



**PennState Extension**

# Impact of Sheep and Wool Growers in Agriculture

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# What's New With Sheep?

# What's New With Sheep

- Overview of PA Sheep Production
- Genetic Selection Tools
- Wool Processing
- The New Mowers and Weed Eaters
- Ethnic Markets
- Challenges



# PA Sheep Production

- 3590 Sheep operations
- \$9.5 million in sales
- 64,072 sheep sold
- 58,459 breeding ewes
- 96,648 total inventory
- Ranked 17<sup>th</sup> nationally in sales
- Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> nationally in number of operations and 15<sup>th</sup> in inventory





# County Rankings for Sheep Inventory

- 1<sup>st</sup> Washington
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancaster
- 3<sup>rd</sup> York
- 4<sup>th</sup> Bedford
- 5<sup>th</sup> Greene



# Genetic Selection Tools

- What you see is what you get
  - Maybe
  - Maybe not



# Genetic Selection Tools

- National Sheep Improvement Program
- LambPlan
- Estimated Breeding Values
  - Genetic linkages for performance





# Estimated Breeding Values

- Growth
- Milk production
- Lambing percentage
- Lamb survival
- Wool quality
- Muscling
- Fatness



# Impact of Genetic Selection Tools?

- Faster growing lambs
- More lambs born
- Higher quality wool
- Higher quality meat
- Efficiency and profitability



# Wool Processing

- Superwash
  - Machine washable
  - Chargeurs in Jamestown, SC
- Military garments
- Fine wools
  - Merino



# Wool Products

Which sweater would be less itchy?

Which fabric contains more wool?



# The New Mowers and Weed Eaters

- Targeted grazing
- Hard to mow areas
- Weed control



## Ethnic Markets

- Lamb size matched to holiday
- Roast like a turkey
- Intact animals
- No blemishes



# Challenges

- Predators
- Internal parasites
- Foot problems
- Smaller industry



# Predators

How many sheep and lambs  
are killed each year in the United States?

250,000



# Predators

What predator causes the largest losses?

Coyotes

52%



# Internal Parasites

What is the biggest issue with internal parasites?

Resistant  
Parasites



# Internal Parasites

- Anemia
- FAMACHA
- Pasture Management
  - Rotations
  - 3 inch forage



# Foot Problems

- Footrot
- Foot scald
- Zactran





# Smaller Industry

- Infrastructure
  - Equipment and supplies
  - Veterinary care
  - Medications



# Efforts to Increase Sheep Numbers

- Let's Grow Campaign
- Production Efficiencies
  - 12 Best Practices
  - Penn State Sheep Home Study Course
  - Shepherds Symposium
  - Other Field Days and Workshops



# Support American Lamb

- Ask for American Lamb at restaurants
- Buy lamb from local producer
- Wear wool

