Greetings Everyone,

By the time you receive this newsletter August will be halfway behind us and about another 30 days of summer type weather. I hope you have accumulated whatever hay is needed for winter feeding, and forages are being stockpiled for fall into winter grazing. As many of you are probably aware summer prices for prime or selection one slaughter goats and cattle have held around two dollars per pound or higher, and prices for same quality of sheep have hovered around $1.50/lb. Now is the time to plan for establishing forages (grasses & legumes) that will allow for winter and early spring grazing. Winter wheat, rye, turnips, chicory, and etc. are some options, seed prices and practices for establishment are always factors of practicality.

For those of you who enjoy researching all your forage options on the internet I encourage you to visit ACES Alabama Forages website at http://www.aces.edu/anr/forages/Species/Grasses/index.php. That page provides an extensive list of grasses with links to information cards with detailed information. Then look at the box on the left-hand side and select the drop-down menus from Forage Species with legumes and their information cards, and Forage Management regarding establishment, fertilization, pest management, livestock, and hay. This will allow you to explore all your options and make an informed decision on establishment and management.

In this newsletter you will find: (1) Points to Ponder, a section that intends to get you thinking about alternatives, strategies, and etc. (2) Other Information – relevant updates from other agencies, organizations, or institutions. (3) Upcoming Events – workshops, field days, and conferences that may be of relevant interest or benefit. (4) Scrapie News – New opportunities. (5) Regional Market Report – Tennessee Sheep and Goat Market Report gives you an idea what fair market prices could be for this region.

I hope the information in this newsletter provides strategies to becoming better managers, producers, and marketing experts. If you know of someone who would benefit from this newsletter please share it with them and encourage them to contact my office to subscribe. I appreciate your support and participation in Extension events. Wishing you happy and successful farming!

Sincerely,

Robert Spencer
Urban Regional Extension Specialist
What’s In Your Garden?
If you enjoy vegetable production and think you might also enjoy raising chickens, cattle, goats, or sheep, you should consider integrating vegetable and livestock production to diversify your farm operation. It does not matter whether you have small garden plots or large vegetable fields, using livestock to clean up old vegetation with poultry or ruminants has great potential from late fall through late winter as long as you have proper fencing and housing for controlled grazing as needed.

Advantages to integrating vegetable and livestock production:
- Crop residue provides healthy nutrition for livestock
- Animals trample vegetative residue into ground, loosens top layer of soil, & add organic matter
- Value-added way to rid crop residue and vegetable discards
- Livestock manure provides natural fertilizer – N, P, K & minerals

Integrating livestock and vegetable production offers farm diversification such as:
- Year round, marketing and revenue generating opportunities
- While vegetable production and marketing tends to be seasonal, livestock production and sales can be year round
- Expands customer base, develops customer loyalty; provides one-stop shopping for vegetables, eggs, and meats
- Both can be all-natural or organic with the proper management strategies
- Opportunities with silvopasture, fruit & nut trees with forages for grazing

The need for fencing is essential to making this integrated practice stress free. During time of viable vegetable production it is essential to exclude animals from the garden area, and when vegetable production season is completed it is time to allow animals access within the garden area which encourages them to clean up all dormant vegetation.

So what are fencing options?
- Permanent woven wire with appropriate posts is an expensive option
- Strands of electric wire with appropriate posts are okay but plain wire is not very visible
- Portable electric net-wire fencing is an option for smaller areas, and is portable, yet can be expensive for larger areas
- Poly, rope, and tape electric wire is affordable and with portable posts can be moved about or removed as needed.

Keep in mind containing or excluding untrained goats and sheep with a fence charger that offers 5-6 low-impedance joules will be necessary to maintain their exclusion or retention. Poultry and cattle will not require such a strong fence charger, unless it covers acres and acres.

Word of caution regarding potentially toxic vegetation and their fruits: Do not allow animals to graze plants of the Nightshade Family; such as eggplant, tomatillo, tomato, and potato (excluding sweet potato)! Rather than going through the effort to fence those plants away from livestock, harvest entire plants and remove them to a location where livestock will not be able to access.

