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Editor's Notes

Pat Elliott

Late Summer 2008 Issue

In that wonderful musical, "Porgy and Bess" there is a song that goes, "Summertime and the living is easy; Summertime . . ." It came to my mind the other day as I considered the list of things I had to do. During lambing season, it seems like once lambing is over, one should have a lot of free time, but somehow I have never caught up from that. My goal today is to see the wood on my desk. Then collect the news I have been getting in from around the country for the summer newsletter and summer is about over.

I wouldn't say the "living is easy" in the summer but it is ever interesting. That's what we wanted, wasn't it? Wasn't it? I think it is safe to assume that, if you are milking sheep successfully, you are not slow or lazy!

Darkness is coming earlier, and the upper lips of the rams are curling. I have gotten so that each morning I am alert for the "crisis of the day." I guess as one grows bigger there are more possible crises. One of the minor ones the last several days has been a mouse getting into a closed and latched dishwasher! I suppose that isn't a bonafide crisis like the big leak in the water line last month but it qualified in my mind as a crisis when I had to wash the same load of dishes three times!

Please set aside time for the DSANA Symposium October 29 to November 1 in Nashville. We are setting up a great program and extending you a warm invitation to see what is going on in the dairy sheep world while enjoying southern hospitality.

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Membership ■ L'Adhésion

DSANA welcomes all current or future sheep dairy producers, artisanal farmstead cheese producers, sellers, suppliers, industry professionals, and academic researchers with an interest in sheep dairying, dairy genetics, sheep milk cheese production, and sheep milk based product development. DSANA also welcomes any individual who is a friend of the sheep dairying industry.

DSANA accueille tous les producteurs (trices) de lait de brebis, les transformateurs artisanaux, les fromagers de ferme, les vendeurs, les fournisseurs, les professionnels dans la filière des ovins laitiers, les chercheurs académiques...enfin, tous et toutes qui s'intéressent vivement à la production et à la transformation du lait de brebis. Nous accueillons également les ami(e)s de l'industrie laitière ovine.

Benefits of membership ■ Bénéfices de l'adhésion à DSANA

- ✓ Quarterly DSANA Newsletter • *Journal tous les trois mois*
- ✓ DSANA website • *Site web de DSANA*
- ✓ Discount admission to the Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium • *Tarif réduit pour le symposium annuel des Grands Lacs sur la brebis laitière*
- ✓ Voting rights to help determine the future of the association in the industry • *Droit de vote pour déterminer les orientations de l'Association au sein de l'industrie*

Annual Dues

A principal member is one who is currently milking sheep in a state/province licensed facility, or is actively involved in getting milk to the market, brokering milk sales, producing or distributing sheep milk based products.

Un membre principal producteur de lait de brebis avec un agrément provincial ou d'état, ou êtes-vous activement impliqué dans l'achat ou la vente de lait de brebis aux transformateurs, la production de produits à base de lait de brebis.

Principal Member/Membre principal \$50 US/ \$62.50* cdn

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Deadlines for submission of material is three weeks prior to publishing. The editor reserves the right to move material to future issues if needed. Past issues are available on the DSANA website (www.dsana.org).

Limited research has been conducted with sheep. Dr. Don Ely at the University of Kentucky compared DDGS to soybean meal as a protein source for lactating ewes. No performance differences were observed for lamb gain or milk production. Similar results from the ISU McNay Research farm with DDGS versus corn did not improve milk production or lamb gains, indicating that alfalfa hay based lactation rations do not require escape protein. In personal communication with Don Ely, they include 5-10% DDGS in their lamb finishing rations. Gain responses are observed from increased intakes and possibly escape protein that increases the protein available to the lamb. Work at South Dakota State University led by Dr. Jeff Held indicates that diets of soyhulls and dry distillers are readily consumed by lambs. Additionally this ration is safer for starting feeder lambs as it contains low levels of starch compared to corn based rations. One precaution with lamb finishing rations is that calcium:phosphorous ratio needs to be closely monitored to prevent urinary calculi since distillers' grains are high in phosphorous and low in calcium.

