



2009 RAM LAMB TESTING PROGRAM

(nominations accepted between January 1 and March 15, 2009)

PENNSYLVANIA'S LIVESTOCK EVALUATION CENTER

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PURPOSE :

1. Provide a sound testing program that allows both large and small sheep producers to participate.
2. Promote the value of performance testing of sheep in Pennsylvania.
3. Provide a common test for evaluating rate of gain, structural soundness, and estimated carcass merit.
4. Provide an opportunity for purebred breeders and commercial producers to purchase performance-tested rams that have been evaluated in part under similar environmental conditions.

SPONSOR :

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with Penn State's Department of Dairy and Animal Science, the Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Grower's Association, and state breed associations.

SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE :

Anyone who participated in last year's tests will automatically become members of this year's Species Advisory Committee and will begin their duties about May 1. Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee will chair this committee and meetings will be called as needed. Participants are encouraged to forward suggestions or concerns in writing to the chairman or to the director of the LEC.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE :

Representation on this committee will include Penn State animal science faculty members involved in small ruminant teaching, research, and/or extension (Dr. Harold W. Harpster, and Mr. Richard Kuzemchak), the attending veterinarian (or designee, Dr. Lester C. Griel, Jr.), a representative of The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (Mr. Ron Miller), the director of the Livestock Evaluation Center (LEC, Mr. Glenn Eberly), the assistant manager of the LEC (Mr. Greg Hubbard), and three sheep producers selected for three-year terms:

John Stewart (term expires 10-1-09)

Bob Calvert (term expires 10-1-09)

Dr. Kathy Soder (term expires 10-1-09)

Members of the Technical Advisory Committee will be listed in the sale catalog.

SALE COMMITTEE :

The combined Species and Technical Committees will make up the basic Sale Committee. A smaller group consisting of two or three individuals from the technical committee and five or six test participants appointed by the co-chairmen of the Executive Committee will be responsible for making and carrying out the final decisions on all sale details.

APPROXIMATE TESTING TIMETABLE

Nomination Period *January 1 – March 15*

Delivery date..... April 7
Official start..... April 21
14-day weighing..... May 5
28-day weighing May 19
42-day weighing *..... June 2
56-day weighing..... June 16
70-day weighing..... June 30
77-day weighing..... July 7

Tentative sale date..... August 1

*** Trim feet on rams**

Pre-Test Technical Comm. Mtg..... To be scheduled
Post-Test Technical Comm. Mtg. To be scheduled

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY :

1. All rams must be out of a sire and dam that is registered with their national breed association(s).
2. FALL rams must be born between September 1, 2008, and November 30, 2008.
 WINTER rams must be born between December 1, 2008, and February 28, 2009.
 Rams will be penned according to breed, age, and size as uniformly as possible.
Animals must be identified to meet Current Federal Scrapie Regulations.
3. For the purpose of establishing realistic standards, breeds will be divided into six groups:
 GROUP #1 – Cheviot, Southdown, Tunis, Texel
 GROUP #2 – Dorset, Montadale, Oxford, Shropshire, Polypay
 GROUP #3 – Hampshire, Suffolk
 GROUP #4 – (wool breeds) Columbia, Corriedale, Merino, Rambouillet
 GROUP #5 – Hair sheep
 GROUP #6 – F1 Crosses
4. It is strongly suggested that anyone planning to enter a ram for test, should be prepared to weigh 10 or more lambs by one sire, between the ages of 30 and 60 days. To be eligible for test, a ram should have an adjusted 50-day weight ratio of 100 (average) or higher.

