



Dakota Lamb Growers Co-op News

Proudly serving producers in the
Upper Midwest



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Spring 2022

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From DLGC President Riley Braaten

Greetings Fellow Shepherds,

Well the calendar says its spring yet mother nature has provided winter conditions for many of our producers. From very dry conditions in some areas, to very wet in other areas. We need to continue to pray especially for those areas and producers who have endured severe droughts which continue to contributed to lack of feed and water.

Prices for market lambs and slaughter ewes have seemed to hold stable recently. Cash lambs have been \$1.90 - \$2.10, with excessively heavy lambs being sharply discounted. Cull ewes were around \$1.50 - \$1.90 six weeks ago, but have dropped to \$0.85 - \$1.25 currently. With Easter holiday celebrations done it will be interesting to see what lies ahead for us with the lamb market going into the summer months. I would expect to see lighter carcass weights being delivered again this year as we see record high feed prices and input costs. "Will the consumers be able to, or willing to, pay these high prices for a great protein source like our lambs" is a question that keeps coming up. I hope consumers continue to eat our lamb and that they share with others how tasteful it is and rather unique.

As many producers finish up spring lambing, they now turn to the next work season of planting and seeding. Hopefully all our producers can receive necessary moisture they need for their crops and grass to grow and flourish this season. With the later planting and growing season we are experiencing this year many are going to feel rushed and stressed. Please take the extra time to stop at all stop signs. Keep your eyes peeled for our youth that may be learning to drive a car or to operate farm equipment for the first time.

Hopefully in the days to come we may each watch our young lambs frolic and grow. Let's all take time to enjoy the beautiful sunny days and especially the wonderful sunsets. May God bless and comfort each and every DLGC member this growing season.

May you find all the tagged ears in your flock alive and well.

Riley Braaten, President

Welcome to the Family



Jon and Alex Kahnke welcomed Jed Joseph Kahnke a little early. He was born March 14th weighing in at 4lbs 13 oz. He spent the first two weeks of life in Sanford's NICU but he is a fighter and a miracle from God.

Congratulations!!!

New DLGC Members in 2021

Kent & Brandee Fjeldheim , Herreid, SD	275 Targhee Ewes
Jon & Alex Kahnke , Florence, SD	310 Rambouillet, Targhee, Suffolk, Cross Ewes
Matt Hirsch , Java, SD	350 Rambouillet, Targhee Ewes
Donald Drewry , Farmington, MN	50 Hampshire Ewes
Matt Brehmer , White, SD	150 Rombouillet/Suffolk Cross Ewes
Randy Gravley , Russell, MN	200 Crossbred Ewes

For Sale

FOR SALE: Suffolk Ram Lambs, and 1/2 Finn / 1/2 Dorset ram lambs for sale. All born February through May 22. May have a select few yearlings for sale also. Jeff Young, Norcross MN. Cell # 320-808-4079.

FOR SALE: Border Collie Puppies ready to go mid-June. Issac Radermacher, Belgrade, MN, 320-290-6956.

FOR SALE: Anatolia Shepherd, Akbash, Great Pyrenees cross puppies for sale. Raised with sheep and cat friendly. Asking \$250 but willing to negotiate. Call or text Daniel Trygstad at 605-530-4444

FOR SALE: Ile de France Rams and Ewe Lambs. Visit our website hasbargenlandcattle.com to view current sale offerings.

FOR SALE: Livestock Guard Dog Pups. They will make your life easier and your predator's lives miserable. From generations of on-the-ball LGDs who earn their keep. Contact Cindy Wolf at 507-450-5453.

FOR SALE: Ram Extra - Siremax Composite Terminal Sires. Best of the best. That's why we retained these to use on this end as single sires and backups. Contact oneillfamilyfarm54@gmail.com or 507-458-6244.

Please send any **Wanted** or **For Sale** ads to Phyllis. They will be added to the weekly carcass market report, posted on the DLGC webpage, and put in the next newsletter.

Highlighting Members

Dallis & Tammy Basel, Union Center, SD

We are located about 35 miles east of Newell, SD. An area that is called "The Gumbo". Not a lot of good water sources and has areas of cactus flats. Historically known as good sheep country.

We joined the Dakota Lamb Growers Coop. in 2001. I believe that was the second share drive of the Coop. Early on I think our lambs that went through the Coop went to Bridgewater, SD. Our lambs were fed at Emory, SD with Jim Hanssen. One year our lambs went to Greeley, CO to go through the Mountain States plant. DLGC lambs did go through Haywarden, IA for several years, until the plant closed.

