketing lambs through the MSLC Where Food Comes From-Natural Source Verification program must sign an All Natural Source Verification Feedlot Program Protocol every year. You will find that form enclosed. Please email the completed form to Brad Anderson at brada@rosenlamb.com or fax to the attention of Ralph Hinton at 970.304.0422. You can also mail the form to Mountain States Rosen Attn: Ralph 920 N 7th Avenue Greeley, CO 80631. To simplify the process we only want paperwork submitted to MSR.

IDAHO-HERE WE COME!

We are pleased to announce that our 2015 Annual Meeting will be held July 22-24 in Pocatello, ID area. Our headquarters will be the new, beautiful Shoshone Bannock Hotel (Fort Hall) and convention center. We are putting together a great program and tour for you, so mark your calendars. Watch upcoming newsletters for hotel reservation information. Rooms will be \$89 plus tax.

ETCHEVERRY AND JENSEN TOP GRIDS

Idaho producer, Etcheverry Sheep Company had November's top lambs and Utah Producer, EPH Jensen Livestock, LLC, marketed the top December lambs.

Fed at Double J, the Etcheverry lambs were 99% Y2's and 3's. They returned a market premium of \$5.17 and an additional natural premium of \$2.98. This made the total average premium \$8.15 per head. November's average MSLC pelt returned \$4.52 and the average 2X dressed price was \$1.60. The average carcass weight was 77 lbs.

The Jensen Livestock lambs were also 99% Y2's and 3's and returned an average market premium of \$4.33. The lambs were fed at Harper Livestock. The average 2X dressed price on MSLC lambs was again \$1.60 and pelts averaged \$5.66. The average carcass weight was 76.5 lbs.

NEWS TO EWES

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and is ready for the New Year. Hopefully 2015 is prosperous and profitable for MSLC and all its members. We just finished up the Christmas Holiday run and I'm sorry to report that it was lackluster for the entire industry. This was due to higher retail prices from all proteins and a significant amount of fresh and frozen import product available to the retailer. As a result, this has left the industry with a carryover supply of lambs and this may result in extra weight being put on lambs as demand may stay stagnant through the middle of February.

Now the good news! We saw this as a potential issue in November and we made necessary changes to increase throughput of Co-op lambs early so that we would be in excellent shape and this equips MSR to be able to keep the memberships lambs at optimum weights and yield grades. With that said, it is still extremely important that you make contact with me when any changes in your delivery time or

scheduling arise as we want to avoid any back up or shortage issues.

Where Food Comes From

Many of you know that we have updated our Natural program to be Source Verified. This has created some changes to the program. We are now tagging all Natural lambs with a MSLC tag. Producers have the option of applying tags at the ranch or at the feedlot level. Please contact me if you are planning on tagging the lambs yourself so that I can send you Tags and Applicators. Also, we have had a change in paperwork. The Certificates have been updated and are included with this newsletter. To simplify paperwork submission, all certificates should be sent to MSR. Please don't hesitate to call or email with questions.

Both Becky and I plan to be in Reno for the ASI convention, along with Frank and Brad, if anyone wants to meet and visit about any issues that need to be addressed.

Thanks,
Brad

LATE GESTATION EWE MANAGEMENT Utah State University Extension

Some Cache Valley sheep producers have already started to lamb. Others are in anticipation of receiving baby lambs soon. With this time of year comes a number of key management considerations. For this column I share a few recommendations provided by Mike Caskey, Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program, Pipestone, Minnesota.

First, Caskey emphasizes the necessity of close daily observation during late gestation. Often, nutrition and health problems can be prevented with careful analysis of changes in behavior and condition. The observant shepherd will detect needs before they become critical. It is always better to prevent problems than it is to treat them after they become serious. Successful shepherds cannot be in a hurry at this stage of the production cycle. Next, it is usually wise to shear the ewes around the udder and backend. Lambs can nurse easier at birth, and the ewes stay much cleaner. Ewes that lamb later in the year should be completely shorn prior to delivery. Ewes will take up less space and will generally lamb in the warmest spot in the pen. Shorn ewes are more agile and less likely to lie on their lambs. If the weather is still cold, shorn ewes will require more feed and better housing.

The late gestation period is when producers must find time to get their buildings in order and ready for lambing season. Proper facilities will do more to save new lambs than almost anything else. Confining the ewe and her newborn lambs to their own individual pen will enhance bonding and

reduce mortalities. Pay particular attention to having a good ventilation system in your facilities. This is the number one method of preventing pneumonia.

Successful shepherds are also prepared for the many little details and items that need to be ready and on hand before lambing starts. In addition to having the lambing pens ready, anticipate additional needs. Examples include milk replacer, feeding equipment, bedding materials, docking equipment, antibiotics, vaccines, OB supplies, watering equipment, and warming apparatus. If all supplies and equipment are in place, managers can give full attention to the ewes and baby lambs when the first lamb is born.

Sheep producers should also work to reduce stress on pregnant ewes. Late gestation is one of the critical times of the year when any stress on the ewe can set them up for problems with pregnancy disease, Hypocalcemia, abortions, etc. Stresses, such as the environment, missed feedings, shearing, and moving, should be avoided or managed to minimize their effect on ewes.

Prior to lambing, ewes may need to be supplemented with grains and high quality roughages. Care must be taken to be sure there is adequate feeding space for all ewes to eat and that feeding is done in clean mangers or on clean ground. Often, abortions and other health problems are caused and spread when ewes eat feed contaminated by manure or urine of infected ewes. Overfilling ewes with bulky feeds or crowding at feed bunks, through doors and gates can cause vaginal prolapse and belly rupture problems.

Thinner ewes should be sorted off a month prior to lambing and supplemented with a higher energy diet to prevent pregnancy disease, insure that strong healthy lambs are born, and that ewes have adequate milk. Nutrient requirements increase significantly for ewes carrying twins or triplets. The most important need is for increased energy, but almost as important are adequate levels of protein, vitamins, and calcium. Occasionally there are deficiencies in selenium, too. Sometimes thin ewes are challenged by internal parasites that can be controlled by administering a dewormer that is approved for pregnant ewes.

In most flocks ewes need to be vaccinated for Type C & D Overeating Disease about 2-3 weeks prior to lambing. This builds immunity in the ewe which is passed onto her lambs to protect them. This health problem is common enough that all flocks should vaccinate for it. Some flocks have significant problems with scours caused by E. coli. Good managers will make sure the drop areas and lambing pens are clean and dry to minimize lamb exposure.