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# The Sheep Man's Calendar

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service

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## THE SHEEP MAN'S CALENDAR

A sheep is fundamentally a pasture animal. The better the pastures, usually the more successful the sheep enterprise.

A sheep man's aim should be to produce market topping lambs weighing from 80 to 100 pounds at 4 to 5 months of age using a maximum of pasture and roughage and a minimum of grain.

### Management Suggestions

#### Fall

1. Sell all lambs weighing 80 to 100 pounds, except those being saved for breeding purposes, by August 1. Wean the late, small lambs. Shear these small lambs, treat for internal parasites and fatten them to the heaviest acceptable market weights.

2. Tag ewes, trim their feet, shear their heads if necessary and put the over-fat ewes on short pasture. Give the ewes a rest and start them out at the breeding season in a similar condition.

3. Drench the ewes a month before the ram is turned with them or wait until after they are bred.

4. Select rams that are vigorous and heavily muscled. Shear them before September 1. Trim their feet. Do everything to make them as vigorous as possible during the breeding season. They should not be over-fat.

5. Ewes should be bred from September 1 to November 15 for January, February and March lambs.

6. Watch the ewes. If they are not s. tled with lamb in 60 days, obtain additional rams.

7. A good mineral mixture consists of two parts special steamed bone meal to one part of trace mineral salt. Extra salt should be provided. This should be used the year around.

8. Seed 1 1/2 to 2 bushels of balbo rye in legume sod without working the ground during August or early in September. This is a good time to top dress the pastures with commercial fertilizer.

#### Winter

1. Provide as much good winter pasture as possible. Balbo rye sown during August or early in September or bluegrass that has not been pastured during the summer and fall is very good.

2. Keep the ewes outside or in open sheds. They require plenty of fresh air.

3. Supplement winter pasture with good quality legume hay.

4. Feed 1/2 to 1 pound of grain per ewe per day for the last 6 weeks before the lambs are born.

5. Ewes should gain from 25 to 35 pounds during the gestation period.

6. Keep the rams away from the ewes except during the breeding season.

#### Spring

1. Try to save every lamb. Lambing pens, plenty of bedding and warm quarters in a clean barn are a big help.

2. Tag the ewes before lambing. Shear a part of the belly, flanks, between the hind legs and over the dock before the lambs are born. Another plan is to shear the ewes before lambing if shelter is adequate.

3. When the lambs are a few days old and able to follow their mothers, increase the feed to provide more milk to produce fatter lambs.

4. Dock and castrate lambs when they are from 3 to 14 days old.

5. Put the ewes and their lambs on the first early green pasture.

6. Shear before corn planting time.

7. Inspect and trim every ewe's feet each spring and fall.

8. Drench the ewes before turning them to pasture.

#### Summer

1. Mixed legume pastures that are heavily fertilized enable ewes to milk heavily. Plenty of milk makes lambs fat.

2. Dip or spray the flock to control external parasites.

3. Provide fresh water in the pasture at all times.

4. Sell fat lambs weighing 80 to 100 pounds directly from their mothers.

5. Obtain good pure bred rams early in the season before they are all sorted over. One should be provided for each 30 to 40 ewes. It is a good plan to have an extra ram or two for insurance.

6. Sell old or poor milking ewes.

7. Obtain good heavy Northwest ewe lambs or yearlings or select the best early, fast growing ewe lambs for replacement in the ewe flock. Do not keep late, slow growing, cull ewe lambs for replacement purposes.