Your Sheep Business

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Internal parasites in sheep are the cause of losses that are getting heavier each year. What are you doing to control them in your flock? Have you drenched your flock this year? If not, now is the time to do it, or when the lambs reach 30 or 40 pounds in weight. Then if they still do not make the gains they should under good feed conditions, drench again every three weeks until they do show thrift. Extension Folder 42, "Stomach Worms in Sheep", obtainable from the Bulletin Room, University Farm, or at your county agent's office, describes this treatment fully. Follow the directions carefully, both as to starving the sheep before drenching and proper mixing of the bluestone and Black Leaf 40 solution. Do not underdose. Use the one recommended in the folder. A slight overdose is a great deal better than an underdose.

A pasture rotation effectively supplements drenching in the control of worms. Every sheepman should have two pastures and should shift his sheep from one to the other regularly every two to three weeks during the pasture season. This does two things: It reduces materially the number of worms picked up by the sheep; and increases considerably the yield of grass from the pastures.

It is hoped that every sheep raiser in the state will eventually put his flock on a planned system of drenching and pasture rotation, if only for the purpose of controlling parasites. In regard to drenching, the minimum would consist of one treatment for the breeding flock in the fall as they go on winter feed, and a second treatment for the entire flock when the lambs weigh 30 to 40 pounds. Further drenching then would depend upon the need as indicated by the thrift of the lambs.

MARKETING YOUR LAMBS. Many producers have lambs now that are approaching four months of age. If they have had plenty of feed and are free from parasites, these lambs carry good weight. If the feed supply is ample, they are going to approach the weight and market conditions that will satisfy the packer within a month. Such lambs should be watched closely and when they do get up to a desirable weight,- say 85 pounds, and are in top condition, they should be sold. In other words, the crop should be topped off, and those that are ready should be sold. Otherwise if pastures fail, these lambs will go down in condition and it would be some time before they would again be ready to sell.

If the pasture is not going to be sufficient for the entire flock but will take care of the lambs at weaning age, then it is advisable to wean the lambs, give them the good pasture, and put the ewes on pasture where the picking is more scarce. After lambs are weaned, ewes can be used to clean up the waste feed,- weedy spots and places like that. If the feed supply there is not too abundant, it will be good for the ewes as it will keep them from getting overfat; in fact, I prefer to see ewes a little on the thin order during the middle and late summer, and even early fall, as there is always danger, where the feed supply is too good, of some of these ewes putting on so much condition that they may not breed. By supplying a little extra feed just before breeding, the ewes can easily be brought back to the condition of thrift we want at that time.

During the pasture season, particularly when the lambs are old enough to be weaned, it is important to see that they are not slighted on feed. Keeping lambs supplied with ample feed will put them on the market earlier, and bring them off grass in top market condition and size, without having to feed grain in the fall in order to get them fat enough for the top market.

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