

Shearing Feeder Lambs

by

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History on Shearing Lambs

* Shearing feeder lambs 6 to 8 weeks prior to marketing has been promoted by buyers, feedlots and extension people

* Traditional \$3.00 to \$5.00 unshorn lamb discounts

Processor's Perspective

* Cleaner

* Easier to process

* Contain less low valued by-products (wool, manure and burrs)

* Prime pelts are valuable

Producer Perception

* Distorted definition of “value-added marketing” – selling 5 lbs of thirty cent wool at a \$90.00/cwt live lamb price

* Sell a few pounds of manure and mud

* Shearing costs and labor

WHY SHEAR?

Budget – compares marketing two 130 lb lambs (one shorn & one unshorn) at a \$90.00/cwt market with a \$4.00/cwt unshorn discount.

Revenue	Lamb	+\$5.20	(\$117.00 - \$111.80) Shorn vs unshorn difference
	Wool	+\$1.50	Wool value @ \$0.30/lb x 5 lbs
Expenses	Shearing	-\$1.75	Shearing cost
	Feed	-\$1.80	Feed for extra 5 lbs of gain to replace the removed wool (6:1 conversion w/feed @ \$0.06/lb)
Total		+\$3.15	Return to producer for shearing

Equation to “plug in” Own Figures

* (diff. in lamb value + shorn wool value) - (shearing cost + extra feed cost) = net change

* 130 lb lambs@ \$90/cwt w/ \$4/cwt wool disc: $(\$5.20 + \$1.50) - (\$1.75 + \$1.80) = +\$3.15$

Pelt Influences

- * Pelt value variations of \$2.00 to \$18.00/pelt create similar lamb dollar value fluctuations
- * Especially true when there is an abundant supply of lambs

Grades and Classifications of Pelts - Wool Length

Unshorn

Spring: 1^{1/4} to 3"

Wool: 3" and over

Shorn

Fall Clip 1 to 2"

No. 1 5/8 to 1"

No. 2 3/8 to 5/8"

No. 3 1/8 to 3/8"

No. 4 0 to 1/8"

Wool Marketing Loan Program Unshorn Pelts

- * LDP rate for the day you lose beneficial interest in Unshorn Slaughter Lamb @ 6.865 lbs wool/lamb
- * Example: 6.865 lbs x LDP rate (24 cents 11/03/03) = \$1.65 per head eligible
- * If repayment rate on the upgraded wool is above loan rate, there will NOT be an unshorn lamb pelt LDP

Additional Factors to Consider

- * Health and Feed Efficiency - "shearing lambs is like cultivating corn - they just seem to grow better".
- * Shearing is important when temperatures are above 40F.
- * Shearing is important when heavy fleeced, white-faced lambs are being fed.
- * Shearing reduces barn moisture, improves ventilation and bedding conditions and contributes to a cleaner product.
- * Food safety for the consumers.
- * *The single most common food safety issue confronting the lamb industry is dirty pelts and related processing contamination.*
- * Unshorn lambs increase the likelihood of wool and manure contamination of the carcass during pelt removal.
- * Manure contamination contributes to food safety concerns while wool contamination can alter flavor.

Shearing as a Management and Marketing Tool

- * If feedlots are muddy and sloppy, shearing shortly after arrival can prevent manure build-up on the fleece.
- * Early shearing avoids excessive dirty pelt discounts and keeps the shearers happier.
- * Shearing provides producers and buyers with a ready look at their end product.
- * Producers are more likely to visualize and market lambs at the appropriate time and finish.

Exceptions to Consider

- * Winter feedlots with minimal to non-existent protective housing, shearing would be ill advised.
- * Summer time when flies are out, shearing would be ill advised.