

The Northwest Experiment Station *News*

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Fall vs. Winter Shearing Of Ewes

by Harvey Windels

A study was initiated in the fall of 1983 to determine the effect of fall shearing (October 25) versus midwinter (January 20) shearing on the ability of ewes of three different breed groups to produce and rear two or more lambs per ewe. The breed groups used were Targhee, Finn x Targhee, and $\frac{1}{2}$ Suffolk- $\frac{1}{4}$ -Finn- $\frac{1}{4}$ Targhee. Eighty ewes of each breed group were bred to begin lambing February 10 and were fed in six separate lots except for breeding and location. All ewes were lambing in the lambing barn and moved to outside shelters when their lambs were 7-8 days old. Finn x Targhee and $\frac{1}{2}$ Suffolk ewes were bred to Suffolk rams and Targhee ewes were bred to Targhee or Finn rams.

The main objective of the study was to determine if the midwinter shorn ewes were subjected to sufficient cold stress during late gestation and early lactation to reduce their ability to produce milk. It was anticipated that the fall shorn ewes would be subjected to cold stress during early and midgestation when energy requirement was relatively low.

Results (average of three years) show that the lambs born and lambs weaned per ewe exposed were 2.33 and 1.90 respectively, for fall shorn ewes and 2.19 and 1.91 respectively, for midwinter shorn ewes. Lambs in excess of what a ewe could raise were removed and sold as bottle lambs or grafted onto other ewes. Finn x Targhee ewes dropped 2.74 and weaned 1.92 lambs per ewe exposed compared to 2.29 dropped and 2.08 weaned for $\frac{1}{2}$ Suffolk ewes and 1.80 dropped and 1.70 weaned for Targhee ewes. Fifty-six day weaning weights of lambs from $\frac{1}{2}$ Finn, $\frac{1}{2}$ Suffolk and Targhee ewes were 48, 51 and 47lb., respectively. Birth and weaning weights were not significantly influenced by the time of shearing.

During the first two years of the study, fall and winter shorn ewes were fed the same; however the fall shorn ewes gained less during gestation and by the

third breeding weighed about 7 lbs less. Thus, alfalfa haylage dry matter was increased from 3 lb/head/day to 4 lbs for fall shorn ewes during the third gestation.

Health data showed that there was a trend toward more abnormal delivery presentations in fall shorn ewes which indicated that shearing shortly before winter lambing did not contribute to abnormal presentations as was suspected. Number of lambs born dead was also similar between the two groups. Essentially, no difference in lamb pneumonia, coccidiosis or mortality occurred between the fall and winter shorn groups.

It appears that fall shearing will result in equal performance of ewes and can be used as an alternative to midwinter shearing, however, it has several dis-

advantages. The ewes apparently will need more feed during gestation and will require more bedding because they are cold and spend most of the time in the shelters. Their wool is about one-inch long at lambing which is nearly too long for nursing ease and also results in higher barn moisture.

The **Annual Sheep Day** will be held at the Northwest Experiment Station on Thursday, October 16 beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Ag Research Center Auditorium. Topics that will be discussed are pasture studies, lasalocid for sheep, the potential of Angora goat production, progress and results of the placement ewe lamb trial and corn vs. barley for feedlot lambs and internal parasite control. Everyone interested in sheep is invited to attend.



Dr. Harvey Windels, animal scientist, NW Exp. Station, Crookston, checks on the progress of lambs born in February to the most productive ewe on record here. This ewe of $\frac{1}{2}$ Finn and $\frac{1}{2}$ Targhee bloodlines has held up well for 11 years producing 44 lambs. She had 6 lambs as a four-year old, quads for a couple of years, then a set of five, more quads and five again in 1986. Part of the Experiment Station project is to pursue management practices which can maintain greater production in a sheep flock.

