



Dakota Lamb Growers Co-op News

Proudly serving producers in the
Upper Midwest



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Directors

President: **Travis Fowler**
Truman, MN
507-236-5055

VPresident: **Kelley O'Neill**
Rushford, MN
507-458-6244

Secretary: **Chad Hasbargen**
Wheaton, MN
320-815-5185

Treasurer: **Adam Ost**
Ashley, ND
701-301-3876

Directors: **Rob Dallmann**
Hecla, SD 57446
605-994-7398

Susan Holler
White, SD
605-695-9478

Brady Bjornson
Albert Lea, MN
701-212-2492

Manager: **Phyllis Pates**
21867 466th Ave.
Volga, SD 57071
605-695-5157

Submit calendar events, ads
and article ideas to:
dakotalambgrowers@gmail.com

Website:
dakotalambgrowers.com

Greetings from DLGC President Travis Fowler

Hello from southern MN. Where the weather can't seem to make up its mind of late!

By now most of you are probably well into lambing. Hopefully things are going smooth. Here we are in the thick of it and other than working around these spring storms, things are going good and fast.

As the new president for DLGC I'm looking forward to severing the Co-op and working with you. I would like to let all members know that we have a mentorship program in the Co-op. It's not just for the newer members, even if you've been in the sheep business awhile sometimes you might need some help figuring something out. So please feel free to call me or any other board member and we will do the best to answer any questions you may have or point you in the direction to find the answers.

In this newsletter there are a few good articles to look at from Superior Farms. Including an update from Mark Dumdi, the current ABF guidelines, and purchasing feeder lamb guidelines. Hopefully this information will get you up to date.

I would also like to say Thank You! to Riley Braaten for his years of service to the Co-op. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with him! He will be missed.

Until next time Happy Lambing and stay safe!

Travis Fowler, President



Please Welcome these New Members

Cody Dejaeghere, Lund, MN

Sheep Producer since 2024

100 Ewes (Polypay, Targhee)

Steve Engelkes, Fulda, MN

Sheep Producer since 1990

170 Ewes (Polypay, Suffolk)

Zach & Mike Fischer, Goodwin, SD

Sheep Producer since 1970s

200 Ewes (SAM, Polypay, Targhee))

Edward Forcier, Verndale, MN

Sheep Producer since 1976

150 Ewes (Ile de France, Polypay, South Hampshire)

Matt Palmlund, Bancraft, SD

Sheep Producer since 2011

300 Ewes (Suffolk, Polypay)

Do You Have Questions?

The DLGC Board understands that sheep raising can seem overwhelming at times. They want you to know that they are available to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have. Whether you're seeking guidance on a specific issue, looking for insights into how DLGC works, or simply need clarification on a process, our board members are here to provide support. We encourage open communication and are committed to ensuring that you feel informed and empowered. Your inquiries are important to us, and we're here to help you every step of the way.

Contact information for the Board members is on the first page of this newsletter. Don't hesitate to reach out.

For Sale

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.

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

FOR SALE: 200 bales of grass hay . They are 4x5 and asking \$65/bale. Call Austin at 507-360-4099.

FOR SALE: BTX 9010 Vermeer Bale Processor (low usage); Meyers 3425 Manure Spreader (very nice); Loftness Stalk chopper with Windrower (like new); Verns 7 x 22 Horse Trailer; (2) 40 ft lambing units; (40) 24 ft portable panels. Near Sisseton, SD. Contact David at 605-880-8515

WANTED: Gallagher M1100 or larger Gallagher electric fencer. Please call 507-920-0583

Superior Farms

Mark Dumdi; mark.dumdi@superiorfarms.com; (303) 886-1613

I hope everyone is having a great start to the New Year. With the new administration we are seeing a lot of diversion. Will this have an effect on our market and our livelihoods? In my opinion the economy is going to take a while to perk up which means we have to keep the price in the stores at a reasonable level to maintain demand. Every time we overprice ourselves at the retail level, we end up killing demand which has a detrimental effect on our lamb market. We are seeing exceptionally high live prices at Sioux Falls and other auction markets due to the Ramadan and other ethnic holidays combined with a short supply of light lambs. Easter and Greek Easter both fall on April 20th this year and in my past experience this doesn't always play favorable to the lamb market due to the drop off of demand after the Easter holiday. Every year is different, and time will tell how this will play out.

In other news: I would like to remind you about a couple of things you can control that might affect how your lambs pay back.

Cleanliness: Clean lambs will enable the kill floor to do a better job dressing which helps get a better yield from your lambs.

Buck lambs: We have had this discussion, and they don't dress as well. and because we put almost everything in a box, we are looking at the most consistent product that we can produce.

