



SCHSIA NEWES

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FEED STUFFS

For a while now most of us are feeding our sheep something besides just hay. If you lamb in January you started increasing the amount of feed in December getting your ewes in shape to lamb. If you lamb in February then you have started this month. And whatever you are supplementing them with it costs money. So how do we cut the cost of feeding without reducing the value of our feed stuffs?

This is where it pays to see what is out there besides what's in the fancy bag at the feed store. What is available is going to depend on what part of the country you live in and how far you are from the source. But remember that sheep are not small cows so what you can feed a cow is not necessarily what you can feed a sheep.

Let's start with a quick look at hay. As all of us have observed sheep are picky eaters. They will pick out all the leaves, especially if you're feeding alfalfa, then the finer stems, then the not so fine stems, and ignore the coarser part. If you are having to feed hay that is a little coarser than you like you can grind it and that will prevent them from picking through it as much. You cannot starve them into eating coarse or unpalatable hay that they don't like.

So what is available to feed that might not be available at the feed store and will be cheaper?

Well, it depends on what part of the country you are in. Out here in western Oregon they raise about 300,000 acres of grass seed all of which has to be cleaned. That means there is a lot of what they call grass screenings which there are many mills turning into feed pellets. It will run about 14% protein, or higher if they mix in some clover screenings, and is very palatable. And while 14% feed in the store is about \$12 a bag the screening pellets are \$7. We also have a by-product called radish meal which is 19% protein and 19% fat. It is not as palatable as the screening pellets but is \$6 a bag and if mixed with the pellets increases the energy of your feed. There are a lot of pumpkin patches around that will have left over pumpkins after Halloween.

Before they quit growing them I used to get several pickup loads for \$10 a load. A friend of mine used to get a truck load of cull onions that he would just dump out in the pasture and let the sheep eat them all winter till the pile was gone. Always wondered how the milk tasted to the lambs. It also used to be that we could get old bread products for practically nothing.

The “gold” standard for grain is corn so let’s compare that to other grains that might be available. Corn has 9.6% crude protein and 82% TDN, barley has 12.2% crude protein and 73% TDN, buckwheat has 11.1% CP and 62% TDN, and oats have 12.1% CP and 68% TDN. milo has 10.6% CP and 78% TDN, and wheat has 14.2% CP and 78% TDN. These, and many others, are considered energy feeds. So corn has more energy than the other grains although it does have less protein. But there are other feeds that might be available that can be substituted for any of these. Sunflower seeds, triticale, whole soybeans, rye, millet, field peas, lentils, flax seed, cotton seed, bread, and beans all have over 70% TDN. Peanuts might also be available but I don’t have any information on them. So there are a lot of options to take advantage of if they are available. While not traditional feeds, both molasses and fats will increase the energy in your rations. . A friend of mine a couple of years ago ran across some bent grass seed which she got for about \$20 a ton. Nothing wrong with it but the seed company was getting rid of it for some reason. So all winter long her ewes had a trough full of seed to supplement their diet.

Now let’s take a look at protein feed. The first thing everybody thinks of is soybean meal which is either 44% or 41% protein depending on whether it is solvent processed or expeller processed. In the south you might have thought of cottonseed meal which is about 30% protein. But again let’s look at what else might be available. Alfalfa seed, beans, buckwheat middlings, clover seed, distiller’s byproducts, flax seed meal, lespedeza seed, sorghum gluten, peanut meal, rape seed meal, sunflower seeds w/o hulls, and dried brewer’s yeast all have a crude protein content of over 25%. Of course you can’t feed any animal products regardless of the price or the protein content.

There are other feeds out there that are low on an as fed basis, but if the price was right, might be worthwhile. If fed free choice lots of crops like pumpkins, squash, onions, raisins, and turnips can be fed successfully. Volume will make up for a lower quality. Sometimes, you might be in a position to get the waste from a winery or an olive press. If they are cheap enough, so you can feed a lot of it, you might try some, but remember they have gotten almost every bit of energy out of these products.

What about forage products other than hay. We aren’t going to talk about silage because sheep don’t do as well on it as cattle do. In the south a lot of cottonseed hulls are available and cattlemen feed a lot of them but they are only 3.8% CP and 34% TDN. Corn cobs might be available in the Midwest but they

have a CP of 2.8 and TDN of 46%. Rice hulls have 2.8% CP and 18%TDN. I had a friend at Texas A&M, from Alberta, and he told about an old rancher up there that wintered his cows on sawdust and molasses because times were tough and money was short. He said they got through the winter but looked pretty much dead when the grass started to grow. But we aren't talking about emergency here.

Remember the old saying that "you can't starve a profit out your animals". This is especially true with sheep because they have a short gestation cycle and most of the growth of the lambs takes place in the last 30-40 days. Also, a sheep produces a higher percentage of her weight at lambing than cattle do at calving. But take advantage of alternate feeds that might be available in your area and cut your feeding costs whenever possible.





Getting to Know Ewe...