Last few words of advice:
- Be aware of nutrient needs for livestock, and be prepared to supplement with additional grazing, hay, or grain-based feeds. Ex. Cattle & sheep need 8-12% protein, Goats need 10-16% protein, and chickens may need supplemental layer pellets for egg production, or feed for growth as meat animals. Ruminants will consume 2-3% of their body weight in forages, hay, and grain.
- Goats were meant to browse, but can be grazers; sheep and cattle are primarily grazers
- Allow livestock to graze for short time frames then relocate to pastures; keep em moving to minimize problems with gastro-intestinal parasites
- Provide free-choice minerals for livestock on a year-round basis

No matter how big or small your operation, the integration of vegetable and livestock production has a significant potential. From late fall through late winter is an ideal time frame to graze animals on
vegetable plots while allowing them to: clean up your remaining vegetation, leave behind an all-natural form of fertilizer, and expand marketing opportunities. So why not integrate some form of livestock (chickens, goats, sheep, and/or cattle) into your vegetable or fruit operation?

**Considered Hair Sheep?**

For those of you who enjoy or are considering small animal production, why not consider adding Hair Sheep to your farm? Hair sheep are small ruminants, do not require shearing, and do well grazing grasses and legumes, forbs, and browse. So why are the called “hair sheep”? Their fibrous coats are more hair-like that wool. While they can be sheared at the onset of summer, they generally do not need shearing and will shed off their minimal coats during the first half of summer. With their coats are more hair-like than wool, the fibrous materials is not worth collecting as a fiber product; they are solely intended to be meat animals. There are also many varieties and colors of hair sheep. The advantages include year-round breeding, a more vigorous small ruminant, faster grow-out rates (compared to goats), and year-round demand for the meat. Sound too good to be true, there is more to learn before making a final judgment.

Many of the hair sheep breeds originate from Africa and South America, which genetically makes them predisposed to being tolerant of heat and humidity. In all likelihood their population growth rate in the U.S. now exceeds meat goats. Based on some of the information out there, hair sheep are more parasite resistant than goats or wool sheep. However, they tend to have the same flight instinct as many forms of livestock. The variety of breeds is quite interesting, and each has unique features, colors, and advantages or disadvantages. Most common breeds and their features now found in the U.S. include:

**Barbados Blackbelly** - mature early, breed year-round, and are prolific. While lacking the growth rate and muscling of conventional sheep breeds, they have value in crossbreeding programs to improve reproductive efficiency and parasite resistance.

**Dorper** (white and black-headed) – are the fastest growing, heaviest-muscled hair sheep breed currently found in the U.S. Dorpers are best adapted to hot, dry climates, where they are suitable as either a ram or ewe breed. However, they lack the parasite resistance of other hair sheep breeds and do not shed as well as other hair sheep, but their carcasses are superior to any other breed of hair sheep.

**Katahdin** - is probably the best "all-around" hair sheep in the U.S., as it combines the best attributes of the Caribbean hair sheep with those of the traditional meat-type wooled breeds. They are valued for not requiring shearing and tail docking, as well as its parasite resistance and reproductive efficiency. Katahdin ewes cross well with other breeds to produce superior market lambs.

**Saint Croix** – are best known for their resistance to internal parasites. They are considered the most parasite resistant breed of sheep in the U.S. Like sheep with similar origins, St. Croix sheep are highly productive. They reach puberty early, breed back quickly, and produce large litters of lambs. Drawback on this breed is their small size, slow growth, and poor muscling, but in crossbreeding programs, the St. Croix has much to offer with commercial meat animals.

The previously mentioned varieties are the more common breeds known in the U.S., there are several other breed which will be discussed during another opportunity. When evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each breed make sure to consider the advantages of cross-breeding to gain hybrid vigor, improved growth rates, and advantages for terminal markets. This strategy has well-served the cattle and goat industry.

In some of these breeds you will notice parasite resistance is common factor among hair sheep, this only applies to encounters with stomach worms. Like all forms of livestock, coccidian remains a gastrointestinal parasite threat with potential to compromise the health of all young animals. Another
The advantage of hair sheep is they do not require tail-docking. Their tails are not thick and wooly as found in wool sheep, less messy.

