

Sunday August 17 2008

Hi everyone Marshall Ball here reporting for the sheep showers. We had our meeting August 6th 7:00 at Laura Dorrell's home. Since it was finally a nice night we were able to sit outside by a campfire which was nice.

Laura talked to us about feeding our lambs Colostrum. That is the first milk from the ewe, it is thick and yellow in colour. If you are bottle feeding then frozen Colostrum can be used, milk from the ewe or cows milk. For the first month a new born lamb can only digest milk. Then you will see the lamb nibbling on hay or grass. Some lambs can be weaned at 3-6 weeks of age, but most are weaned at 7-9 weeks. When creep feeding our lambs we should make sure that the lambs are able to eat the feed and the adult sheep can not. The adults like the creep feed but do not need it, the young lambs need the protein more.

Advantages of early weaning are: lambs are ready for market sooner.

Ewe's can be rebred.

If you have orphan lambs it is easier to care for them.

Disadvantages: Are that lambs weaned earlier may not eat enough solid food and will grow poorly.

You need to put more feed into your lamb so it can be more costly.

We then looked at a chart that showed what to look for in our lambs to tell what shape they are in....

A Skinny lamb is when you can feel a sharp spine, they have shallow back muscles and there is no fat.

A Lean lamb is when you feel a sharp spine they have full back muscles and no fat.

A lamb in Good Condition is when you can feel the spine they have a full back muscle and they have some fat cover.

A lamb that is Over Conditioned is when the spine is barely fat they have very full muscles and they have a thick fat cover.

A lamb that is just Fat is when you can not feel the spine they have very thick fat cover and they have fat deposits over the tail and rump.

These are some of the things the judge is looking for when we are showing our lambs. They don't just judge the appearance of our sheep, they look at how we handle the lambs and how we look when showing.

We talked about the different markets for selling our lambs.

The holidays and Ethnic markets.. There is the Western or Roman Easter

Eastern or Greek Orthodox Easter.....Passover.....Christmas....

Id al Adha.....Qurbani.....Ramadan....Id al Fitr.

All the different markets want the same weights 65-79 pounds.

Lambs ready for market should look clean and healthy, be up to a good weight some may have to be castrated but some markets {The buyers} prefer the lambs to be intact with no brusing.

We also talked about lamb meat, that it is very good tasting you can cook your meat many different ways and there are different spices that go good with lamb. Meat from older sheep is called mutten, it is stronger tasting but good.

We are all learning that there is lots to know about raising sheep, and we have a good leader in Laura Dorrell helping us to learn.

Our next meeting is August 20th at Charlton Fair grounds, Where we will be having a special guest Mr. Vern Burnett. He will be showing us how to properly block and trim our lambs. So we were told to wash our lambs and be ready for a hands on meeting where we handle our lambs. We will be trimming and brushing them. This should be lots of fun.

And on August 27th we will be going to Belle Valle Wools.

Then August 30th is the Charlton fair when we will be showing our sheep. So if you can come on out

and join us at the fair and watch the sheep show and everything else. It will be lots of fun like it was last year.