



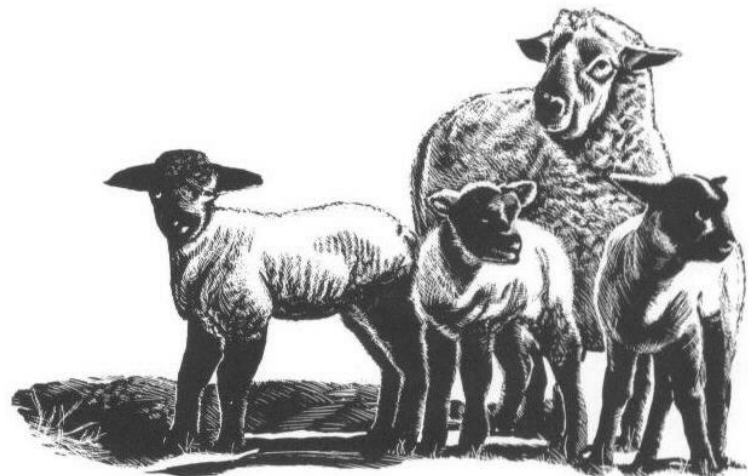
## 2007 4-H MARKET LAMB PROJECT GUIDELINE

Raising a market lamb for meat will help you to learn about the requirements of an animal grown for meat. You will also learn important life skills such as responsibility and record keeping along the way. The 4-H Market Lamb Project is designed to allow 4-Hers to become familiar with and practice the normal day-to day feeding and management of market lambs. You should become familiar with the genetic, nutritional, and health factors that effect market lambs through this project. Market lambs are shown at the Delaware State Fair and sold at auction there. Members enrolled in the 4-H Market Lamb project are required to own their animals by 60 days prior to the Delaware State Fair. However, if you are going to purchase a feeder lamb for this project, it is advisable that you purchase it in mid-April in order for it to be market weight by the Delaware State Fair. Lambs must weigh a minimum of 80 pounds and a maximum of 150 pounds.

Your market lamb must be identified with a Delaware State Fair ear tag in order to be shown at the Delaware State Fair. You may tag as many market lambs as you wish but will only be allowed to show a maximum of two market lambs, not in the same class. Tagging of livestock for the Delaware State Fair will occur on several different dates and at three different locations this year. If you choose to participate in the 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Contest sponsored by the Delaware Farm Bureau, you need to attend the tagging/weigh in for your county. If you choose not to participate in the 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Contest you may tag at any of the three locations regardless of what county you are enrolled in. Please see the guidelines for the 2007 4-H/FFA Rate of Gain Educational Contest for further details. Entry information for the Rate of Gain will be handed out at the tagging locations. The dates and locations for this year are as follows:

- Saturday, May 5, 9 am-1 pm - Smyrna High School (**NC County**)
- Saturday, May 5, 9 am- 1 pm - Georgetown Research and Education Center (**Sussex County**)
- Saturday, May 12, 9 am- 1 pm - Delaware State Fair (**Kent County**)
- Tuesday, May 22, 6 pm- 8 pm - Delaware State Fair (**Kent County**)

Untagged market lambs will not be accepted for the Market Lamb show and Jr. Livestock Auction. **The deadline for state fair entries this year is June 15, 2007.** Delaware State Fair entries will be accepted online on a first come first serve basis. Any entries over barn capacity will be placed on a waiting list, if necessary. Please do not wait until the deadline to submit your entries.



### **A. What Kind of Lamb Do You Purchase for This Project?**

Selecting the right lamb can make the difference between placing high or low in the lamb classes at the State Fair. Black faced lambs, in general, tend to place higher than the white-faced breeds, even though outstanding lambs exist in all breeds. It does not matter if you purchase a ewe or a wether. Ram lambs are ineligible to be shown in market classes. Sheep shown in Open Breeding Classes are ineligible to show in market classes. In general you should choose a lamb that:

