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Your Sheep Business

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After six weeks devoted to demonstrations and discussions relating to sheep management over the state, we have returned to the office. These six weeks in the sheep-raising counties give us a pretty good picture of the difficulties being encountered by sheepmen. These observations lead to the old conclusion that parasites remain one of the biggest problems of sheep raising and that if parasites are kept under control and the flock given even ordinary management, sheep raising can be a very profitable livestock enterprise in these times. At present lambs are high and any carelessness should be avoided which prevents a top lamb from reaching the market. These days sheep raisers can well afford to incur a little expense in controlling parasites. Parasite losses in this state were in 1941 the largest on record. More lambs reached the market as feeders last fall and death losses were higher. These all indicate an increase in parasitic infestation. So much of this kind of trouble was reported in the Red River Valley that Dr. Billings and Dr. Pomeroy of University Farm made a week's trip through that area to determine the causes. From what they were able to observe, the troubles were largely parasites.

Now is the time to do something about this. If the flock has not already been treated, do it now. If it has been treated, it is advisable to treat again within three weeks after the first. It would be good management to treat every month during the pasture season. This is particularly true on those farms where there was considerable trouble last year. We think that the copper sulphate-nicotine sulphate drench will do the job. The directions for using this are contained in Extension Folder 42, which can be had at the county agent's office, or by writing directly to the Bulletin Room, University Farm, St. Paul. This treatment is usually effective and at the same time low in cost. If the lambs do not respond to this treatment, then phenothiazine might be tried. You will find now that the drugstores are beginning to keep this in stock and the price is down somewhat, although the cost is still higher than that for copper sulphate-nicotine sulphate.

Parasites can put men out of the sheep business in a hurry. They are forced out by unthrifty lambs and death losses. This can all be avoided by treating in time. If your lambs are thrifty now, keep them that way? It is better to prevent them from becoming contaminated than try to bring them back.

We wrote once before about supplementary pasture, - a pasture that will supply feed needed during July and August when other pastures are short. We said that second crop of alfalfa is an excellent pasture. If this is not available, and rape or Sudan has not been provided for, lambs are pretty apt to be short of feed the last of July and August when regular pastures are short. There is another way to avoid this, feed grain during that period. Just as soon as the pastures begin to get a little scarce, start the grain. Oats is good but oats and corn or barley, half and half, is better. It will prevent lambs from going back in condition and weight, and keep them gaining. They will be ready for market a lot earlier than otherwise with a very much larger percentage of them in condition to top the market.