By now you should be more familiar with hair sheep breeds and their advantages. Now take time to identify some local farms with these animals, pay a visit or three, ask questions, and decide if they might fit into your farm plan. You can find much more information on the internet, the resource for this article was found at sheepandgoat.com, more specifically http://www.sheep101.info/201/hairsheep.html. Susan Schoenian always does an outstanding job of authoring educational information relevant to the small ruminant industry.

**Small Ruminant Toolbox**
This is the ultimate technical resource for goat and sheep producers and available on a USB flash drive! The Small Ruminant Toolbox was developed in order to provide a collection of information for small ruminant producers and educators. The Small Ruminant Toolbox includes many publications, and other resources that will be helpful to small ruminant producers. These include annotated presentations from NCAT, several informative presentations shared by Susan Schoenian of University of Maryland Extension, and the entire course for the Tennessee Master Meat Goat Producer Program.

The 978 page collection is available on-line and is a very large PDF (56MB). We highly recommended you order the USB flash drive; it is very affordable at $5 each (plus $3 shipping & handling). The device is portable and all content are readily available even when you don't have internet access. Contact debbiern@ncat.org or call 1-800-346-9140 for ordering or information on bulk pricing. You can order on-line at [https://attra.ncat.org/ruminant/](https://attra.ncat.org/ruminant/).

**Soay Sheep Study Shows Parasite Load Impacts Prolificacy** American Sheep Industry Weekly August 15

In the first evidence that natural selection favors an individual’s infection tolerance, researchers from Princeton University and the University of Edinburgh have found that an animal’s ability to endure an internal parasite strongly influences its reproductive success. The researchers used 25 years of data on a population of wild Soay sheep living on the island of Hirta in northwest Scotland to assess the evolutionary importance of infection tolerance. The researchers tracked the number of offspring produced by each of nearly 2,500 sheep and found that those with the highest tolerance to infection produced the most offspring.

The researchers used 25 years of data on a population of Soay sheep living on an island in northwest Scotland to assess the evolutionary importance of infection tolerance. They first examined the relationship between each sheep’s body weight and its level of infection with nematodes, tiny parasitic worms that thrive in the gastrointestinal tract of sheep. The level of infection was determined by the number of nematode eggs per gram of the animal's feces.

While all of the animals lost weight as a result of nematode infection, the degree of weight loss varied widely: an adult female sheep with the maximum egg count of 2,000 eggs per gram of feces might lose as little as 2 percent or as much as 20 percent of her body weight. The researchers then tracked the number of offspring produced by each of nearly 2,500 sheep and found that sheep with the highest tolerance to nematode infection produced the most offspring, while sheep with lower parasite tolerance left fewer descendants.

To read the full text, go to [http://esciencenews.com/articles/2014/08/08/wild.sheep.show.benefits.putting.with.parasites](http://esciencenews.com/articles/2014/08/08/wild.sheep.show.benefits.putting.with.parasites).

**Lamb By The River**
You may have recently missed an excellent opportunity to enjoy a wonderful lamb luncheon at an affordable price! Lamb by the River was held July 24th in conjunction with the W.C. Handy Music Festival. The
The purpose of this event was to promote the consumption of locally grown lamb and other foods. The event was sponsored by Northwest Alabama RC&D Council, American Lamb Board, Meat Goat and Sheep Producers (a division of ALFA), and Food Bank of North Alabama. The menu included: Braised leg of lamb basted with merlot wine, roasted lamb loins and chops basted with dejon mustard and local fresh honey, cucumber, radish, spinach, mint salad with Creme Frachie, Greek Orzo pasta salad with fresh summer vegetables, and Alabama Squash Bake with fresh yellow squash and zucchini baked with bread crumbs, sour cream and a good cheddar cheese. Contact the NW AL RC&D Council to learn about plans for next year.

Rainwater Catchment System Installed at Extension’s Small Ruminant Outreach Center

The Alabama Mountains, Rivers, and Valleys RC&D Council recently provided and installed a rainwater catchment system on the barn of the Small Ruminant Outreach Center at the Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station in Hazel Green. This will help with future expansion on the concept of Alabama Ethnic Food Security Network, a component of this project, and utilize a natural resource that is recognized as being organic. The next phase is to plan and implement several types of gardens with specialty vegetables. The Small Ruminant Outreach Center is an Extension led project with intent to showcase best management practices and options for sheep and goat production. The rainwater catchment system provided by the Alabama Mountains, Rivers, and Valleys RC&D Council (AMRV RC&D) is considered a partnering educational component that will demonstrate sustainable agriculture.

