

# ***EKRE PROJECT - THE EWE FLOCK***

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## **PRODUCTION GOALS OF THE EKRE EWE FLOCK**

**Flock Size:** 125 ewes

**Stocking Rate:** 1 ewe per 5 acres

### **Ewe Type:**

Highly fertile - drop 200% lamb crop; 1998 drop was 178% as compared to 1997 ND average of 110% and National average of 108%.

Heavy milkers - be able to raise twins.

Moderate frame size 150 - 170 lbs.; lower feed requirements than a larger 200 - 250# ewe ; can run more ewes on given land area.

Utilize speckled face ewes.

Increase heterosis or hybrid vigor.

Increase fertility, livability in lambs and milking ability.

### **Labor Inputs:**

Low inputs during grazing & maintenance periods (early spring - late fall).

Highest requirements at lambing and lactation periods.

**Yearly Management Calendar used on Ewe Flock: (All dates approximate)**

**May 15** Dry ewes brought to pasture.

Moved every 20 days to a different pasture.

No parasite problem (internal worms) because rotation has broken worm cycle.

Ewes are always moved to fresh ground.

**Aug 20** Prebreeding.

Two vasectomized rams put with ewes to help bring ewes into estrus and close lambing interval.

No added grain or concentrates fed (no flushing).

New regrowth of spurge acts to increase the nutritional level of ewes; thus, lowering labor requirements as well as feed costs over more conventional methods of management.

**Sept 10** Breeding.

Rams put in - vasectomized rams taken out.

Three mature rams are used per 100 ewes.

1998 breeding rams:

Dorset ram used to produce moderate sized replacements

Hampshire & Columbia rams used to produce larger framed market lambs (135 - 150#)

In 1997 all ewes lambed in 3 weeks with the majority lambing in a 2-week period.

**Nov 1** Gestation

Ewes brought home from pasture. Able to utilize by-products of sugar beet plant.

Ewes put on ration of 75% beet tailings and 25% lower quality alfalfa or alfalfa grass hay.

## **Jan 1** Late Gestation

Tailings reduced to approximately 25% of ration - Hay quality and quantity increased.

**Jan 15** Begin feeding 1#/hd/day grain with 250mg. of Aureomycin or Terramycin added.

Shear ewes 2 to 4 week ahead of lambing.

## **Feb 1-5** Lambing Starts

Highest labor requirements at this time.

A 20% creep feed is put out for lambs at 7 to 10 days - lambs given free choice.

Lambing time labor requirements:

- Two overeating shots (initial shot and booster 3 weeks later)
- Docking and castrating
- Daily feeding
- Check lambs for pneumonia, starve outs, scours, etc.

## **Mar 1** Preweaning

Lambing finished

At 45 to 50 days into lactation - take grain away. Ewes put on grass hay or lower quality hay to reduce milk production. This process lasts 2 - 3 weeks.

## **April 1-20** Weaning

Wean lambs at 60 - 75 days - Watch ewes for possible mastitis.

Ewes kept on grass hay or poorer quality hay until they are taken to pasture

Lambs are kept on feed-used for nutritional research projects or pushed for early

markets. These prices are usually some of the highest of the year. This year lambs sold

in June brought \$1.02/lb lambs in Aug brought \$.83/lb.

**May 15** Dry ewes returned to pasture again

## ECONOMIC SUMMARY FOR 1998

### Flock of 50 ewes

Ewes lambled in Feb-March; Lamb Drop = 178%; Death Loss = 12.4% 89 lambs born; 78 lambs weaned.

### Feed utilization by the ewes:

**Nov/Dec** - 75% beet tailings, 25% hay; ~cost per day of \$.045 (1.5 lbs of hay at 3 cents/lb) **Total (61 days)/ewe = \$2.75**

**Jan** - 1 lb grain, 4 lbs hay; ~cost per day of \$.16 (hay at 3 cents/lb and grain at 4 cents/lb) **Total (31 days)/ewe = \$4.96**

**Feb/April 15** - 1.5 lb grain, 4 lbs hay; ~cost per day of \$.18 (hay at 3 cents/lb and grain at 4 cents/lb) **Total (74 days)/ewe = \$13.32**

**April 15/May 15** - 4 lbs hay; ~cost per day of \$.12 (hay at 3 cents/lb) **Total (30 days)/ewe = \$3.60**

**TOTAL = \$24.63**

**May 15/Oct** - Grazing on Ekre Property (value vs 165 days @ 4 lbs hay/ day = \$19.80)



Feed (total ration, self feed) @5 cents \$100.00/ton	\$13.83	<b>Profit = \$19.22</b>
Feed (total ration, self feed) @6 cents \$120.00/ton	\$16.60	<b>Profit = \$16.45</b>