

White-faced sheep show similarities

LETHBRIDGE—Sheep breeders who are given to praising one white-face breed's virtues against another's won't find support from conclusions reached this year by CDA researchers. J.A.P. Vesely and Dr. H.F. Peters of CDA's Lethbridge Research Station found that there is little to choose between the six most popular white-face western range sheep.

Commercial producers planning a crossbreeding program may therefore select for these factors equally from Rambouillet, Romney, Canadian Corriedale, Romeldale, Columbia, and Targhee, said Mr. Vesely.

The researchers conducted their tests in two four-year periods, 1953-56 and 1959-63 at M a nyberries Experimental Farm. They used 50-ewe flocks.

There were improvements in management during the 10-year period covered by the two tests. During the second test herding gave way to fenced pastures, nutrition of ewes during pregnancy and post-lambing period was improved, and new management practices were incorporated,

such as vaccination of ewes before lambing against enterotoxaemia and disinfection of navel cords of all born lambs.

The presence of Rambouillet and Romney sheep in both tests served as a basis for comparison and confirmation.

Fertility—Ewes lambing, expressed as a percentage of ewes bred.

The lowest percentage was 89 and the highest 96. The average for both periods of the test was about 92.

Productivity—The percentage of lambs born to ewes lambing. Management has improved with time as a comparison of the averages showed. The average in the first test period was 143 per cent lambs per ewe lambing and in the second 156 per cent. The variation between the breeds in each experiment was only about seven percentage points.

Productivity—Percentage of lambs weaned per ewe-bred.

The average in the first period was 108 per cent and in the second period 128 per cent. Breeds in both groups were fairly well bunched together. Number of pounds of lamb weaned for bred

ewe each year was also averaged out under this heading. The figure rose from 69 in the 1953-56 tests to 92½ in 1960-63 with little difference between breeds in each period.

Livability—Number of lambs weaned as a percentage of those born (including stillborn lambs).

The average rose from 82 to 88 per cent in the 10-year period covered by the test, romellet was a shade ahead of other white-faced breeds in both periods. The difference between breeds was negligible.

The researchers concluded that there were no significant differences between the breeds evaluated for the qualities named. One reason for this is that all breeds are related, having Rambouillet blood in their makeup.

LAUNDRY BILLS CUT

QUEBEC (CP)—Health Minister Dr. Alphonse Coturier says the \$8,500,000 renovation to the 600-bed Hopital de l'Enfant Jesus will include a community laundry, serving three other hospitals in Quebec City.

FIRST CHURCHILL STAMP

HERM, Channel Islands (CP)—This small-British island, one of a group off the French coast, will issue a memorial stamp for Sir Winston Churchill May 9, the 20th anniversary of the Channel Islands' liberation from German occupation.



JERSEY PRINCESS AND ADMIRERS

Miss Paula Coady, Hazelbrook was Jersey Princess for Prince Edward Island when this picture was taken. Gilbert Robinson, Harvey Station, New Brunswick, right, was Jersey cattle judge at the Provincial Exhibition here. Left is George MacMillan, well known Jersey breeder from Cornwall in this province.

Announce program changes for eradicating scrapie

OTTAWA—Agriculture Minister Harry Hays today announced changes in the federal scrapie eradication program.

In the past, all infected animals, their progeny, and any other sheep that had contacted infected animals, were destroyed.

The modified program—while continuing to stress control and eradication of the disease—will now permit the retention of sheep not closely related to the infected animals. They will be kept under quarantine for 24 months.

This major change in the program should result in an overall reduction of 50 to 60 per cent in the number of sheep being destroyed. In the past 10 years, scrapie has been identified in 30 flocks resulting in 16,100 sheep being destroyed. The government will continue to pay compensation for animals destroyed under the new program.

Scrapie is a disease of sheep and goats that affects the central nervous system causing them to rub and scratch; they become emaciated and die. Sheep of any breed are susceptible.

The modified program embodies the results of experience gained in the field and through research. It places greater importance on tracing affected blood lines, while at the same time not disregarding the possibility of spread by contact.

After scrapie has been confirmed in a flock, a complete study will be made of the history of the flock, sheep purchasing practices, numbers of infected animals, extent of blood lines, and other factors. This assessment will be used in deciding which animals will be slaughtered and which may be quarantined.

Mr. Hays said that the modified scrapie program had been reviewed and approved by sheep industry representatives. The new scheme has been closely coordinated with the United States scrapie eradication program and allows continued exchange of sheep between the two countries.