Co-product feeds from the dry corn milling industry are most useful when fed with low quality forages. For example, diets composed of corn stover and DDGS would be extremely economical for ewes in early and mid gestation. When protein is needed in the ration, corn co-products should be compared to soybean meal on cost per pound of protein provided. With high quality feedstuffs like alfalfa or alfalfa grass hays, corn co-products are being used primarily for energy and need to be evaluated against corn as an energy source. One major concern when evaluating costs is that differences in dry matter content need to be taken into account. From Table 1, wet distillers grains are from 30-35% dry matter and 70-65% water, whereas dried distillers is 90% dry matter. So, if we adjust for water, one can pay 33 to 40% the price of dry distillers for wet distillers. We may buy high priced water for ourselves, but generally purchasing water for sheep is not an economical choice.

Some producers located close to plants have ready access to stillage. In some beef cattle feeding trials, this stillage has provided the only water source. Free-choicing these products to ewe flocks has resulted in over consumption and digestive disorders (Larry Holler, personal communication). Polioencephaloma (brainers) is the most severe response from over consumption. Over-fat ewes and dystocia could be another negative consequence of ad libitum intake. Polios (brainers) can also occur due to excess sulfur intake, which has been a reported problem with corn gluten feed in dairy cows and feedlot cattle and is possible with distillers.

Copper levels seem to be quite variable and may be dependent on the copper content of the stills. Values range from 6 ppm in wet distillers to 83 ppm in the condensed distillers solubles. Care must be exercised to prevent the accumulation of copper to toxic levels over time. Since a small portion of ewe diets will be co-products, copper problems are minimized. One step to help prevent copper problems is to feed a sheep mineral with molybdenum to reduce copper absorption. The higher sulfur level in distiller's products also reduces copper absorption.

Table 1. Composition of by-products and common feedstuffs^{ab}.

Ingredient	%DM	%CP	%TDN	%Ca	%P
Corn	88	8.0	77	.02	.30
SBM	89	44	78	.30	.70
Alfalfa Hay	87	16-18	51-56	1.3	.31
Products from wet milling					
Dry corn gluten feed					
	90	18	72	.05	1.0
Corn gluten meal					
	90	60	77	.07	.48
Condensed steep water solubles					
	50	17.5	45	.03	1.0
Products from dry milling					
Distillers dried grains w/ solubles					
	90	26	78.8	.19	.72
Distillers dried grains					
	90	27	69.3	.09	.37
Condensed distillers solubles					
	30-50	8	29.4	.03	.41

^a Nutrient values are on an **as fed basis**.

^b DM=dry matter, CP=crude protein, TDN=total digestible nutrients, Ca=calcium and P=phosphorous.

For suggested rations including corn byproducts, please refer to the complete Proceedings at http://www.ansci.wisc.edu/Extension-New%20copy/sheep/Publications_and_Proceedings/res.html.

American Cheese Society Winners Announced

Aged Sheep's Milk Cheese

- 1st Carr Valley
2nd Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Co-op
3rd Blackberry Farm

Fresh Sheep's Milk

- 1st 3-Corner Field Farm
2nd Hidden Springs Creamery
3rd Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Co-op

Fresh Sheep's Milk, Flavor Added

- 1st Hidden Springs Creamery
2nd Hidden Springs Creamery
3rd Hidden Springs Creamery

Farmstead Sheep's Milk Cheeses

- 1st La Moutonniere
2nd Bonnieview Farm
3rd 3-corner Farm

Flavored Sheep's Milk Cheese

- 1st none
2nd Everona Dairy
3rd Bellwether Farm

Smoked, Sheep's Milk

- 1st none
2nd 3-corner Farm
3rd Carr Valley

Feta from Sheep's Milk

- 1st La Moutonniere
2nd Appleton Creamery
3rd none

Blue Veined Made from Sheep's or Mixed Milks

- 1st Rogue Creamery
2nd Carr Valley
3rd Old Chatham Shepherding Company

American Made/International Style

- 1st Carr Valley
2nd Carr Valley
3rd Heartland Creamery

Soft Ripened Cheeses from Sheep's Milk

- 1st Old Chatham Shepherding Company
2nd Old Chatham Shepherding Company
3rd Marin French Cheese Company

Washed Rind Sheep's Milk Cheese

- 1st Hidden springs
2nd Fromagerie Le Detour
3rd Carr Valley

Congratulations to all! Keep making those good cheeses, everyone!

