Seasonality of the US Lamb Industry

Presenter:
Reid Redden, PhD
Sheep and Goat Specialist
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Host/Moderator: Jay Parsons
August 21, 2018

This webinar is made possible with funding support from the Let’s Grow Committee of the American Sheep Industry Association.
Outline

• Background
• Seasonality of Supply
  — Traditional
  — Non-Traditional
• Demand
  — Traditional
  — Non-Traditional
• Market Incentives
• Aseasonal Sheep Breeding
• Conclusion
Background

• Commissioned by US Lamb Industry Roundtable
• Grant Support by American Lamb Board
• Authors
  – Dr. Reid Redden, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
  – Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, Michigan State Extension
  – Cody Hiemke, Niman Ranch & Mapleton Mynd
  – Erica Sanko, California Wool Growers
• Final Publishing
  – Demeter Communications
Seasonality of US Lambing

1. Short-Day Breeders

2. Feed Resource Availability

3. Avoid Harsh Weather Conditions
Seasonality of Supply

Birth and Harvest for US Lambs

- Heavy Lamb (145 lb) - Traditional Supply
- Light Lamb (65 lb) - Non-Traditional Supply

Source: USDA APHIS & NASS
Traditional Lamb Consumer
Nontraditional Lamb Consumers

• Highly Diverse Group of Consumers
  – Mostly, ....
    • Recent immigrants from less developed countries
    • Muslim Faith
    • Sheep and Goat Meat are common proteins in diet
    • Religious Events:
      – Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan) & Eid al-Adha (Sacrifice Feast)
      – Islamic Calendar
  
• Direct to Consumer
  • Farmer Market
  • Local Marketing
Carcass Weight

Monthly Average Dressed Weight of US Sheep and Lambs

Source: USDA NASS
Carcass Weight

Source: USDA APHIS & NASS
Traditional Slaughter Lamb Market 2014-2017
145 Lbs. Average Live Weight

Source: LMIC
Nontraditional Lamb Slaughter 2010-2016 by Price and Volume
68 Lb. Average Live Weight

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension and Producers Livestock Auction, San Angelo, TX
Imports

![Bar graph showing domestic and imported lamb supply from 2010 to 2016. The graph indicates that the supply of imported lamb was generally higher than domestic lamb supply during this period.](image)

*Source: USDA ERS*
Seasonality of Imports

Source: USDA ERS
Retail Sales

Source: Fresh Look, July 9, 2017
Retail Sales
Retail Sales

Loin Segment Pounds Year to Year

Ground Segment Pounds Year to Year
Frozen Product

• Majority of foodservice & retail customers are averse to buying frozen lamb!!!
  – Beef, Pork, and Poultry are available fresh
  – Shanks & Neck for cold-weather demand
  – Legs are frozen to prepare for holidays

• Direct Marketers
  – Most product is frozen after processing
Market Incentives

- Seasonal Price
- Packer Techniques to Cover Demand
  - Seasonal Premiums on Contracts
  - Seasonal “no-less-than-price” Contracts
  - Market ewe lambs early
  - Background cross-bred wethers
Techniques to Alter Lambing Season

- Plane of Nutrition
- Ram Effect + Higher Ram Coverage
- Exogenous Hormones
- Light Therapy
- Genetics
Technologies Needed to Improve Aseasonal Lamb Production

- Aseasonal Breeding is Consistently, Inconsistent
- Better genetic prediction of aseasonal lambing
  - Quantitative
  - Molecular
- Better understanding of strategic nutritional management
- Exogenous hormones and light therapy technologies could be improved upon
Summary

- Seasonality of Lambing Creates a Supply Issue
- No Single Solution
- Requires Slight Adjustments in Various Sectors
  - Aseasonal Lambing
  - Adjusting Rate of Gain
  - Forward Contracts/Slotting

White Paper

http://lambresourcecenter.com/

Source: USDA APHIS & NASS
Questions