Exciting addition to our Livestock Team:

I would also like to introduce you to Wyatt Crane our Livestock Manager at the Denver plant. I am including a bio so you can get to know a little about Wyatt. He has been a great addition to our company.

My name is Wyatt Crane, I was raised in Wheatland, WY. I Graduated from Wheatland High School where I went on to attend Chadron State College for one year while playing football for them. I then transferred to the University of Wyoming where I pursued a degree in Agricultural Business with an emphasis on Farm and Ranch Management. My family and I have always been part of the sheep industry, I grew up in Wheatland where my family runs around 150 head of Rambouillet ewes and 65 head of Dorper hair sheep. While in attendance at the University of Wyoming I was a part of the collegiate wool judging team my junior year and was also in the Wyoming collegiate wool growers' association. During my senior year I was an assistant coach for the wool judging team and the president of the wool growers' association. I started at Superior Farms on an internship during the summer of 2023 before going back to school to get my degree that fall, I then came back to Superior Farms full time as the livestock manger in January 2024. I have been with the company for around a year and a half working alongside Mark Dumdi. I got into the sheep industry to make as many relationships within the industry as possible while also trying to help promote and grow the sheep industry.

Interesting facts from the lamb board:

2024 Annual Sheep Industry Market Report Now Available

The American Sheep Industry Association prepares an annual market report for the American Lamb Board summarizing key statistics and trends in the sheep industry. Here are some highlights from the 2024 report:

Sheep & Lamb Inventory: The industry saw an increase in inventory for the first time since 2016. On January 1, 2025, the sheep and lamb inventory totaled 5.05 million head, an increase of 20,000 head. Market lambs were up 9,000 head for a total of 1.288 million. The total breeding flock grew by 10,000 head to 3.68 million.

(Continued on next page)

(continued) Superior Farms

Production & Consumption: While wholesale lamb prices remained stable due to favorable cuts, feeder and slaughter lamb prices fluctuated, especially in the latter half of the year, due to larger supplies. Retail lamb prices remained high, reflecting steady consumer demand despite inflationary pressures.

Overall, lamb and mutton production increased by 2.4%, driven by higher slaughter volumes. While lamb and yearling slaughter levels were 1% lower than the 2018-2022 average last year, federally Inspected (FI) lamb and yearling slaughter was up 3.8% at 1.79 million head in 2024.

Per capita lamb consumption was 1.3 pounds in 2024, an increase attributed to a larger supply of lamb (American and imported). Based on lamb prices relative to supplies, consumer demand for lamb was stronger in 2024.

Lamb Crop & Trends: The 2024 lamb crop experienced an increase, with a lambing percentage of 105.9%, the highest since 2020. An increase in breeding stock, along with the higher lambing percentage, led to growth in the market lamb crop, marking 2024 as the first year-over-year increase in two decades. Regions such as the Corn Belt, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast saw an uptick in sheep numbers, while the Mountain and Western regions encountered declines.

2025 Outlook: The report highlights a modest increase in demand, especially from direct-to-consumer and ethnic markets, which contributes to a positive outlook for the sheep industry moving forward. Overall, the sheep industry continues to demonstrate signs of recovery with rising inventory, stable prices, decreasing feed costs, and growth in various market segments, despite ongoing inflation challenges.

Download the [full report](#) with more information and insights at LambBoard.com

Thank you,

Mark Dumdi

Purchasing Feeder Lamb Guidelines

DLGC members are dedicated to producing high quality lamb meat. We encourage our members to deliver homegrown lambs under their current contract with Superior Farms. There are always some instances where a member has the opportunity to purchase additional lambs to supplement their numbers. Here are the steps involved with purchasing feeder lambs:

- 1) Prior approval from DLGC and Superior Farms before purchasing.
- 2) Must be purchased from a known source (not stockyard lambs).
- 3) Lambs may not be delivered as ABF under your contract.



ABF Lamb Protocol and Husbandry Standards Producer Handout

PURPOSE:

The purpose of Superior Farms, ABF lamb program is to provide the consumer an American Grown product that has never been given antibiotics or added hormones and has been fed an all-vegetarian diet. We also want to be able to assure our customers that ABF lambs are raised and managed following our strict standards.

SCOPE:

The ABF lamb program starts with the live animal producer at the time the animal is born and continues through raising, harvest, processing into retail cuts and shipment of the product. At each step there are protocols and procedures in place to ensure the validity of this program.

ABF Lamb Protocol and Husbandry Standards – This document details the raising, handling and feeding requirements of the ABF lamb program.