Using Co-products from the Corn Milling Industry in Sheep Rations

Dr. Dan Morrill
Department of Animal Science
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

Over the last four years, the United States has experienced an explosion in the corn milling industry. The majority of this investment is in cooperatively owned and operated small- to medium-sized ethanol plants. The most important factor when evaluating co-products for use in sheep rations is what specific product one is considering using. Two excellent reference pieces are located on the Iowa Beef Center web page: www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/IBC18.pdf and www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/IBC19.pdf

Even though these are oriented primarily to cattle, the information is useful for sheep nutrition, especially IBC 18, as it explains the dry corn milling process and the co-products produced.

The main products from ethanol plants are wet distillers grains (WDG), dried distillers grains with solubles (DDG), and modified (MGS). Higher-moisture products include the thin stillage and condensed distillers solubles (CDS). To get ethanol produced during the milling process, ground corn is fermented with yeast. Yeast converts the starch into alcohol leaving a protein-dense co-product ranging from 24 to 32% crude protein on a dry matter basis. As one reviews the research in cattle finishing trials, the energy value of these by-products varies from 90-120% of corn.

In most situations, wet distillers grains have higher energy values than the same product in the dry form. Additionally, research indicates greater benefits when co-products comprise a low (5-15%) percent of ration as compared to diets containing high (25-40%) co-product. Researchers are not exactly sure but think this may be due to escape protein value improving the protein status of the animal resulting in superior performance or to improved rumen fermentation which results in better utilization of the feedstuffs.

Editor's Notes, continued from page 2

I am sorry to read from Claire's President's Report that Yves Berger has retired. He has been such a help to me and to many of you.

The American Cheese Society Newsletter says that Jodi and Steven Read and Black Sheep Creameries are both hanging in there and recovering from a devastating fire in the Read's case (Shepherd's Way Farms) and a flood in Washington State for the Gregory's.

Please take time to e-mail me what is going on for you and perhaps a bit about something new for you –new technique, new idea etc. We all have a stock in your success and a concern for you. everona@vabb.com

President's Message

Claire Mikolayunas Sandrock

I would like to recognize two DSANA members who are moving onto new challenges. The Small Ruminant Dairy Project of the University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture will be ending on September 30, 2008. In 1998, the Small Ruminant Dairy Project began with the donation of an anonymous person interested in growing and supporting the sheep and goat dairy industry in Vermont.

Carol Delaney was hired as the Small Ruminant Dairy Specialist. For 10 years, Carol has worked to promote small ruminant dairying in Vermont and New England. Carol's quarterly newsletter was one of my first introductions to the small ruminant producer network. Her innumerable workshops and events, including organizing the 2005 Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium, have been an invaluable resource to producers throughout the Northeast. Carol will be taking a position at the Northeast Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education Program at UVM. While her job change may take her to fewer farms, her interest in sheep and cheese will surely keep her close to the dairy sheep industry!

Yves Berger, sheep researcher at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station since 1988 and Superintendent since 2000, retired in July. Yves was instrumental in establishing the only dairy sheep research station in North America (Spooner, WI), was a founding member of the Wisconsin Dairy Sheep Cooperative and

has been a leading educator in the US dairy sheep industry. Not only has he brought knowledge from his sheep experiences around the world (Argentina, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Morocco, California), but he always brings along a sense of interest and humor to every situation. Among Yves' many accomplishments is his constant involvement in DSANA, organizing the first and many subsequent Dairy Sheep Symposia. So far, he has remained in contact with the Spooner Station, so we may continue to tap into his expertise.

Our Mission - Notre Mission

DSANA will promote effective dairy sheep management by educating, supporting and encouraging new and established sheep milk dairies, farmsteads, and artisanal sheep milk cheesemakers.

DSANA fera la promotion de la gestion efficace des troupeaux de brebis laitières par la formation, l'encouragement et le soutien des producteurs (trices) de lait de brebis (autant les débutants que les plus expérimentés), ainsi que les fromageries fermières et artisanales.

DSANA will promote cooperation and exchange of information among producers of sheep milk and cheesemakers.

DSANA incitera la coopération et l'échange d'idées entre producteurs (trices) et transformateurs (trices) de lait de brebis.

