



# Mountain States Lamb Cooperative

May/June 2017

Newsletter

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## MSLC 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting July 19-21, 2017

Our 15<sup>th</sup> Mountain States Lamb Cooperative Annual Meeting is coming up fast. This year the Clarion Inn Pocatello, ID will be our headquarters. The dates are July 19-21. A registration form is included. Please return to the office by **July 4**.

Our discounted hotel room rate is \$89. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel directly at 208.237.1400 and mentioning that you are with the Mountain States Lamb group. The deadline for making your hotel reservation is also **July 4**.

A welcoming reception will be held Wednesday evening, July 19. Thursday will be our annual business meeting. Friday we plan to tour MSLC producer range operations in this scenic area. We will wrap up the event with a special lamb dinner Friday evening.

Please plan now to join us in Pocatello for this very important 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.

### Top Lambs

The top April lambs were marketed by Martin Auza Sheep Company, Flagstaff, AZ. The natural lambs earned \$5.61 per head in average grid premiums and another \$1.27 in natural premiums for a total of \$6.88. The load, fed at Double J contained 69% YG2 and 28% YG3. April's average pelt returned \$7.86. The average grid premium was \$2.74.

### Natural Affidavits and Paperwork

Please submit your natural affidavits and paperwork to Mountain States Rosen. You can email them to [brad@rosenlamb.com](mailto:brad@rosenlamb.com) or fax to MSR in Greeley at 970.304.0422. The email and fax number on older affidavits is incorrect. If you need blank affidavits you may contact Brad or the office.

### Plant Fee Assessment

Just a reminder for MSLC members who chose the 5-year plan for the plant assessment, your plant fees are due by year end. If you would like us to deduct them from a settlement please let us know.



American Lamb Board

## All-American Lamb Burger

### Ingredients

2 pounds ground American Lamb  
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce  
½ cup rolled oats  
½ finely chopped onion  
3 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1 tablespoon of dried basil leaves, crushed  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon seasoned salt  
1 teaspoon pepper  
8 hamburger buns, split and toasted  
8 lettuce leaves  
4 thin slices red onion, split into rings  
16 tomato slices

### Directions

In large bowl, combine ground lamb, tomato sauce, oats, onion, basil, garlic powder, seasoned salt and pepper. Mix until all ingredients are blended. Shape into eight 1/2-inch thick patties. To Grill: Cook over medium-hot coals. Grill 4 inches from coals 5 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness: 145°F for medium-rare, 160°F for medium or 170°F for well. To Broil: Place lamb patties on broiler pan. Broil lamb 4 inches from source of heat for 5 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness: 145°F for medium-rare, 160°F for medium or 170°F for well. Arrange lettuce leaf on bottom half of each bun. Top with onion rings, 2 tomato slices, cooked lamb patties and bun top. Serves 8.

See more great recipes at:  
<http://www.americanlamb.com/consumer/all-american-lamb-burger/#sthash.PZH5PRqM.dpuf>

## 2017 Board Elections

The MSLC board election ballots were sent out to members last week. There are two at-large seats open this year. The seats are currently held by Frank Moore, Douglas, WY and Regan Smith, Powell, WY. Moore and Smith have both been nominated for the seats again this year. Bob Harlan, Kaycee, WY was also nominated but asked for his name to be removed from consideration. The ballots need to be postmarked or faxed or emailed to the office by **June 5**.

## For Every Cow, Add a Ewe and Increase Net Return 65 Percent

By Kris Ringwall, NDSU Extension Service April 06, 2017 | 5:15 pm EDT Published in Drovers

Research has shown multispecies grazing may improve revenue flow, but the pace of agriculture oftentimes inhibits producer pondering.

The challenge is that alternative production scenarios exist, but time must be set aside to evaluate these alternatives. Time is precious; however, pondering still should occur.

Recent Dickinson Research Extension Center sales caused me to ponder the concept of adding a sheep for every cow. The center sold market cows on March 9 for \$68.24 per hundredweight (cwt), or \$995.58 per head, and a market ewe on March 13 for \$71 per cwt, or \$113.60 per head. When adjusted for body weight, an equivalent weight in sheep was worth \$1,035, or \$40 more than the market cows.

A review of 2016 cow budgets (<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/livestockeconomics/Budgets>) with Tim Petry, North Dakota State University Extension Service livestock economist, shows net return after total costs in the cow-calf enterprise is around \$100 per cow. For a 300-cow operation, the \$30,000 would be split among unpaid family labor, management and equity, and then a return on investment could be calculated.

Beef producers are squeezed for cash; the lucrative years are history, at least for now. So what can one do?

Well, here is my sheep side pondering. I recently asked Karl Hoppe, an NDSU Extension livestock systems specialist, what a typical response would be among livestock producers when asked how to deal with the current cash squeeze. His response noted an increase in herd size and more automation through more and larger equipment and specialization of cattle products. This means more selective markets with the hope of increased revenue per production unit.

Hoppe acknowledged the foundation of many producers is filled with fond memories of a farmyard fully occupied by numerous livestock, which has led us to the innate development of animal husbandry skills. Those memories are often distant, but the concept of

adding sheep to a cattle operation still exists for some producers.

Previous work at the Dickinson Research Extension Center revealed that for every cow on the operation, one ewe could be added with no reduction in stocking rates. Sheep do not compete directly with cattle when grazing a mixed-grass and forb forage base. So adding sheep offers production advantages. Those advantages help diversify grazing and grassland management.

But what about the dollars? A quick look at 2015 records from FINBIN (<https://finbin.umn.edu/LvSummOpts/LvSummIndex>) at the University of Minnesota is interesting. Gross margins for the beef cow-calf operation averaged \$871.34 per cow, with an average net return of \$181.29 per cow; the sheep market-lamb production operation averaged \$254.97 per ewe, with an average net return of \$65.68 per ewe.

Based on cow market weight, nine ewes make up one cow, which means an equivalent sheep gross margin would be \$2,294.73, with a net return of \$591.12.

Ponder this: If the \$30,000 projected for a 300-cow operation is a bit shy on cash to distribute, why not add sheep? What would happen if the 300-cow operation added 300 ewes with a net of \$65.68 per ewe? It would mean a year-end bonus of \$19,704. I doubt most operations would have any reason to turn down the money.

Is this real or simple frivolous pondering? In 1983 and 1984 studies at the Dickinson Research Extension Center, Mike Humann and Don Kirby evaluated incorporating sheep with cattle. They noted, "While cattle are the predominant grazers of range and pasture in the northern Great Plains, sheep offer a significant untapped potential use of this diverse grazing resource. ... Since the mixed-grass prairie provides an abundant variety of classes and species of vegetation, we questioned whether one class of livestock could make efficient use of this varietal abundance."

They found sheep diets complemented the grazing of cattle extremely well.

"The sheep production cycle, breeding, gestation and lactation of ewes compares favorably with the quality of forage selected seasonally by ewes," they wrote.

The biological needs of sheep fit very well with cattle. In 1990, James Nelson and others grazed ewes and cattle at the center, one ewe to every cow. They noted, "Grazing sheep and cow-calf pairs on native range ... allowed both species to make normal growth without sacrificing either pasture quantity or quality."

So the complementary grazing of cattle and sheep is real, not simple something to ponder. If I can take a 300-head cow herd that has a projected net return of \$30,000 and add 300 ewes and increase net return to \$49,704, maybe I should ask some questions. I significantly increase net return per production unit by more than 65 percent. Interesting!