ABF Lamb Producer Husbandry Questionnaire – This document will be completed by all live animal producers wishing to become a part of the ABF lamb program. This questionnaire serves as an affidavit that the producer's practices are in agreement with the requirements of the ABF lamb program.

ABF Lamb Program Certification – This document will be signed by each approved live animal producer on each lot of animals sold to Superior Farms at the time of sale.

PROCEDURES:

Who:

This protocol applies to all ABF lamb raisers, spanning from the lambs with the flock through the feedlot. Every ABF lamb producer must be located in the United States.

Feed/ Water:

Lambs must NOT be administered, through water or feed, any hormones, antibiotics or ionophores for any reason.

Lambs must be fed a balanced diet that promotes proper rumination. Animals must be fed an all-vegetarian diet. No Mammalian or avian derived feed additives can be included in the feed rations – i.e. tallow, milk proteins, bone meal...

Water troughs and feeders should be kept clean and stale feed should be removed to ensure that the lambs are being supplied with clean fresh feed and fresh water every day.

No lamb is to be kept from feed or water for longer than 24 hours.

A salt and mineral mix should be provided at all times.

Handling:

Handling systems should be constructed to compliment natural herding behaviors in order to minimize stress and injury.

Persons handling the sheep should understand basic herding behavior of livestock and try to minimize stress of the animal at all times. The use of electric prods is prohibited.

Sheep must be given adequate space to behave as they would in a natural environment.

Health:

Antibiotics: Use of antibiotics and ionophores are strictly prohibited. If a lamb becomes ill and requires antibiotic treatment, producers are encouraged to do so in order to minimize animal suffering. HOWEVER, that animal must be identified and taken out of the ABF program. No treated lambs will be allowed to re-enter Superior Farms' ABF program. Any treated lamb must have some type of permanent visual identification indicating that it can no longer be part of the ABF lamb program. (i.e. an ear tag)

The routine use of antibiotics to prevent and treat coccidiosis is prohibited. Sulfa-based compounds, Tetracycline, and Terramycin are antibiotics and therefore cannot be used. USDA also considers ionophores such as Bovatec to be antibiotics – therefore Bovatec is not allowed to be used in the ABF lamb program.

Vaccination and Parasite Control: Routine parasite control and vaccination is allowed and encouraged to ensure the healthiest sheep flock possible. Protozoal parasite control (coccidiostats) can be used as part of the parasite control program as long as they are not compounds that are classified as an antibiotic or an ionophore. Consultation with a veterinarian is recommended to ensure the most effective use of products to control parasites and vaccines to prevent disease.

Castration: If performed, should be done after 1 day of age and before 12 weeks of age. Elastration (banding) or sharp knife are the recommended methods of castration.

Tail Docking: If performed, should be done after 1 day of age and before 12 weeks of age. Care should be taken not to dock the tails too short. A minimum of ½ the web should remain. Hot Docking, Elastration and sharp knife are the recommended methods of tail docking.

Mueling: Must never be performed under any circumstances.

Weaning: Weaning should take place when it is healthy for the lamb and the ewe. This will depend on the breed of the ewe, milk quality, milk production, and overall body condition. The lamb should be weaned no earlier than 60 days of age.

Feeder Lambs:

If lambs are purchased to be fed in a feedlot:

1. Lambs must have been raised on ranches of known origin.
2. Lambs must have been raised in accordance to ABF protocol.
3. Producer must sign an affidavit ensuring that the animals have been raised according to this protocol.
4. Producer must fill out the ABF Lamb Protocol, Producer Husbandry Questionnaire.

Lambs purchased from unknown origins or pooled or mixed lots at auction yards CANNOT be included in the ABF lamb program.

Feedlots:

Lambs for the ABF program must be kept segregated from other lambs in the feedlot.

REFERENCES:

“The Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance Program”, T.W. Hoffman, et al, American Sheep Industry Association
“Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Sheep”, Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, Ministry of Agriculture, New Zealand

U.S. Sheep and Lamb Inventory Up Slightly

Travis W. Hoffman, NDSU/UofMN Extension Sheep Specialist

The all sheep and lamb inventory in the U.S. on Jan. 1, 2025 totaled 5.05 million head, up 20,000 head from 2024, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service. The report indicated a year-over-year increase of 2% in Minnesota, and 2% decrease in North Dakota and South Dakota.

"A stabilization of U.S. inventory is encouraging as this the first year for increased numbers since 2016," says Travis Hoffman, sheep specialist for NDSU Extension and UMN Extension. "Excitingly, U.S. lamb consumption was up 14% from a year ago to 1.3 pounds per person per year for 2024."