The last couple of years we have fed our lambs at Double J in Ault, CO then processed through Superior.

Our local market is Newell, SD. They have a good weekly market that we sell our feeder lambs and cull ewes through.

Our ewes have been Ramboulett for years. Our Granddaughter got started with a small herd of registered Targhee about five years ago and we have added a small flock of registered Targhee ewes and have started using Targhee rams. We do the NSIP and ultrasounding on these sheep. Last year we microned the wool on all of ewes and rams to see where we were and the herd averaged 21.6 microns.

I enjoy looking at the numbers and data and trends in our registered herd. I'm have a hard time waiting for Superior to get their cameras going to get carcass data back on our lambs. Feeding our lambs in Colorado is a challenge because a pen of lambs is around 130 head and they all market at the same time as opposed to marketing a few when ready.

One thing that makes our place unique is in 2005 we were out of water and what water we had was high in sulfates, so we dug a deep well, 3,400 ft. Now the neighbors have added pipelines to the system and there are about 30 miles of pipelines.

Chad Harbargen, Wheaton, MN

I have been involved in the agriculture and the sheep industry my whole life. I bought my first ewes when I was 8 years old. We operate a diversified family farm north of Wheaton, MN growing sugar beets, corn, soybeans and wheat as well as a feedlot for backgrounding cattle. My wife Jody and I met at NDSU, have been married for 32 years, and have four children. Our family has always been active in the community, school and church. I have served on several boards over the years and enjoy working with different organizations.

I have been a member of Dakota Lamb Growers Coop since 2007 and have seen many changes in the organization and I am proud to have been a board member as the organization moved in a positive direction. We market our lambs to Superior Farms through a DLGC contract and are excitedly awaiting the introduction of the camera grading system.

We have a closed OPP free flock of 400 Ile de France ewes. We have been using imported fullblood semen from France in our AI program since 2019 and we are currently importing semen from New Zealand and European Union. We sell purebred rams and ewe lambs and have sent genetics to 22 states in the last five years. I have been an NSIP member since 2018. NSIP data is invaluable and has assisted us with making more informed decisions. We have used Flock 54 genetic DNA testing to identify elite traits.

In 2020 my oldest daughter Hannah, a CPA by trade, joined me as a partner in the Ile de France flock, prior to that she had created and maintained the website and helped out with daily activities. This spring my youngest son John also came back to join the farming operation. It is a blessing to have them both involved. My oldest son Jacob is with the 82nd Airborne currently deployed and my youngest daughter Olivia is a student at University of North Dakota, in Grand Forks, ND.

A unique thing about our farm is we have been hosting agriculture exchange students for the past 40 years and that has given us the opportunity to travel, share and learn about agriculture around the world.

Superior Farms

Jaylene Scott, jaylene.scott@superiorfarms.com; 303.749.5281

Hello Dakota Lamb Producers,

I hope that the winter months have been treating you well and that you are starting to see some beautiful spring weather in the Midwest. Here at Superior Farms we are gearing up for the Easter season and preparing for our annual audits at the different facilities.

As we move into the Easter season, we are beginning to see an increase in demand after a significant slowdown at the tail end of 2021 and early in 2022. Covid-19 and restaurant shutdowns were incredibly hard on the foodservice industry. It is estimated that 20% of restaurants have permanently closed since 2020. In light of 2022, we are starting to see new restaurants come on board and are working to help these new restaurants feature American lamb on their menus. Lamb in retail saw a slow in demand towards the end of 2021 and entering into 2022 due to pricing. Currently, we are seeing positive trends with ad pricing and promotions being brought back for lamb in the retail sector. Until now promotions of lamb have essentially been on hold with retailers for the last two years due to limited product availability and COVID restrictions on in-store sampling. It will be interesting to see how Ramadan, Easter, Greek Easter, (Eid) al-Fitr, and (Eid) al-Adha affect demand in 2022. Historically, when we see two major Christian lamb eating holidays back to back (Easter and Greek Easter) we see a shorter period of increased demand.

We have seen an increase in Colorado feedlot inventory due to 2022 kill volumes being down. Decreased kill volumes have also led to heavier weight lambs coming to the plant. This is a significant contrast to last year when we stayed current on our feedlot inventories and harvest weights. The pelt market has softened significantly in the past month. This is directly related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and Russia not having the use for skins that it traditionally does.