Capturing or harvesting rainwater from roofs of buildings is a fairly simple process, it requires: a sloped roof, rainfall, some type of gutter system to catch the rainwater from the roof, a drain pipe, and a plastic vat or barrel to hold the water until needed for irrigation. One inch or rainfall will almost fill up the entire 1100 gallon tank

Robert Spencer was quoted as saying “The generosity of AMRV RC&D Council and staff is greatly appreciated; the rainwater catchment system lifts this facility to a whole new level. RC&D Councils throughout Alabama have always been great supporters of Extension, and champions for natural resources, education, and agriculture!”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sustainable Silvopasture Systems for Small Farmers: Field Day & Training Workshop

Taking place on September 5-6, 2014, held at Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Rural Training and Research Center, 575 Federation Road, Gainesville, AL 35464; near Epes, AL in Sumter County. The event is part of ongoing integrated research and Extension activities aimed at helping small farmers develop sustainable silvopasture systems for forage, meat goat, and timber production, particularly in the Southeast’s Black Belt region. The event is free, but preregistration is required. For more information contact: Dr. Maria Leite-Browning at mll0002@aces.edu or call 256-372-4954, Mr. Tommy Teacher at teachto@aces.edu or call 334-624-8710, or Mr. Willie H. Lampley at lamplwh@aces.edu or call 205-652-9501.

Livestock Medicines: Use, Storage, and Disposal Workshop

The event will be held Tuesday evening September 9 at the Lauderdale County Cooperative Extension Workshop, 802 Veterans Drive, Florence, AL from 6:00-8:00 PM with doors opening at 5:30 PM. The event is free and we request preregistration by phone or e-mail to Robert Spencer, 256-766-6223 or rds0002@aces.edu. Cattle, goat, and sheep owners are encouraged to attend this meeting to learn about fundamentals of responsible usage, storage, and disposal of livestock medicines. Local veterinarian Dr.
Joe Cobb will be the primary speaker for this informal event. A modest dinner will be provided, which is why preregistration is required; attendance is limited to forty.

**Soil Ecology Workshop: Life in the Dirt**
Event will be held Thursday evening September 18 at the Lauderdale County Cooperative Extension Workshop, 802 Veterans Drive, Florence, AL from 6:00-8:00 PM with doors opening at 5:30 PM. This workshop is designed to benefit gardeners, small-scale vegetable producers, and livestock producers relying on forages. Soil and organisms living within are vibrant living matter, chemical usage can affect these organisms/insects living above and within the soil, and we know soil fertility including pH affects productivity for gardens and pastures. This workshop is an opportunity to learn more about these concepts and relevant safe practices. The event is free and we request preregistration by phone, 256-766-6223 or e-mail Robert Spencer or Chris Becker at cmb0034@aces.edu. Light refreshments will be served, and attendance is limited to forty, which is why preregistration is required.

**Successful Aging Initiative: The Changing Face of Aging**
Taking place Friday September 12, from 8:00 AM-1:00 PM, at the Florence Lauderdale Coliseum, 902 Veterans Drive Florence, AL 35630. This is an opportunity to hear presenters talk about issues relevant to aging in today’s dynamic world, meet with exhibitors who have relevant information, and spend quality time with like minds. **The fun-filled event is free and preregistration is required.** Contact Darlene Minniefield at 256-766-6223.

**Two-Generation Farm Business Transition**
Taking place Monday October 13 & Monday October 20 from 5:30-9:00 PM at the Lauderdale County Extension Office, 802 Veterans Drive Florence, AL 35630. **Evening meal is included so preregistration is required;** contact Heidi Tilenius, 256-766-4846 or htl0005@aces. Program designed to assist farm families or individuals interested in active farm business transition and want to learn how to: assess the feasibility, develop communication and relationship skills, transfer ownership and management, and evaluate factors in transitioning the business arrangement.

