Ram Breeding Soundness

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Host/Moderator: Jay Parsons
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Ram Breeding Soundness Evaluation (RBSE)

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WHY DO BREEDING SOUNDNESS?
1. RAM UTILIZATION
2. INCREASE TWINNING
3. TIGHTEN YOUR LAMBING PERIOD
Why is ram selection so important?
The ram contributes over 80% of the genetic change to the flock

Heritability Traits
• Scrotal Cir. 35%
• 120 day wt. 30%
• Retail cuts 45%
• Fiber Dia. 40%
• Staple length 55%
A Ram Breeding Soundness Examination (RBSE) includes a total physical examination with an emphasis on the reproductive tract.

A ram's POTENTIAL ability to impregnate a given # of ewes / defined period of time. NOT a fertility test.
Observe the animal when undisturbed...

Note social behavior

Does libido exist?

10-15% of all rams do not have any interest in ewes.

BCS 3 or 4
Identification of each individual ram is a must.
Mucous Membranes & Teeth

Pale may indicate parasitism

AGE
TESTICULAR PALPATION
Scrotal Circumference (SC)

**Satisfactory**
- Rams 6-14 mo. 30-36 cm
- Rams > 14 mo. 33-40 cm

**Exceptional**
- Rams 6-14 mo. >36 cm
- Rams > 14 mo. >40 cm

WHY THE EMPHASIS?
EXAMINE THE PENIS
Anatomy

- seminal vesicle
- ampulla
- bladder
- penis
- urethral process
- prepuce
- testis
- scrotum
- vas deferens
- head of the epididymis
- body of the epididymis
- tail of the epididymis
- prostate
- bulbo-urethral gland
- urethra
- anus
Sample is viewed under a microscope: Motility & Morphology

Normal Spermatozoa

Abnormal Spermatozoa
Results recorded
Results are discussed with the owner
This set of rams is from a sire with excellent semen quality & scrotal circumference of 46cm ... Mated to 140 ewes 95% conceived in the 1st estrus cycle
Utilizing Breeding Soundness you can increase your profit by $20-30 per ewe.

Group 1 was exposed to BSE rams.
Group 2 was exposed to rams selected by ranch standards.

Group 1 produced 17 more pounds of weaned lamb than group 2 ewes.
Ram Cost / Year

Purchase of one $800 ram
Salvage (Cull) value of $170

Depreciation (4 years) $157.50
Interest (6%) $29.10
Death Loss (5%) $24.25
Feed & Maintenance $120.00

Cost / Year $330.85
# of ewes / ram | # of lambs born / ram Assuming a 150% lamb crop | Ram cost / lamb @ $330 ram cost | Ram cost / lamb @ $355 ram cost w/ RBSE test incl.
---|---|---|---
30 | 45 | $7.33 | $7.89
50 | 75 | $4.40 | $4.73
85 | 127 | $2.50 | $2.80
202 lambs born in a 3 day period

SINGLES = 58
WEANED = 56
WEANED = 34.8 LBS

TWINS = 144
WEANED = 134
WEANED = 57.4 LBS
THE PRODUCTION IMPACT OF TWINS

58 singles vs 144 twins
Lbs marketed / single bearing ewe = 113
Lb. marketed / twin bearing ewe = 209
HOW MUCH RAM POWER??????

1:85

1410 ewes
50 non-pregnant (3.5%)
310 singles (21.5%)
1050 multiples (75%)

90% + pregnant 1st 18 days
Average Weaning wt of a single = 113 lbs

Average combine wt. of twins = 209 lbs
310 singles @ 113 # = 35,030 # X $1.60 = $56,048
1050 with twins @ 209 # = 219,450 # X $1.60 = $351,120

Open ewes grossed $0/hd

Single bearing ewes grossed $180.80 / hd
Twin bearing ewes grossed $334.40 / hd
DO LIST

• Select rams with EXCELLENT SEMEN QUALITY & LARGE SCROTAL CIRCUMFERENCE
• Select HEALTHY rams
• Select for GENETIC SUPERIORITY
• Purchase only B.OVIS & OPP NEGATIVE rams
• Use RR or QR rams
• Keep RAM LAMBS & MATURE RAMS SEPARATE

TAKE CARE OF YOUR RAMS & THEY WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU
Results: It pays!

- Increased lamb crop in flock w/ tested rams:
- Economic advantage of $20-30 / ewe
- Reduced expenditure on additional ram power
- Shorter lambing season
- More lambs born early in the lambing season
- Increased size and uniformity of lamb crop
This Estonia Seed Stock producer purchased an expensive ram from Denmark. No ewe conceived. It was a good educational opportunity. Without RBSE a Single sire system is a disaster!
The two young Hallik boys and Liina watch as the microscope is being adjusted for everyone to observe why the subject had not produced any offspring. Note the beautiful flowers against the stone wall of the barn. The wood siding is where the house is separated from the barn.
Back to Denmark!
Students training on the solar powered microscope inside a GER
Ram Breeding
Soundness

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