DSANA will also promote the products manufactured from sheep milk.

DSANA fera la promotion des produits fabriqués à partir du lait de brebis.

DSANA will help producers organize activities for the genetic improvement of dairy sheep.

DSANA soutiendra les producteurs/trices pour les aider à organiser des activités visant l'amélioration génétique des ovins laitiers.

DSANA will endeavor to inform and educate the public as to the merits and availability of sheep dairy products.

DSANA s'efforcera d'informer et d'éduquer le public quant (aux mérites) à la valeur nutritive et à la disponibilité des produits fait à partir du lait de brebis.

DSANA will strive to help foster international understanding and the free exchange of ideas between North American based producers and producers abroad.

DSANA s'efforcera de favoriser une meilleure entente internationale et soutiendra l'échange libre des idées entre les producteurs d'Amérique du Nord, ainsi qu'ailleurs dans le monde.

This newsletter/Dairy Sheep Association of North America will not be responsible for any mishap resulting from an individual(s) following any advice published in this newsletter.

Materials submitted for articles or advertisements will be subject to the approval of the DSANA. Views and opinions represented in this newsletter are not necessarily those of DSANA.

Notes from Around the Country

Pat Elliott

Scott Burrington

Scott tells us he started lambing on January 2. He is milking 140. He is pleased with his new pipeline milker.

Brenda Jensen

Things are going great. We had the BBC film us in April and Will Studd's slice of cheese film us in June. We won a 1st and 3rd place at the world Cheese Championship in March. We have also been working on some new cheeses. My son came to work with me part time and it's been a big help. His fiancé is helping me with milking. Life is good. I will see you in Chicago. I am on a panel about selling to chefs.

Editor's note: she did well in Chicago too—see article in this issue.

Sheri Palko

Hmmm... Well, several of those questions can be answered by reading the latest entry on my web page... <http://www.locustgrovefarm.net/ourstories.html>.

What didn't I answer there? PROBLEMS! I wouldn't put anything negative on the web page.

The biggest problem I have had is finding "good" help. One of my milkers is AWESOME, the other is a dud. I currently have one part-time cheesemaker who is great. Having employees has been a HUGE learning curve for me. I have discovered that having a not-so-great employee is worse than having none at all. I have learned to be "very specific" about requirements and expectations. I have learned to be very vague about job descriptions.

It sounds like those two previous comments contradict each other, but really they don't. A good employee needs to be able to adjust to the current needs. My husband asked one day why I had just unloaded two tons of grain when I have two young 20-year-olds working for me. My answer: a) they aren't here right now and the grain is and, b) I didn't think about it, I just do it.

A little better planning on my part, and neither a) or b) should be an issue, but I still find myself the one to take out the trash and clean out milk bars.

I am hoping (now that I have learned a "little") that I can bring in an intern next year to help solve some of those time consuming problems.

Successes....The one thing I have just been dreading is sales, and yes - those dreaded farmer's markets which I have avoided to this point.

Well, I now find myself at three farmer's markets a week, and though I hate to admit when I'm wrong, I am actually enjoying it. And all the retail sales sure don't hurt either. Sales are way up, and I feel a lot better about next year's projections since I'll be milking 100 instead of just 40.

We are way too crowded on only 15 acres, so we are planning to relocate in 3-4 yrs if we can find just the right place--we'll see.

Fighting the drought, the cost of grain and hay... that's been a killer. Not sure how that will all pan out, but having some more pasture sure would be nice.

I am milking six of the 14 milkings each week (so nice to have a break to go to the farmer's markets). We are making cheese every three days this season. Next year it will be every other day.

I know you've been there, done that, but as you can imagine just the daily chores, sales, packaging and shipping, and billing and paperwork, are all a full time job in and of themselves. But I am really enjoying it, and am looking forward to a little down time in the fall to take a step back and learn from all the mistakes I made this year.

Lambing will begin again in January, so hopefully I will have more duckies in a row by then. For right now, it's sleep just a little, eat only when necessary, and just keep on. And when I'm too pooped to think about doing it all over again the next day, all I have to do is take a look at all my girls who work so hard producing all that milk, and then walk over and look at all the beautiful ewe lambs growing up so nicely in preparation for next season, and it just makes all of it worth it!

