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# **SHEEP IQ**

**Turning Knowledge Into Productivity & Growth**

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*Presented by ASI & ALB*

# YOUR TRUSTED HUB FOR PRACTICAL SHEEP MANAGEMENT EDUCATION.

Presented by



AMERICAN SHEEP INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
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## Featured Articles

ALB News

**NEW DISCOVERIES IN SHEEP GENETICS OPEN  
DOORS TO INCREASED GROWTH & PRODUCTIVITY**

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ASI News

**DENVER ANNOUNCED AS HOST CITY FOR  
REGIONAL RANCHER CONFERENCE**

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Extension Specialists

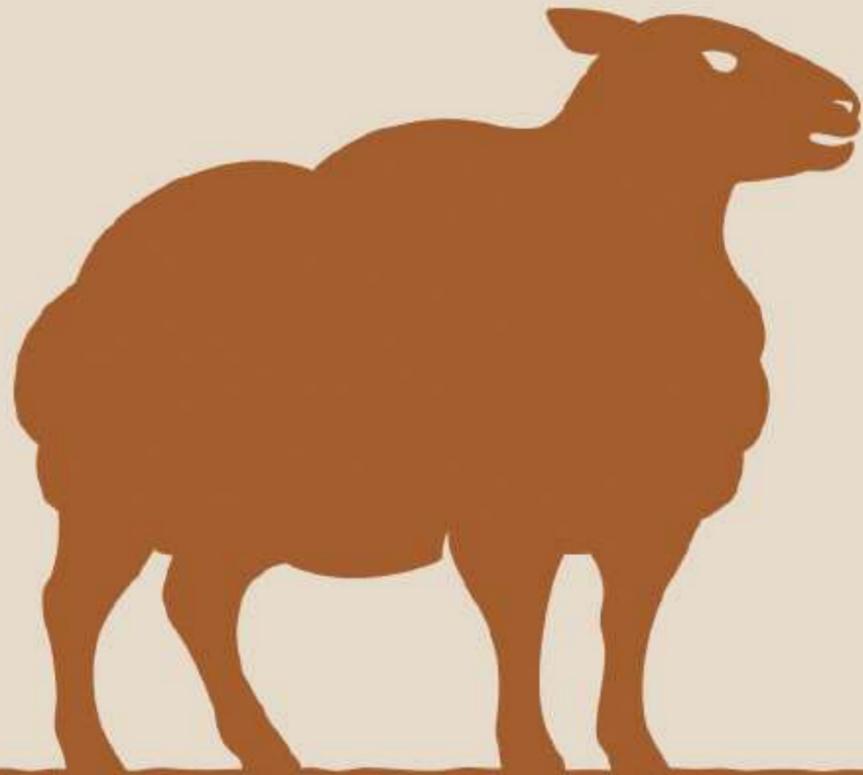
**PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT:  
THEO JOHNSON**

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## **FIND WHAT YOU NEED – FAST.**

Sheep IQ brings trusted education, tools, and expert guidance together in one easy place. These links help you start with the resources that support better management, stronger flocks and productive operations.



### **Featured Resources**

**NEW PRODUCER RESOURCES** →

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**PARASITE CONTROL** →

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**LAMBING & REPRODUCTION** →

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**OPTIMAL NUTRITION** →

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**GENETIC SELECTION** →

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**EVENTS & WORKSHOPS** →

# *S H E E P I Q W E B S I T E*

## *C O N T E N T*

- Updated Best Practices Guides – Increasing Your Lamb Crop
  - Fact sheets and videos
  - Emission Calculator and Mitigation Strategies
- Producer Profiles – Success Stories (implementing best management practices)
  - Extension Resources and Events
  - ASI Resources
  - Handbooks – Sheep Production and Targeted Grazing
    - Sheep Care Resources
    - Quality Assurance programs



# 12 BEST PRACTICES

- Breeding Ewe Lambs at 7-9 Months
- Select for Prolific Genetics
- Use Crossbreeding
- Culling Underperforming Ewes
- Reduce Lamb Loss
- Test for Pregnancy Status
- Disease Prevention and Treatment
- Match Reproduction to Management
- Testing Rams for Breeding Soundness
- Manage for Seasonal Changes in Reproduction
- Accelerated Lambing Cycles
- Optimal Nutrition



## Increasing Your Lamb Crop Series Optimal Nutrition

### Introduction

Sheep are seasonal breeders with the greatest ovulation rates occurring during the middle portion of the breeding season. Successful reproduction of the ewe requires that she has a normal estrous cycle, ovulates one to multiple eggs, is mated by a fertile ram, and then maintains the fertilized embryos until she delivers healthy, vigorous lambs. This is a very complex reproductive process that becomes more challenging once flocks begin to increase productivity to greater levels. Nutrition plays a critical role in the successful reproductive rates that are accomplished in ewe flocks. Figure 1 shows protein and energy changes through the various production phases. Ewes cannot make these nutrient modifications on their own; it is up to the manager to provide rations that meet animals' needs.