**Annie’s Project: Risk Management for Farm and Ranch Women**
Classes comprised of six Tuesday evening meetings from 5:00-8:30 PM. Will be held September 23, 30, & October 7, 14, 21, and 28; at the Roundhouse/Tuscumbia Train Depot, 204 W. 5th St. Tuscumbia, AL 35674. **Registration is $50/person and must be paid by September 20.** Preferred registration online: http://www.aces.edu/anniesproject, or contact the Colbert County Extension Office at 256-386-8571, or e-mail Heidi Tilenius at hlt0005@aces.edu. Program to include: presentations and discussions with agribusiness professionals, topics of importance to your future in agribusiness, relevant resources, and networking with other agribusiness women partners.

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**SCRAPIE NEWS**

**Scrapie Surveillance Program**
The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries State Veterinarian announce the development of the FY2014/2015 Sheep and Goat Scrapie Surveillance program. This program is in partnership with the USDA/APHIS/VS and is an effort to increase the surveillance for the disease “Scrapie” in sheep and goats in Alabama.

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is in the same class of diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle and chronic wasting disease in elk and deer. There is no cure or treatment for Scrapie. Participation in the Scrapie Surveillance program can be in one of two ways:

1. First will be the opportunity for a free necropsy or post mortem examination for a sheep or goat that has died on the farm. The necropsy will be an effort to determine the cause of death by the Alabama State Diagnostic Labs. The labs are located in Auburn, Boaz, Hanceville and Elba. The animals **must**
be 14 months of age or older as evidenced by the eruption at the gum line of one or more adult incisors to qualify for the free necropsy.

2. Second, a reimbursement of $25 will be paid by direct deposit from the USDA for the cost of the proper disposal of the sheep or goat carcass that has died on the farm. Certain tissue must be collected from the head of the animal by the lab. The producer may deliver the head to one of the labs or contact a State or Federal field employee for assistance. These animals must also be 14 months of age or older as evidenced by eruption at the gum line of one or more adult incisors. Proper disposal of the carcass must be according to Alabama Department of Agriculture guidelines for disposal of livestock mortalities.

As a reminder, the Alabama Scrapie Eradication program requires that all sheep and goats be officially identified before change of ownership, prior to moving across state lines and before going to a show, fair, petting zoo or exhibition. For more information about either program, contact Sharon Fulmer in the State Veterinarian’s office at 334-240-7215.

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**REGIONAL MARKET REPORT**


Next Sale August 25, 2014. (Second and fourth Monday of each month). Goats sold per hundred weight (cwt) unless otherwise noted; weights actual or estimated.

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<tr>
<th>Slaughter Classes: Kids</th>
<th>Slaughter Nannies/Does 76.00-122.00</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selection 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25-35 lbs 214.00-239.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-50 lbs 201.00-202.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-65 lbs 190.50-193.00</td>
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<td>66-80 lbs 161.00-174.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-35 lbs 208.00-242.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-50 lbs 182.00-187.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-65 lbs 160.00-188.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-80 lbs 153.00-155.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-35 lbs 184.00-237.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-50 lbs 162.50-170.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-65 lbs 133.00-138.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-80 lbs 121.00</td>
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| Yearlings Selection 2-3         |                                     |
| 50-100 lbs 113.50-128.50         |                                     |

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<tr>
<th>Slaughter Bucks/Billies 93.00-120.00</th>
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| SHEEP:                             |                                     |
|------------------------------------|                                     |
| Slaughter Lambs-Includes all breeds, |                                     |
| sold per hundred weight (cwt).     |                                     |
| Choice and Prime 40-60 lbs 155.50  |                                     |
| Good - 137.00-139.00               |                                     |
| Choice and Prime 61-80 lbs 149.00-154.50 |   |
| Choice and Prime 81-100 lbs 142.00-145.50 |   |
| Choice and Prime 100-120 lbs 136.00-145.00 |   |
| Choice and Prime 120-140 lbs 140.00-142.50 |   |

| Slaughter Ewes Utility and Good:   |                                     |
| All wgts 55.00-67.00               |                                     |

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<tr>
<th>Slaughter Rams:</th>
<th>All Wgts 42.00-67.00</th>
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**Pending Workshops**

Water Ecology Workshop & Field Day - Saturday November 8, 9:00 AM – Noon, & Healthy Holiday Cooking with Ethnic Meats and Vegetables – Saturday December 6. 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Details forthcoming if events come to fruition.

*Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University).*