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Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

Smith's Comments



Another growing season is history. Small grain yields were highly erratic, being effected by excess water, drought, disease and insects. Wheat yields on the Station ranged from 39-68 bu/acre with an overall average yield of 59 bu/acre. Test weight and protein were above average in the wheat planted in early April, but dropped substantially due to scab, a fungal disease, in the wheat seeded in May. Barley yields ranged from 64-97 bu/acre. Thrips, an insect I have not encountered in my years here, had a severe effect on the early seeded barley in my opinion. I'm sure this insect will be discussed at many extension meetings this winter.

Corn and sugarbeet harvest are just beginning. Early indications are that the corn yields will be excellent, probably higher than ever experienced by the Station, and sugarbeet yield and quality

will be above average.

The variety of building and repair projects that have made getting around the Station next to impossible this summer are nearing completion. By November 1 the dairy facility, repairs to the Ag Research Center and the machinery storage building will be completed, or so I'm told. Chancellor Sargeant has refused to make a prediction on when the road in front of the Ag Research Center will be useable, however.

Russell Severson, associate scientist on the soils research project for the past 13½ years has resigned effective October 17. Russ has accepted a position with the West Polk County Extension Service. The staff of the Station thank him for the years of dedicated service and wish him well in his new position.

B.E. (Bernie) Youngquist, professor emeritus and former superintendent (1956-83), will be leaving the Crookston area and moving into a new townhouse located near the St. Paul campus in mid October. I will miss Bernie's smiling face as he has provided me with excellent counsel during the past three years. Bernie will still find occasion to visit the area as many organizations in northwest Minnesota have failed to find a person of his caliber to replace him on a number of committees. He also has a deer hunting shack near Grygla.

Have a safe and dry harvest.

Calendar of Events

Beef Cattlemen's Institute
October 30

Torch & Shield Banquet
November 21

Beef Cattle Day
December 10

- 1987 -

Dairy Day
January 13

Ag - Arama
January 22 & 23

Northern RRV
Sugarbeet Meeting
Grafton - January 27

Mid - RRV
Sugarbeet Meeting
Grand Forks - January 28

Red River Valley
Winter Shows
February 13-19

International Sugarbeet
Growers Institute
March 18 & 19

Elvin Moran Retires From NWES After 39 Years

Elvin Moran, farm foreman, retired on August 31, with 39 years of service to the former Northwest School and the Northwest Experiment Station. Elvin worked on the farm crew for three superintendents-Tom McCall, Bernie Youngquist and Larry Smith. Moran saw many changes during his tenure including the change from horsepower to small two-wheel drive tractors to large horsepower 4-wheel drive tractors.

Elvin and his wife, Rose, are pictured at the retirement coffee that was held in their honor in late August. Elvin's future plans are to spend the winter months in a warmer climate and to see if the fish are still biting in Minnesota lakes in the summer.

Best wishes to Elvin and Rose on their retirement.



Personnel Changes At NWES

The summer of 1986 has brought many personnel changes at the Northwest Experiment Station. Among those who have resigned, changed positions or been hired are Elvin Moran, Janet Solheim, Donna Nabben, and Janet Sannes.

Janet Solheim started with the University in 1976, so she is not a newcomer, but she has transferred to the position of research staff secretary. Janet will be working for 5¼ research staff and 4 technicians. She will be responsible for producing the typed research reports for the research staff and will also be the receptionist for the Station.

Solheim is chairman of the Hafslo Chapel Project and is actively engaged in raising funds to help renovate the building. She is married to Harvey Solheim and they are the parents of three children; Debbie, a student at NDSU; Kathy, a graduate of NDSU; David, who is self-employed. Janet is a member of the Onstad Homemakers Club and Trinity Lutheran Church ALCW. She enjoys attending classes at UMC whenever her work schedule permits.

The staff of the Northwest Experiment Station wish Janet the best of luck in her new position as staff secretary.