Sheep are **seasonal breeders** with the highest ovulation rates occurring during the middle portion of the breeding season. Successful reproduction of the ewe requires that she has a normal estrous cycle, ovulates one to four eggs, is mated by a fertile ram, and then maintains the fertilized embryos until she delivers healthy, vigorous lambs.

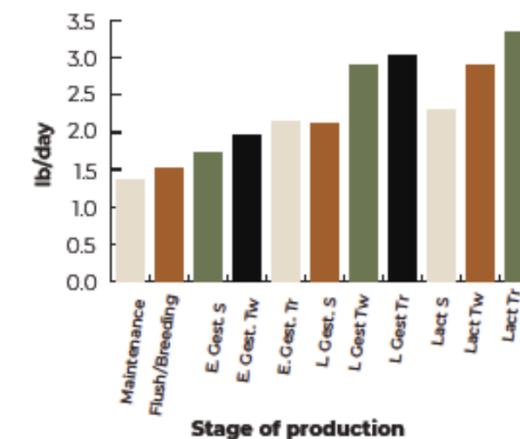
### INCREASING WEIGHT, IMPROVING BODY CONDITION

Ewes require energy as the largest proportion of their diet. Sheep with a shortage of energy intake will lose weight. This may happen with un-supplemented ewes grazing native range and fed low quality forages. The ewes cannot consume and absorb adequate amounts of nutrients due to low availability of quality forage, or slow rate of digestion. Ewes will respond to improved nutrition by gaining weight and/or body condition score (BCS). The process of providing this improved nutrition prior to and through breeding season is commonly referred to as flushing.

The process of providing this improved nutrition prior to and through the breeding season is commonly referred to as flushing. Flushing works best on ewes that are slightly under conditioned or in a body condition score (BCS) less than 3 (BCS < 3, on a scale of 1-5, in which 1 is extremely thin and 5 is extremely fat). Flushing can increase the number of lambs born by 10 to 30%. Ewes that are already in above average body condition score (BCS ≥ 3) do not respond as well to flushing. Figure 2 demonstrates the response in terms of number of lambs born with improved ewe body condition score.

Flushing can be accomplished by supplemental feeding of concentrates, which is the standard practice for most farm flock operations. The amount of supplemental grain is dependent on the size of the ewes and the quantity and quality of the forage

**Energy and Protein Requirements by stage and level of production for 150-pound ewes**



**Figure 1.** Protein and energy requirement by stage of production. (TDN is total digestible nutrients)

NRC (2007). National Research Council. 2007. Nutrient Requirements of Small Ruminants: Sheep, Goats, Cervids, and New World Camelids. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/11654>; but some values don't look accurate. Please inform the source.

# *BEST PRACTICES VIDEOS*



Optimizing accelerated lambing systems to produce a consistent year-round supply of quality lambs.

Richard Ehrhardt  
Senior Extension Specialist-Small Ruminants  
Michigan State University

# PRODUCER FEATURES



**Darnell Dugger** (AL) Regenerative ag

**Matt Goble** (UT) grazing and operation adaptability in traditional sheep environment

**Gavin Blonquist** (UT) Terminal sires and practical use of NSIP in range rams

**Eric Bronson** (VA) Solar, low input annual lambing system

**Morgan Hodges** (TX) Growing an operation, range operation in TX highlighting emerging growth

**Kristen Bieber** (MT) Genetics, purebred/NSIP flock

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*W O R K S H O P S*

**Texas - March**

**Florida - June**

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**Virginia - October**

**Sheep IQ/Productivity Workshops**

**Missouri - August**

**West Virginia - October**

# *S H E E P I Q P O D C A S T*



## **The Grazing Sheep Podcast**

Big Tom Perkins and Camren Maierle

★ 5.0 (35) · EDUCATION · UPDATED DAILY

A podcast with Big Tom Perkins and Dr. Camren Maierle. We are just two guys who raise Katahdin sheep and love to talk about anything that has to do with raising sheep. We hope that you will find this ... [MORE](#)

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