

Portable Sheep Dairy

Final Report for FNE03-479

Project Type: Farmer

Funds awarded in 2003: \$9,611.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/2004

Region: Northeast

State: Maine

Project Leader:

[Claire Mikolayunas](#)

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Project Information

Summary:

The goal of this project was to produce a high value crop - pasture based sheep milk - through grazing of underutilized pasture. The project was based around a portable sheep parlor, allowing ewes to be milked in the field, on borrowed land. For two seasons, dairy and domestic ewes grazed hillsides of a nearby educational farm. The milking system included a 9 x 14 portable parlor, allowing 6 ewes to enter the parlor at a time. The milk was frozen and delivered once per week to a local cheese maker.

The project spanned two milking seasons, with Suffolk and East Friesian ewes and ewe lambs milked each year. Ewe lambs that were more than 50% Friesian averaged much greater milk production and longer lactation length.

Claire found that income was less than projected for both years due to lower milk production than she expected and the number of ewes. She feels that it is important to milk at least 24 ewes in the first year, getting more milk for equipment prep and cleanup time investment. The portable parlor worked very well but Claire would make some modifications in the future. She would increase the size of the holding pen and have the holding pen on a concrete pad. She would also work on developing an efficient milk transport system.

Research

Participation Summary

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or SARE.



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