MINIMUM WT/DAY OF AGE FOR RAMS AT DELIVERY		
	<i>Group ratio of 100 or more</i>	<i>Group ratio of less than 100 or no ratio</i>
1, 4 & 5	.50 lb/day	.55 lb/day
2	.60 lb/day	.65 lb/day
3 & 6	.70 lb/day	.75 lb/day

5. In the event rams have to be sent home due to insufficient pen space, rams from breeders who did not use the ratio system will be considered in the same category as rams not shorn, underweight, off type, etc.
6. All rams must meet acceptable standards for conformation at time of delivery. This is a combination of structural correctness, mouth, feet and legs, testicular development and scrotal circumference, frame, type, natural muscling, breed type, and wool quality. Shoulder height and height ratios will be used at the end of the test.
7. **Rams must arrive at the Center with feet recently trimmed and no evidence of any foot disease.**
8. All rams must be accompanied by a veterinarian's statement that required vaccinations and/or tests have been done within the designated time, that the ram is in good health and apparently free of infectious and contagious diseases, and that it *originates from a flock from which no infectious and/or contagious diseases including Scrapie, OPP and Johne's has been diagnosed within the past 12 months.*

N O M I N A T I O N P R O C E D U R E :

1. Nomination forms must be received at the LEC according to the timetable. A nomination fee of \$20/ram must accompany the nomination form. Make check payable to "P.S.W.G.A. Ram Testing Fund". Entry fees for rams not accepted due to insufficient pen space and/or rams that do not meet entry requirements at the LEC will be refunded. A minimum of 40 ram lambs must be nominated in order to conduct the test.
2. After a producer is notified that his nomination has been accepted, cancellation of entry other than not meeting entry requirements, will result in forfeiture of nomination fee.
3. Anyone whose rams are accepted for test agrees to abide by all rules, regulations, terms and conditions of the entire program now in existence, or any that might be adopted by the LEC Executive Committee for that particular test. Not doing so will jeopardize eligibility for future tests.

N O M I N A T I O N A C C E P T A N C E P R O C E D U R E :

1. Nominations will be accepted from January 1 through March 15, 2009. The postmark will determine eligibility.
2. First choice will be given to Pennsylvania breeders with eligible rams, who have participated in the past.
3. In the event all pen space is not utilized by past test participants, nominations will be accepted from Pennsylvania breeders who have not previously tested at the LEC.
4. In the event all pen space is not utilized by Pennsylvania breeders, out-of-state nominations will be accepted, with first choice going to breeders who have tested in recent Pennsylvania tests.
5. After nominations are accepted, there will be no further differentiation between Pennsylvania breeders and out-of-state breeders.

H E A L T H A N D V E T E R I N A R Y C A R E :

1. Health of the rams will be under the supervision of Dr. Lester Griel, Attending Veterinarian..
2. During the adjustment period, all rams will be administered products to control internal and external parasites and vaccinated for enterotoxemia and tetanus (2 doses), contagious ecthyma (sore mouth),

and rabies. During the test rams will receive the product for control of foot scald (Volar). Contagious foot rot immunization products will not be used.

3. **All rams will have their feet trimmed by a professional foot trimmer at the midpoint of the test and again at the end of the test. Additional foot trimming on individual rams will be performed if necessary. Footbath treatment of rams will occur every two to three weeks during the test.**
4. Any ram deemed clinically unsound during the test will be removed from the test at the owner's expense. This decision will be made by the LEC director and the Attending Veterinarian (or designee).
5. All rams will receive a physical examination for breeding soundness, at the end of the test.
6. Consignors will pay for all incurred veterinary and foot trimming costs.
7. **Genotyping:**
 - a. **All rams will be genotyped for scrapie susceptibility at codon 171 immediately after delivery of the entire test group. Breeders will be notified of the results as soon as they are available. Breeders may request genotyping at additional codons.**
 - b. **The breeder may elect to remove any ram from the test that is determined to be susceptible to Scrapie, provided the station director is notified of the decision prior to the 14 day test report. This is the only time period during which a breeder may elect to remove a ram from the test based on scrapie genotype.**
 - c. **A breeder who elects to remove a Scrapie susceptible ram from the test before the 14 day test report may elect to permit the ram to finish the testing procedure as a private test and this animal(s) will not be eligible for sale.**
 - d. **If a breed association does not permit registration of animals that genotype QQ at codon 171, no QQ rams of that breed will be eligible for the performance tested sale.**
 - e. **Genotyping of rams for Spider Lamb syndrome will be available to breeders on an elective basis. Breeders will have the option to remove rams that test NS or SS for Spider Syndrome from the sale.**
 - f. **Genotyping results for scrapie susceptibility and spider lamb syndrome will be available to potential buyers for animals that are offered for sale. Test results for animals voluntarily removed from the test for either scrapie susceptibility or spider syndrome will be held in confidence and will not be available to potential buyers or the general public.**
 - g. **No genetic testing results will be reported unless acquired while animals are on the premises of the Livestock Evaluation Center.**