When we look at Cold storage inventory we are down from the five-year average, but we have not seen a lot of improvement over the last few months. Inventory levels have stayed stable due to domestic-product being moved through the system and a decrease in imports coming to the United States. Importers have been hesitant to bring frozen-product into the U.S. due to the decline in cruise line business and not having a consistent home for the product.

With the spring season coming to the plant we have some general housekeeping items that we need to keep in mind. With the weather being wet and cold we tend to see lambs coming into the plant with more mud and tag. This creates contamination issues on the kill floor and impedes our ability to get lambs processed in an efficient time frame. The other issue we run into is intact ram lambs. These animals create issues at the feedlot, the plant, and can cost you at the producer level if they do not grade. Please help us to avoid scheduling issues during the summer months by staying in contact with your buy station operator. Communication is critical to getting your lambs processed in a timely fashion. Bringing more lambs than discussed, heavier lambs, or waiting until the last minute can create trucking issues and may lead to your animals being pushed out to a further kill date.

I would like to take the time to personally thank each one of you for the time you put into producing a quality product and being a great partner to Superior Farms. Wishing you all a Happy Easter and a wonderful spring!!

Jaylene Scott

Riding the Wave of 2022

Travis W. Hoffman, Ph.D.

Spring time provides me with joy. Maybe it is the relief from a longer than preferred winter, the new crop lambs, or even the Vitamin D. It has been a ride for U.S. sheep prices, and hopefully, even with increasing input costs, we can keep writing with a black pen.

There was a time when we could look at supply and demand, and overarching market fundamentals and have an idea of profit/loss. May I suggest that the Spring/Summer 2021 prices highs were driven by the amount of lambs marketed to the ethnic trade? I think so. Producers saw unequaled prices, feedlots couldn't pencil the purchase and a large inventory of lambs went to harvest at 60-100 lbs., leaving the supply short during the summer before new crop lambs made it to market weight.

Well, with 2022 cull ewe prices, many people sent marginal ewes to the market, and there is not specific expectations for an increase in the breeding flock. USDA numbers on January 2022 indicated a 2% decrease for breeding ewe numbers, and total sheep inventory, as well as 3% decline for market sheep, year over year from January 2021.

An important factor is number of Colorado lambs on feed. On April 1, 2022 there were 169,742 head, which is up over 9% from March, and up 57% from April 2021. Last year, the lambs simply weren't in inventory, now numbers trend up primarily because California and Western U.S. droughts resulted in placement earlier than normal. We should be harvesting these "California springers" and old crop lambs now, and with the big heavyweight price discounts, those will be sent promptly; and we hope to stay current in lamb carcass weights.

Big picture, moisture-wise we are in a better place now than our Western colleagues. Drought, production input costs, as well as import price pressure and lead national challenges, but market fundamentals shall keep us moving strongly throughout 2022.

Travis W. Hoffman

Lamb Surges Through Pandemic

Travis W. Hoffman, Ph.D.

The 2022 Power of Meat annual report conducts a survey that "looks at meat through the shopper's eyes," and quantifies meat sold through retail food outlets during 2021. The COVID-19 lifestyle changes proved advantageous to the lamb industry complex. Lamb gained in pounds purchased by U.S. consumers in 2021 over 2020. Beef leads in total sales, but lamb sales in 2021 increased 4.3% over 2020, and 19% over 2019, to hit 60 million pounds. Dollar sales grew to \$534 million, an 11.7% increase over 2020 and 35.4% over 2019.

Restaurant dining is returning after 2 years of a pandemic, but 61% of consumers continue to cut back on restaurant spending, with 62% of those people trying to recreate the experience at home. At-home chefs and traditional lamb consumers cooked more, and creative, meals. Futuristically, inflation and supply chain issues may drive consumers to buy meat less often and pay more when they do. The report states inflation will likely continue to be a factor for meat sales into 2022. Total meat sales in price per pound is up 6.4% since 2020, and 14.5% since 2019.

Overall, lamb had a competitive year in the protein sector, and we look forward to continued per capita consumption growth. While I remain optimistic of the bottom threshold of live sheep prices in 2022, we must be aware of the possibility of price limitations and eroding the presence of American Lamb on the restaurant menu, and continue to provide a product that consumers demand at retail that competes for the \$\$\$ versus lamb imports and competing proteins. Reminder: The greatest amount of LAMB is consumed in APRIL for the spring holiday season! Feed your Adventurous Side!

Travis W. Hoffman