The U.S. breeding ewe and ram inventory slightly increased 10,000 head to 3.68 million head. South Dakota is seventh in the nation in breeding sheep with 154,000 head; Minnesota is ranked 14th with 79,000 head; and North Dakota is 27th with 43,000 head.

The 2024 lamb crop of 3.04 million head was up slightly from 2023, and the January 2025 market lamb and sheep inventory, reported at 1.36 million head, was steady from last year.

The 2024 North Dakota lamb crop decreased 2% to 43,000 head, year over year, and was stable in production efficiency with 119 lambs per 100 ewes. The Minnesota lamb crop increased 2% to 87,000 head of lambs. Further, Minnesota improved their sheep production efficiency (nationwide lead, tie with Oklahoma) at 138 lambs produced per 100 ewes. South Dakota recorded strong lambing numbers with 132 lambs per 100 ewes, but the decrease in ewe inventory resulted in producing 170,000 head, down 3% in 2024.

Shorn wool production in the U.S. was 22.5 million pounds in 2024, with an average weight of 7 pounds and a \$0.13 decline to \$1.43 per pound average price paid. The total value for wool produced was \$32.1 million.

According to Hoffman, Minnesota sheep producers tend to emphasize performance with a variety of medium wool breeds in small-to-medium farm flocks, while larger operations with fine wool breeds are more common in western North and South Dakota.

Wool prices for medium wools have remained sluggish over the past several years, averaging \$0.30 per pound in Minnesota, while fine-fibered wools had higher returns, averaging \$0.90 per pound in North Dakota and \$1.15 per pound in South Dakota.



Can a Lick Tub Provide Enough Protein and Energy?

Jaelyn Whaley, SDSU Extension Sheep Field Specialist

Protein and energy supplementation is critical throughout the winter and becomes more important as animals enter late gestation to prevent pregnancy toxemia. Factors like labor, storage, and feed quality can be a challenge with supplements, so many utilize lick tubs as a convenient supplementation method. However, lick tubs can be expensive, and consumption may vary. Meeting nutrient requirements needs to be a top priority, especially for ewes carrying more than one lamb, so is a lick tub the best option for providing protein and energy to our flock?

Lick tubs certainly have their benefits. Most lick tubs include molasses to increase palatability and provide energy. Molasses contains about 75% total digestible nutrients (TDN). Every lick tub is different, but assuming a recommended consumption rate of 0.5 lb per day, that tub would meet approximately 10% of a twin-bearing ewe's energy requirement in late gestation. They also contain about 4% crude fat, or you can purchase a high-fat tub for even more energy. The additional protein and energy also improves low-quality forage digestion. Convenience is one of the greatest advantages to lick tubs. They are an easy way to supplement energy, protein, plus minerals all in one complete package. The labor to provide daily supplementation can be difficult to balance especially if you have an off-farm job or other farm enterprises. Additionally, lick tubs can be easily stored in any shed or barn out of the weather. Feedstuffs on the other hand are cheaper when purchased in bulk and require various storage options such as bins, large totes, or a tarping system.

Unfortunately, lick tubs aren't the perfect supplementation solution. Because the recommended intake of most lick tubs is low, they shouldn't be relied on as a primary source of protein or energy. Your base ration should meet nutrient requirements with a lick tub being used to provide a little extra. Sheep also have varying consumption of block-type supplements, so some ewes may never consume a lick tub and some may overconsume. Be sure to calculate the target intake based on the label and how quickly your flock should consume a lick tub. For example, if the target consumption is 4 oz per head per day, a 125 lb tub should last 100 ewes about 5 days ($4 \text{ oz/head/day} \times 100 \text{ ewes} = 400 \text{ oz/day} \div 16 \text{ oz/lb} = 25 \text{ lb/day}$ à $125 \text{ lb tub} \div 25 \text{ lb/day} = 5 \text{ days}$). Providing one tub per 25-30 head prevents overcrowding and promotes uniform consumption. Relative to other protein and energy options, tubs are expensive. A 24% crude protein 70 lb. lick tub would contain approximately 16.8 lb of crude protein. At \$175 per tub, this supplement costs \$10.41 per pound of crude protein. Whereas 1 lb of alfalfa may be closer to \$0.60 per lb of crude protein.

Lick tubs are a convenient way to provide extra protein and energy that can help prevent detrimental nutritional diseases. Even saving one ewe and her lambs from pregnancy disease can offset the cost of a lick tub. They also provide minerals that further support lamb survival. However, achieving target consumption across the entire flock can be a challenge, and lick tubs are not always the most cost-effective option. At the end of the day, supplementation programs need to be adapted to favor individual management styles and capabilities.

