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Project
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FAT LAMBS



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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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FAT LAMBS

Unfinished lambs on the market sell at low prices, are undesirable from the packer's standpoint, and lose money for the producer. The object of this project is to teach interested 4-H members to select, feed, care for, and show market lambs. Most of the work on this project will be done during the summer vacation months.

Requirements

Each member must have four uniform lambs to begin the project. Three will be exhibited in the pen-of-three class. The fourth lamb can be carried as a spare or shown in the individual class. This project will be carried under the supervision of the County Agent or Club Agent.

Time To Start the Project

If the lambs are to be exhibited at fall shows, they must be selected and started in early June. Desirable weights when finished range around 90 pounds for the smaller breeds, and somewhat heavier for the larger breeds. Too much weight over 100 pounds might be penalized in years of large supplies.

Selecting Lambs

Uniformity: Get four lambs of the same size that look as nearly alike as possible. If they are the same size, they will feed better together; and being uniform they will make a better show.

Breed: There is no one best breed. Check with your County Agent, however, before starting any of the rarer breeds. Most Club members feed lambs from the more popular breeds in the State. Purebred lambs are usually most successful winners; however, you may feed lambs from grade ewes. Be sure they are sired by a good mutton-type purebred ram. Scrub lambs from scrub rams will be disappointing.

Sex: Wether lambs are preferred; however, you may have both ewes and wethers. Some shows require that individuals exhibit-

ed be wethers, but ewes are usually acceptable in the pen class. Young ram lambs, castrated in early June with the emasculator, are satisfactory.

Size: A 60-pound lamb started on feed June 1 should weigh 90 pounds by October 1. This is a gain of $\frac{1}{4}$ pound per day. Many lambs of the large breeds will gain more rapidly.

Preparation of Lot and Equipment

Heat is an enemy to fattening lambs. Pick the coolest stall in the barn, or a well-ventilated stable in a shady grove. Very small, low stables covered with a metal roof will always be too hot, unless they are located in the shade.

Pasture. At night lambs should be out in a fresh pasture for some green feed and exercise. The kind of pasture is not too important. Lambs like green legumes, grasses, edible weeds, rape, etc. The permanent pasture usually found on farms is enough, but it should be land on which sheep are not often kept.

Bedding. Keep plenty of clean, fresh bedding under the lambs. Never let them get dirty or damp. If the stall gets wet often, provide more ventilation and dig a drainage ditch around the stall.

Feeds and Feeding

Starting on Feed. Unless lambs are accustomed to feed before they are weaned they must be started gradually. It is very easy to overfeed at the beginning; so be careful. After the lambs are eating well, feed them three times daily. Corn, oats, bran and protein supplement are excellent feeds. The best protein supplement to use is linseed meal (pea size) when you can find it. Be sure to give them all the choice legume hay they will eat.

Mixing the Ration. Use 100 pounds of coarsely cracked yellow corn, 100 pounds whole oats, 25 pounds coarse bran, 50 pounds molasses feed, and 30 pounds protein supplement. When this amount is half used, add

100 pounds of whole corn to the mixture, to increase the corn ration. Any additional feed necessary should have this extra corn added. Beet pulp may be substituted for bran, and you might substitute part of the protein supplement for some of the calf starters or calf manna. Also feed one to two pounds of chopped cabbage daily at the noon feeding.

Rules for Feeding.

1. Feed all the lambs will clean up in $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour at each feeding.
2. Feed 3 times per day.
3. Never feed in a dirty trough.
4. Feed very early in the morning and then very late in the evening while it's cool.
5. Put in fresh hay twice daily.
6. Keep the stable well-bedded and cool.
7. Do not change feed suddenly.
8. Provide plenty of fresh water at all times.
9. Keep salt always available.

Parasite Control

Treat each lamb with two ounces of phenothiazine drench every month while on feed to control internal parasites. If ticks are present, dip or dust the lamb with rotenone. Your County Agent will tell you how to do it.

Preparation for Show

1. Shear off all the wool in June when the lambs are started on feed.
2. In August shear all the wool off the top of the back to make the back flat on top.
3. A week before the first show, curry and card out the fleece and wet it with soapy water. Rub dry with a woolen cloth. Repeat until fleece is clean.
4. After cleaning, blanket the lamb.
5. Smooth fleece with hand shears before showing.

Records

Keep accurate records of feed cost. The value of such items as pasture and cabbage may be estimated. Record the initial value, all prizes won, and all expenses.