Hello! My name is Brent Vansickle, your most recent vice president, and I am honored to be serving as your president for the next two years. By profession, I am a full time Quality Assurance Leader at Eli Lilly & Co., a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. However, agriculture is my passion and has always played a large role in my life. During my school years, I enjoyed membership in 4-H and FFA, studied agriculture at Vincennes University, and have continued to be involved in agriculture ever since. I live in the small farming community of Trafalgar IN, on a 4th generation 65 acre family farm. This is where I was raised, and I look forward to passing the farm on to my children in the future. My wife, Shannon, and I have two sons, Ethan and Avery, now six and nine. We enjoy working together and love raising our St. Croix sheep.

My goal for the next two years is to collaborate with our board and members to advance our association in breed awareness, membership growth, and development of youth membership. I believe individuals who have been exposed to or active in agricultural activities at a young age are much more likely to continue such activities throughout their lifetime. Youth involvement in raising and exhibiting sheep has helped grow other breed associations, and I believe this will be significant in growing our association and breed ownership as well. Through platforms such as social media, online registration, and relevant media content, SCHSIA will serve to expand and preserve the wonderful St. Croix sheep breed. I am interested in hearing from you. Please feel free to email me with any suggestions or comments at vansickle_brent@yahoo.com.

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED

For those of you who only have four or five sheep on two or three acres this may not apply but it will to those who have 20 sheep on 10 acres.

When you go out to feed, and the sheep are scattered all over the pasture, and you call them they do not all come running in a straight line. One of the sheep has decided where they are supposed to walk and that is the way they will all come to you. They will come from all directions to get to the proper path and when they finally arrive at your location they will be in a line. I have even seen them going in the opposite direction to get to the right way to come. When they get done eating and start to drift back to the pasture, they will all leave on that same path and then scatter out again as they go along. You can walk out in the pasture and follow the path and you can see no rhyme or reason why it is where it is but that is the way they all have to come. If you put a different bunch of sheep in that pasture they may or may not use the same route but whatever way the boss sheep decides to go the others will go that way too.

Never have more sheep than your wife can take care of.

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED

Most all of us have cats, whether they are in the house or in the barn. And as we all know they have claws. But have you ever noticed when their claws are out and when they aren't? As long as their toes are together their claws are in and all you see or feel is the paw. However, when they spread their toes the claws automatically come out, so they can climb, attack prey, or get your attention. They can though extend just one claw to get your attention or to play with some little thing that has caught their attention.



Why my barn is so shiny.

WARMING LAMBS

We have all had the experience of going to the barn and finding a new born lamb that is so cold it can't get up and eat. Our first thought is to get some warm milk into it but that would be the wrong thing to do. You are as apt to kill it as you are to save it. The first thing you have to do is get it warm. There are a lot of ways to do this and I have tried a bunch of them. Drying them and wrapping them in a towel or blanket, putting them under a heat lamp, and bringing them in the house and putting them next to or in front of a heat source. But the one I like best and have found to work the fastest is to bring it in the kitchen and put it in the sink full of warm water. You have to stay there and hold the head up and keep adding more warm water, it cools in a hurry. Keep checking the temperature of the lamb by putting your finger in its mouth but it will let you know when it is warm by starting to struggle in the sink. (We did this last year with one we found frozen to the ground.) When it is warm take it out and dry it off and try and give it some colostrum. If it is still too weak to eat inject some glucose solution into the peritoneal

cavity. It will absorb that quickly and hopefully then be ready to eat. At this point you have saved the lamb but now have a bummer unless you can get its mother to take it back. This, she is not likely to do, since it not only doesn't smell like her lamb but doesn't even smell like a sheep. If you just put the lamb in the pen with the ewe she will most likely reject it, but if you can find the afterbirth and rub the lamb in it, or even rub it against her other lamb she might take it back.

What I am going to tell you now you will wonder if I know what I am talking about but my wife came up with the idea and it works. If the lamb was with its mother it would be getting a lot of attention – nuzzling, licking, etc. – which my wife refuses to do. But she does take the lamb and wrap it in a towel and hold it and rock it like a baby and it seems to settle the lamb down. Although it seems strange it makes sense because babies have to have attention in order to thrive. She will do this for the first couple of days whenever the lamb starts to fuss – which might only be a couple of times a day if it is getting enough to eat. After that, if it is strong, she puts a diaper on it and lets it run around the house, which means that most of the time she has a lamb pretty close to her. Same thing, it doesn't want to be alone, and as long as it is with somebody it is content.

Now some of you newer shepherds are shaking your heads but the ones who have been around for a while are saying “been there and done that”. And like a baby, they can't be left alone very long so you find a way to take it where ever you go. But that is another story.

SOME DAYS ARE LIKE POPPING CORN WITH THE LID OFF

THE EDITOR SAYZ

I hope you all are enjoying the newsletter as much as I am putting it out. But I would still like you to send in pictures or story ideas, or questions, or stories about your sheep, dogs, cats, llamas, donkeys, etc.. There are times my brain gets tired and has trouble coming up with new ideas. This is especially true if I have to think three months ahead. My one request – **DO NOT SEND ME ANYTHING IN A BOX.** If it is in a box I cannot do anything with it. I can put it in but cannot change it to fit in with the proposed layout or make any corrections or edit it in any way.