Donna Nabben joined the research staff at the Northwest Experiment Station in late May, 1986 as a senior laboratory technician. She will be assisting plant pathologist, Dr. Carol E. Windels, in sugarbeet research on the soilborne fungi causing seedling and root diseases. The position is funded by the Sugarbeet Research and Education Board of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Nabben grew up on a farm near Fordville, North Dakota, and earned a 2-year degree in Biological Laboratory Technology from the University of Minnesota, Crookston in 1984 and graduated from North Dakota State University with a B.S. degree in Plant Pathology in 1986. While a student, Donna gained many experiences through various jobs including Valley Soil Testing; agronomy wheat research for Pioneer Hybrid; entomology research in the USDA Radiation Lab, Fargo; and the Plant Pest Diagnostic Lab at NDSU.

Welcome to the Northwest Experiment Station, Donna!

Janet Sannes is the newest member of the Northwest Experiment Station staff, beginning September 22. Janet, a graduate of UMC, was previously employed at the Technical College in the Media Resources Department.

As a senior accounts assistant, she will be working with Sady Newell in the accounting department seeing that the bills are paid and that the inventories are kept up to date. Her new office is located on the second floor of the Ag Research Center and her phone is ext. 470.

Janet is married to Les Sannes and they raise beef cattle on a farm northeast of Crookston. Janet says she likes to help around the farm and her hobbies are horseback riding, biking, swimming and most any other outdoor activity. Janet and Les are the parents of Jennifer, age 5 and Sarah, almost 2.

The staff of the Northwest Experiment Station welcomes Janet to her new position!





Dr. Michael Boehlje To Address Cattlemen

Dr. Micheal Boehlje, Head of the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, will be the main speaker at the 24th Annual Beef Cattlemen's Institute. Boehlje will speak on agriculture finance and opportunities available in the future. The Institute will be held at the Red River Valley Winter Shows Building in Crookston, Thursday, October 30, 1986, with registration beginning at 4 p.m.

The program will also feature locally-grown feeder cattle. Representatives of Central-Farmers Union Marketing Association will discuss availability, grades and price of feeder cattle. Harlan Hughes, extension livestock specialist, NDSU, will do the feedlot commentary, including possible profit margins for various weights and grades.

Computers will be available for those interested in analyzing cash flows for feeder operations. These can be personalized for an individual feedlot.

Refreshments will be provided courtesy of local feed companies. Tickets for the 6 p.m. beef dinner are available from cooperating banks or may be purchased at the door.

Sponsors of the Institute include: Extension Service in Minnesota and North Dakota, UMC Agriculture Division, Northwest Experiment Station, Northwest Stockmen's Association, Central-Farmers Union Livestock Marketing Association, and the Red River Valley Winter Shows.

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NORTHWEST EXPERIMENT STATION
Crookston, MN 56716

Patti Malme, Associate Editor

24TH ANNUAL BEEF CATTLEMEN'S INSTITUTE

RED RIVER VALLEY WINTER SHOWS ARENA
CROOKSTON, MINNESOTA
THURSDAY - OCTOBER 30, 1986

MODERATOR: John Kringler
Trail County Agent - Hillsboro, North Dakota

THEME

'IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?'

- 4:00 P.M.** Registration and Refreshments
Sponsored by Area Feed Companies
View Cattle (Pens of Cattle from Cattle Producers - NW Stockmen's Association)
- 4:45 P.M.** **Cattle Evaluation**
Carl Spong, Moderator
Lee Ebsen, Bert Hagel, Dan Treangen, Roy Ernst -
Central-Farmers Union Livestock Marketing Assoc.
- Feedlot Commentary**
Professor Harlan Hughes
Extension Livestock Specialist - NDSU
- 6:00 P.M.** **Beef Dinner**
Sponsored by Cooperating Banks - (pick up tickets from your lending agency)
Tickets Also Available at the Door
- 7:00 P.M.** **IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?**
Dr. Michael Boehlje
Dr. Boehlje is a student of Ag Finance and the farm economy. He will bring us a unique insight to the farm financial situation.

INSTITUTE SPONSORED BY: Minnesota Extension Service, North Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, Northwest Experiment Station, Northwest Stockmen's Association, Central Farmers Union Livestock Marketing Association, University of Minnesota-Crookston Agriculture Division and Red River Valley Winter Shows Board of Managers.

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