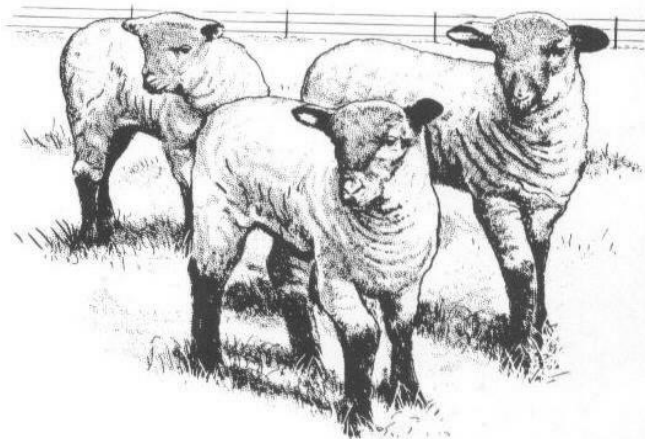
- is large framed and growthy
- is thick and well muscled down its top, through its loin and in its leg
- is complete, balanced, and smooth in its pattern
- is appealing to look at from front to back
- is weaned and eating well
- is healthy and lively

Things to watch out for when purchasing a market lamb include:

- lambs that are pinched behind the shoulder
- lambs that are narrow at the heart girth
- lambs that are short in their loin muscle
- lambs that lack thickness in the leg
- lambs that appear unhealthy/unthrifty

Remember that the ideal weight of a grown market lamb is between 100 and 125 pounds with a few exceptions. Buy a lamb that can be in this weight range by fair time. Most lambs can be expected to gain between ½ and 1 pound per day.

### **B. What Do You Need to Raise a Market Lamb?**



Obviously you need to prepare a place to keep your lamb prior to purchasing it. It is best to raise two lambs instead of one if at all possible. A single lamb raised alone will not grow well. Lambs require some kind of protection from the wind and the rain. This can be in the form of a barn, garage, or a low cost plywood building large enough to contain your lambs. In addition, it would be advisable to have some outside area where the lambs could exercise. This need not be large. However, I personally prefer at least a 25'x 25' area for exercise. Since dogs

have a habit of disturbing, and sometimes killing lambs, make sure the fencing is good. You will also need a clean source of water, water buckets and some kind of feed trough. Try to obtain a feed trough that will prevent the lambs from getting into it.

### **C. Health Concerns:**

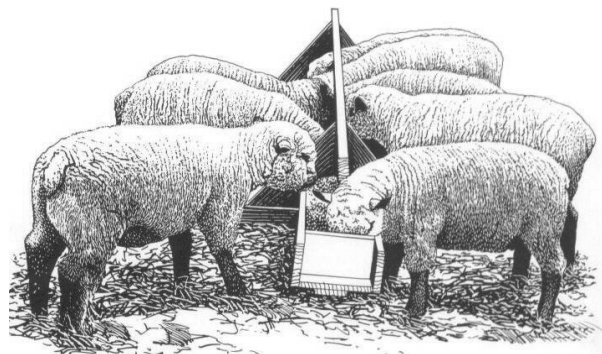
As already mentioned, you should buy a lamb that is weaned and eating well. In addition, your lamb should be vaccinated for Enterotoxemia Types C and D two times prior to your bringing it home. Enterotoxemia is also called overeating disease and can kill fast-growing, grain fed lambs quickly and without warning. It is also advisable to vaccinate your lamb for tetanus using a tetanus toxoid. This type of vaccine will give your lamb long-term protection against tetanus.

Make sure your lamb looks and acts healthy. Avoid lambs that are dull and listless, and those that are limping (a sign of foot rot) or who have runny noses (possibly pneumonia or shipping fever).

Lambs are extremely susceptible to internal parasites. Your lamb should be de-wormed at the time of purchase and may need to be de-wormed again every month thereafter. Just be sure to watch your drug withdrawal times as you get closer to the Delaware State fair.

### **D. Feeding Your Lamb:**

When you bring your lamb home, don't put your lamb in a pen with unlimited feed. Instead, introduce your lamb to grain gradually. It is a good idea to get some grain from whomever you



purchased the lamb from and gradually switch the lamb over to your feed. Drastic changes in feed from one type to another are not good for your lamb. A good quality leafy hay should be provided free choice at first but never providing more than one section per day. Make sure your lamb has access to plenty of fresh, clean water and trace mineralized salt formulated for sheep.

Start your lamb on about  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of a 16% protein grain (formulated for sheep), fed in the cool of morning and evening. Be careful not to substitute feed intended for other types of animals. Sheep are very sensitive to copper and other feeds tend to be higher in copper than sheep feed. Too much copper will kill a sheep. Animals do not eat well when it is hot so you may want to use a fan in the shed on extremely hot days. Keep track of what your lambs are eating at each feeding. If they don't eat it all, decrease by that amount at the next feeding. If they have cleaned it up, increase the amount (by about  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb.) at the next feeding. Keep the feed that is in front of the lambs fresh. Clean the uneaten feed out of the trough before you put in fresh feed.