SHEARING :

Owners are encouraged to shear their rams two or three weeks prior to delivery to the LEC so they have recovered from the initial shock of being shorn. Any ram not shorn prior to delivery will be shorn (at the owner's expense)—regardless of weather—prior to the start of the test. Rams will be shorn at the conclusion of the test.

RETURN OF RAMS :

Rams may be returned at any time to the owner, at the owner's expense, for any reason deemed necessary by the technical or species committee. However, no ram will be removed from test and/or LEC without first having approval from the LEC Director and Attending Veterinarian. Some reasons for return might be:

1. Health (including chronic bloaters)
2. Disposition
3. Lack of valid identification
4. Ram classified as potential non-breeder
5. No sale
6. Any reason deemed necessary by the LEC Director and/or the Attending Veterinarian (or designee)

LIABILITY :

The breeder retains ownership of his ram(s) while on test at the LEC. However, the breeder waives any right to press claims of any type against LEC supervisors and employees, and will sign a testing agreement stating that he assumes full responsibility. The cost of insurance is included in the testing charges to be paid by the owner. Owners who lose rams during the testing period will be paid an amount equal to the market value of a 110-pound market lamb as quoted at New Holland the week the loss occurred, minus testing costs incurred to that date.

RATION :

Rations vary considerably among test stations, particularly in level of energy. This variation causes some differences in the average daily gains of different tests. Differences caused by feed are not heritable.

The present ration used for sheep has at least 16.0% protein and 73% T.D.N. In addition, grass-mixed hay is fed free choice.

Additional protein may be added to the starter ration in an effort to get the lambs off to a good start. Medication may be either added and/or changed at the discretion of the veterinarian.

Also, the Technical Committee and the veterinarian may, from time-to-time, make other adjustments to the ration which they feel is in the best interest of the test.

Ration analysis will be done as changes occur in the ration. All feed batches will be tested upon delivery to the facility to ensure that the feed contains less than 15ppm of copper and/or a copper molybdenum ratio of less than 10:1 for safe feeding of sheep.

PROGRESS REPORT :

1. Rams will be weighed every 14 days, and a progress report will be sent to the owner and other interested persons at least every other period.

2. A final report covering the performance of all rams will be made available as soon as possible following the conclusion of the test.

PERFORMANCE TEST SALE :

1. Sale date is August 1, 2009, and will include an Invitational Ewe Sale.
2. An index ratio will be used to rank rams at the conclusion of the test to determine the sale order for rams within their respective breed or breed groups. The highest indexing ram of each breed will be sold first in the sale according to the determined breed sale order . Breeds with six or more animals on test will sell first, with last year's sale averages determining which breed sells first. All rams eligible for sale must be offered for sale.
3. Approximately the top 75% within any breed and/or breed group will sell. However, the Sale Committee will determine the actual number to be offered for sale.
4. **All applicable registration papers must be provided to the LEC director no later than July 10, 2008, in order to be eligible to sell.**

RATING RAMS FOR SALE :