Present restrictions on the importation of sheep from Britain are now being reviewed in the light of the new scrapie control and eradication program.

Politicians take over moon's job

Time was when the moon herself ruled the Island. Now its politicians who have taken over the moon's job and a sorry mess they are making of things.

But to return to the moon. In pioneer days farmers swore by the lamp of heaven. She could do no wrong, and when she told 'em to plant their spuds and other root crops in her light there was no arguments. And when she told 'em to plant above soil crops while she was in her dark period they did just that—and they reaped good harvests.

Weeds were yanked out in the dark of the moon, and timber was always cut when the old gal was in her last quarter. To cut lumber at any other time was sheer madness as it rotted away after a few year's use.

Orchards and hedges were manicured in her light if one wanted them to put forth their best production. Some farmers even went so far as to say that no pigs should be slaughtered in the dark of the moon—that is, unless you wanted your pork to shrink up like a withered prune in the frying pan.

This supposed influence of the moon over most things earthly persisted until comparatively recent times, and he was a daring soul who thought otherwise—and a pretty foolish one.

Adequate water needed by lambs

In the cool, moist climate of the Maritime provinces it isn't necessary to supply lambs with drinking water on good summer pasture.

In a choice between a pasture that isn't giving a maximum yield of good quality forage, but has water available and good forage without direct supplies of water take the latter, says F.W. Calder of CDA's experimental farm here at Nappan. It's better to put the sheep on good forage than to restrict the feed available for the sake of a water supply.

The fact is that lambs get along surprisingly well at this time of the year in our Eastern climate without a direct water supply. Considerable water is obtained by the animals' from dew and rain water as they graze. A high percentage of green forage is made up of water which supplies much of the water necessary for animal growth.

Average daily gains in weight may be reduced somewhat when water is not supplied but this reduction is not critical, says Mr. Calder.

Two experiments were conducted at Nappan with similar sheep on good pasture receiving three different levels of water supply: One lot had all the water they wanted; another lot was restricted to half the amount consumed by the first; the third lot was not supplied with drinking water.

Ewes with single lambs at two stocking rates were used in one experiment and weaned lambs in the other.

In both experiments the lambs survived on pasture without supplementary water and gained almost as well as the others—those with full and those with limited water supplies. Increasing the stocking rate reduced weight gains by lambs and ewes more than did the lack of water in the pasture. Weight changes indicated that lactating ewes on adequate pasture suffered more from the lack of water than did the lambs.

The tests were carried out from early June to mid-August. Precipitation for this period was 12 inches in 1962, six inches in 1963, and nine inches for the 50-year average.

Which oats for forage

Because oats are easily uprooted at the pre-silage blade stage, Dr. Heinrichs recommends that grazing not be started until the crop has reached the shot blade stage.

When the oat varieties were cut at frequent intervals to indicate grazing value, all varieties had similar regrowth ability. Regrowth was more in all varieties when they were allowed to reach the flowering stage but quite good when cut at the boot stage.

Greatest overall yields were obtained when the oats were permitted to grow to maturity before cutting. However, the greatest protein yield resulted from three cuttings—the first one at the boot stage. Therefore, an oat crop will provide more protein when pastured but more quantity when cut as hay at maturity.

Dr. Heinrichs observes that Fortune may be the best of the seven varieties for pasture.

GIVES TRUE WEIGHT

LONDON (CP)—A new balance that can accurately weigh a bee's knee has been developed here. Engineer Leslie Minchin says "It was designed to cope with objects down to one microgram—about the weight of a single speck of hair shaved off a man's chin. A bee's knee might be 1,000 times heavier."

SWIFT CURRENT—Dr. D. H. Heinrichs, a researcher at the federal experimental farm here, offers a rule of thumb for farmers who are contemplating growing oats for forage: Grow the variety that produces the most grain in your district.

Seven commonly recommended oat varieties—Ajax, Garry, Russell, Exeter, Fortune, Rodney, and Victory—were compared in pasture and fodder trials at the experimental farm on both dryland and irrigated land. (Overall yield was 35 per cent higher on irrigated land.)

Dr. Heinrichs reports little overall advantage for one variety over another, but says the experiments did point up some interesting differences.

Exeter excelled all varieties in protein content throughout the season. It was the least resistant to uprooting, however. Fortune was the most resistant to this damaging effect of grazing.

Twice as much force was needed to pull plants out of the soil on irrigated land as on dryland, indicating that irrigated land can be grazed at an earlier stage.

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