It is impossible to say how much a lamb should be eating. It depends on the lamb's age, weight, condition, breed, and growth rate. That is why it is so important to pay attention to how much your lamb is consuming at each feeding. If it is possible, weight your lamb weekly and chart its growth. If it is 45 days until the fair and your lamb weighs 65 lbs., it will have to gain 1 lb./day to be 110 lbs. Not all lambs will be 110 lbs. when they are ready for market. It is important that your lamb is not too thin or too fat and it weighs at least 80 lbs. at the fair. By weighing your lamb you will know how fast it is growing and be able to estimate how much it will weigh by the

fair. The bottom line is, if you want your lamb to grow you must feed it. At the same time, you do not want your lamb to get fat. Remember never to make quick changes in your lamb's diet (both amount and type).

Commercially available feeds, which are formulated for sheep are satisfactory, provided they contain at least 14% crude protein and no non-protein nitrogen sources. Rations containing greater than 18% crude protein are a waste, because they are expensive and the excess nitrogen will ultimately be excreted in the urine and therefore wasted.

Always make sure you keep the feed and water clean and fresh. Don't allow buckets and troughs to get dirty. Make it a point in your management to check them at each feeding.

### **E. Costs:**

Feeder lambs (40-70 lbs.) are worth more per pound than fat (ready-to-market) lambs. This is because most of the risk in raising lamb occurs in the early part of a lamb's life. Getting a lamb from 50 lbs. to 125 lbs. involves mostly feed costs, plus some labor. This year, expect to pay \$1.50 to \$2.00 or more per pound for your lamb, but remember that more money doesn't always mean a better lamb. Shop around to find yourself a good lamb at a reasonable price.

If you already have the buildings and fenced area in which to raise your lambs, the expenses associated with raising lambs are smaller than most other livestock projects.

May 15	<u>Lamb</u>	\$150.00
	<u>Feed</u> -for 63 days (2.5lbs grain/day), about 157 lbs. @ \$.18/lb.	\$28.26
	<u>Hay</u> -about 2 lbs./day or 126 lbs., about 4 bales	\$16.00
	<u>Misc.</u> -de-wormer, minerals, etc.	<u>\$20.00</u>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$214.26

This is just a guide and costs will vary depending on how well your animals grow, health costs, feed efficiency of that particular lamb, the weight of the lamb you buy and how much you pay for the lamb and feed. Some breeders sell lambs according to their evaluation of the quality of the lamb rather than by the pound. Some project members choose to spend \$200 or more for a lamb but this will limit the possibility of making a profit with the project. More than the price, what is important is that you get a good, quality lamb that will grow economically, is of good meat type and that you learn from the experience.



**F. Showing:**

Market lambs will be weighed prior to the show. Classes will be divided based on weight. All animals will be weighed on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 8:00 am in the Kent Building. You are permitted to show one market lamb per class, two market lambs total. A mandatory barn meeting follows weigh in on Saturday July 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30 am in the Kent Building. Delaware State Fair rules require that all market lambs must be completely slick sheared within 10 days of the show. Slick sheared animals are not permitted in Fitting classes. Junior exhibitors must show their own animals in the Junior Show. There is no assistance allowed in the show ring at any time in all junior livestock classes except for assistance from a designated ring steward. There is a dress code for exhibitors showing livestock at the Delaware State Fair and in 4-H related shows. The State Fair rulebook states that showman will wear appropriate show attire.

Pants- clean, neat jeans or slacks pants (no shorts)  
Shirt- with a collar and sleeves (no T-shirts or tank tops)  
Shoes- hard soled shoes or boots (no sneakers or sandals)

This type of attire will tell those watching the show that we take pride in our projects and it will keep members from unnecessary injury.

**G. Junior Livestock Auction:**

Every year a limited number of market lambs are selected by the market lamb show judge to participate in the Livestock Extravaganza and the Junior Livestock Auction. Exhibitors of the Champion and Reserve Champion Market Lambs are strongly encouraged to sell their animals in the auction. Each exhibitor is limited to a maximum of three animals across all livestock species with no more than two animals entered per species. Each individual selling an animal is strongly encouraged to contact a minimum of three potential buyers who will come to the fair and bid on their animals. The Fair is not responsible for providing buyers for the exhibitors.



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