1. All rams will be inspected by the LEC director, attending veterinarian, and Sale Committee for breed character, breed type, soundness of mouth, breeding soundness, structural correctness, black fiber content, etc. Depending on the severity of the fault, a ram may be eliminated from the sale regardless of performance. The Sale Committee's decision on all sale details will be final, including which rams sell, minimum sale price, minimum index, etc.
2. Scrotal circumference must measure 30 cm for all rams 8 months or older and at least 28 cm for all rams under 8 months of age.
3. All rams eligible for sale will be ranked by an index ratio within breeds and/or breed groups. The following index will be used on the meat breeds.

$$.35 \text{ X average daily gain ratio} + .35 \text{ X final weight per day of age ratio} + .15 \text{ X adjusted fat thickness value} + .15 \text{ X adjusted loin muscle area value} = \text{ram index}$$

$$\frac{\text{individual ram index}}{\text{average breed and/or breed group index}} = \text{INDEX RATIO}$$

4. The following index will be used on the wool breeds.

$$60 \text{ X average daily gain} + 4 \text{ X inches of wool} + 4 \text{ X pounds of clean wool} - 3 \text{ X face covering score} - 4 \text{ X skin fold or wrinkle score}$$

$$\frac{\text{individual ram index}}{\text{average breed and/or breed group index}} = \text{INDEX RATIO}$$

TESTING COSTS:

1. A \$20 (twenty dollars) nomination fee per ram will be applied toward testing cost of all rams that are delivered. Anyone who does not deliver his/her ram(s) after they have been accepted will forfeit the nomination fee.
2. The \$20 nomination fee, plus forty (\$40) dollars, is due at time of delivery for a total of \$60 (sixty dollars) per ram.
3. If a ram dies or must be removed from test, the owner will pay all expenses incurred to that time.
4. Grain costs for each ram will be calculated by multiplying the average pen feed conversion, times the actual gain (in pounds) of each ram in the pen, times actual grain costs.
5. Other testing costs (hay, straw, vet bill, scanning, etc.) will be divided on a per ram basis.
6. A yardage fee of \$.08/day/ram will be charged to help offset miscellaneous testing costs such as postage, telephone, and office supplies.
7. Out-of-state participants will also be charged a fee for labor and facilities which will be (approximately \$7.50/ram). Total testing costs commensurate will be determined by the LEC director.
8. All sale expenses such as advertising, auctioneer, and catalogs will be determined as a percentage of the sale gross and deducted from the selling price of each ram sold. Any ewes catalogued, but not showing up for sale, will be charged the same sale expense as the average sale expense for that particular breed.
9. *No ram will be removed from the LEC until all incurred expenses are paid unless approved by the LEC director. Anyone not paying expenses will jeopardize the opportunity for future testing until accounts are paid in full.*
10. Final test payment or billing will be made to all test participants within 30 days of the sale, providing all testing bills have been received.

RAM LAMB TEST NOMINATION FORM
PENNSYLVANIA LIVESTOCK EVALUATION CENTER

PLEASE PRINT

Owner's name _____ Telephone _____

Farm Name _____ *E-Mail _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Breed _____

Number of rams you want to test _____

TESTING AGREEMENT

Upon acceptance of any of my animals for testing at the Pennsylvania Livestock Evaluation Center, I, the owner, do hereby accept full and complete responsibility and liability for my animals during all phases of the program, including pretest, official test, post-test, and sale. I have read and agree to abide by the rules, regulations, terms, and conditions of the program, both now in existence or hereafter adopted by the LEC Executive Committee for this test.

I further authorize employees of The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, The Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association and any other person or organization connected with the management of the program to act as my agent in connection with the program, including any sale of the animals—provided, however, that the above-mentioned employees or organizations shall not be liable for any loss, claims, or suit by me arising out of participation in the program, including, but not limited to, the sale of the animals.

(owner's signature) (date)

Nomination Date: January 1 through March 15, 2009

Nomination Fee: \$20.00/ram (due with this form)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO P.S.W.G.A. RAM TESTING FUND

Send nomination fee and form to: PA Department of Agriculture
Livestock Evaluation Center
1494 W. Pine Grove Road
PA Furnace, PA 16865