YES, I love my job! That computer science degree seems a little useless sometimes, but I wouldn't trade what I'm doing right now for anything. Although a paycheck of my own in the near future would be a nice bonus.

Editors's note: we will be touring Sheri's place at the DSANA Symposium this fall!

Nancy Clark

Not too much is new. The sheep are having babies about 100 ewes a month. You know we do the light treatment program in the winter and spring so we can have more milk in the fall. I am doing research on a new yogurt flavor--blueberry. I am using wild small

blueberries from Maine so you can get a burst of flavor when you bite into the small bubbles of the blueberries with every bite. We should be coming out with this flavor in September.

We are getting a new yogurt filler in September, one that will fill two cups at a time so more SHEEP'S MILK YOGURT will hopefully be in the marketplace.

Dairy Sheep Milk Regulations

Claire Mikolayunas Sandrock

The National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) is a non-profit organization whose goal is to "assure the safest possible milk supply for all the people". The Conference is made of various members of the dairy industry, including producers, processors, inspectors, academic researchers and consumers.

The main goal of the group is to "deliberate proposals submitted by various individuals from state or local regulatory agencies, FDA, USDA, producers, processors, consumers, etc., who have an interest in ensuring that the dairy products we consume are safe". The NCIMS is responsible for reviewing the regulation of the Grade A Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO).

Within the NCIMS, the Other Species Milk Committee is responsible for reviewing various proposals for sheep and goat milk. The committee members report their findings to members, who will vote on the proposals at the upcoming Conferences. The NCIMS meets every other year, with the next meeting to be held in Florida in April 2009. The Other Species Milk Committee includes one member of DSANA (Tom Clark) and is chaired by Dr. Lynn Hinckley, a microbiologist from the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Hinckley also serves as the Director of the Task Force for Small Ruminant in the Dairy Practices Council (DPC). Similar to the NCIMS, the DPC is a non-profit organization made of representatives from all facets of the dairy industry. However, the DPC is responsible for compiling and publishing the guidelines which cover all aspects of production and regulation of sheep milk, including housing, biosecurity, milk production and somatic cell counts. This organization has an annual meeting, with the next to be held in Michigan on Nov 5-7.

With roles in both organizations, Dr. Hinckley has identified three areas of current research concerning the shipment sheep milk between states (text from email correspondence with Dr. Hinckley, definitions added by author):

1. Sheep and goats produce milk with an apocrine secretory system (producing a secretion by separation of a part of the cytoplasm of the secreting cell), while cows produce milk with a merocrine secretory system (producing a secretion that is discharged without major damage to the secreting cells). Research has shown there are cytokines (small secreted proteins which mediate and regulate immunity and inflammation) present in the apocrine system in the goat which creates an elevated base cell count, therefore, the regulatory cell count in goat milk is set at 1.0 million cells per ml., while the regulatory count for cow milk is 750,000 cells per ml.

However, the sheep milk cell count is set at 750,000 cells per ml. Currently information is being gathered for the purpose of requesting a change in cell count in sheep milk to 1.0 million per ml., based on scientific data.

2. The apocrine secretory system results in the production of cytoplasmic particles in the milk. The Pyronin Y Methyl Green Stain is used as the DMSCC (direct microscopic somatic cell count) confirmatory test for goat milk.

This is a differential stain which allows nucleated cells to be more easily distinguished from the particles which are not countable, therefore providing a more accurate count. A research study is in progress which will provide data to support the use of the Pyronin Y Methyl Green Stain as the confirmatory stain for sheep milk also.

3. There are no FDA approved antibiotic residues tests for use with sheep milk. Currently there is a validation study for antibiotics residues in sheep milk being organized by the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets in cooperation with FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Hinckley is very interested in the comments or concerns regarding these research topics. If you have any thoughts or input, please call or email mikolayunas@wisc.edu and I will compile the DSANA responses. In addition, both the NCIMS (<http://ncims.org/>) and DPC (<http://www.dairypc.org/>) are willing to have representation from DSANA at their upcoming conferences.

This is our chance to have DSANA help define standards, direct research, and establish cooperative relationships with regulators and policy makers. Please let me know if anyone is interested in attending.