**West Virginia Sheep Producers’ Reproductive Management Survey**

****Dear WV Sheep Producer:

West Virginia University is conducting a survey of sheep producers to collect information that will be used to help improve viability of sheep enterprises in West Virginia. The survey will help identify *your* needs and concerns, and gives you the opportunity to express your opinion regarding out-of-season breeding. The information provided will be used to analyze and evaluate socio-economic factors that influence producers’ decisions to adopt out-of-season breeding.

Please take a few minutes to complete and return the attached survey. The survey should be completed by or on behalf of the primary farm owner. Participation is voluntary and the information that you provide will be kept as confidential as legally possible for individual producers. If you do not feel comfortable answering a particular question, please omit it and continue with the rest of the survey. This survey is being conducted by:

West Virginia University West Virginia Small Ruminant Project  
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Resources & Design P.O. Box 6180  
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Respectfully yours,

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1) What is your gender (primary farm operator)?  Male  Female  
  
2) What is your age (primary farm operator)?  Under 30  30-44  45-60  Over 60

3) Which animals have you had experience raising?  Dairy  Sheep  Poultry   
  Beef  Goats  Swine  
  Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) What animals are currently being raised on your farm?  Dairy  Sheep  Poultry  
  Beef  Goats  Swine  
  Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) What is the size of your breeding flock (sheep) at present?  
  Less than 20 head  20-49 head  50-99 head  
  100-249 head  250-500 head  More than 500 head

6) How many years have you raised sheep?  Less than 2  2-5  6-10  More than 10

7) How satisfied are you with the productivity of your ewes (pounds of lamb sold for each ewe  
 per year)?  
  Very satisfied  Satisfied  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

8) How satisfied are you with the profitability of your sheep business?   
  Very satisfied  Satisfied  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied   
  
9) What is your highest level of educational attainment (primary farm operator)?   
  Less than high school degree  
  High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)  
  Some college but no degree  
  Associate degree  
  Bachelor degree  
  Graduate degree  
  
10) What is your annual household income?   
  Less than $50,000  $101,000 - $150,000  More than $200,000   
  $50,000 - $100,000  $151,000 - $200,000  
  
11) What percentage of your gross household incomes comes from sheep  
 production?  
  Less than 25%  25% - 50%  51% - 75%  76% - 100%

12) What is your farming status (primary farm operator)?  Full-time  Part-time

13) In which county in West Virginia is your farm located? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
14) How do you access agricultural information to enhance your farm decision-making?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sources** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Radio |  |  |
| Newspaper |  |  |
| Internet |  |  |
| Bulletins |  |  |
| Friends |  |  |
| Extension agents |  |  |
| Social media (e.g. Facebook) |  |  |
| Others |  |  |

15) How many times do you contact an extension agent for agricultural advice in a period of  
 one year?  
  None  Few  Many  Unsure

16) Do you belong to a farmer organization?  Yes  No (Go to # 18)   
  
17) In the period of one year, how many times do you attend meetings for the farmer  
 organization(s) in which you are involved?? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

18) How has the size of your breeding flock changed during the past 3 years?   
  Increased (Go to # 19)  Decreased (Go to # 20)  Stayed the same (Go to # 20)  
  
19) If you answered ‘Increased’ to Question 18, please rate the following factors according to  
 the degree of influence it has had on your decision to expand. Responses for degree of  
 influence are 1= Strong Influence; 2= Moderate Influence; 3= Weak Influence; 4= No  
 Influence. Please check the appropriate boxes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Degree of Influence** | | | |
|  | **1 = Strong** | **2 = Moderate** | **3 = Weak** | **4 = None** |
| Personal Preference |  |  |  |  |
| Labor Availability |  |  |  |  |
| Production Costs |  |  |  |  |
| Predator Losses |  |  |  |  |
| Forage Availability |  |  |  |  |
| Manage Risk |  |  |  |  |
| Even-out Income |  |  |  |  |
| Available Capital or Financing |  |  |  |  |
| Available Facilities |  |  |  |  |
| Lamb and Wool Prices |  |  |  |  |
| Health of Producer |  |  |  |  |
| Time to Retirement |  |  |  |  |
| Debt |  |  |  |  |
| Technical Advice and Support |  |  |  |  |

20) If you answered ‘Decreased’ or ‘Stayed the same’ to Question 18, please rate the following  
 factors according to the degree of influence it has had on your decision not to expand.  
 Responses for degree of influence are 1= Strong Influence; 2= Moderate Influence; 3=  
 Weak Influence; 4= No Influence. Please check the appropriate boxes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Degree of Influence** | | | |
|  | **1 = Strong** | **2 = Moderate** | **3 = Weak** | **4 = None** |
| Personal Preference |  |  |  |  |
| Labor Availability |  |  |  |  |
| Production Costs |  |  |  |  |
| Predator Losses |  |  |  |  |
| Forage Availability |  |  |  |  |
| Manage Risk |  |  |  |  |
| Even-out Income |  |  |  |  |
| Available Capital or Financing |  |  |  |  |
| Available Facilities |  |  |  |  |
| Lamb and Wool Prices |  |  |  |  |
| Health of Producer |  |  |  |  |
| Time to Retirement |  |  |  |  |
| Debt |  |  |  |  |
| Technical Advice and Support |  |  |  |  |

21) How do you intend to change the size of your breeding flock over the next 3 years?  
  Increase  Stay the same  
  Decrease  Unsure

22) Current technology affords sheep producers the options of lambing in the spring and/or fall  
 months. Given this option under your present farming circumstances, indicate your  
 preference for lambing months.  
  
  Spring lambing (Go to # 23)  Fall lambing (Go to # 24)  Both (Please answer #23 & 24)

23) If you chose ‘Spring lambing’ or ‘Both’, please rate the following factors according to the  
 degree of influence it has had on your decision. Responses for degree of influence are 1=  
 Strong Influence; 2= Moderate Influence; 3= Weak Influence; 4= No Influence. Please  
 check the appropriate boxes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Degree of Influence** | | | |
|  | **1 = Strong** | **2 = Moderate** | **3 = Weak** | **4 = None** |
| Higher Market Prices |  |  |  |  |
| Less Labor Required |  |  |  |  |
| Lower Feed Cost |  |  |  |  |
| Less Predator Losses |  |  |  |  |
| Increased Stocking Rates of Ewes |  |  |  |  |
| Increased Stocking Rates of Lambs |  |  |  |  |
| Lower Internal Parasite Losses |  |  |  |  |
| More Efficient Use of Farmer’s Time |  |  |  |  |
| More Available Markets |  |  |  |  |
| More Available Forage |  |  |  |  |
| Higher Profitability |  |  |  |  |
| Make Use of Barn Space |  |  |  |  |

24) If you chose ‘Fall lambing’ or ‘Both’, please rate the following factors according to the  
 degree of influence it has had on your decision. Responses for degree of influence are 1=  
 Strong Influence; 2= Moderate Influence; 3= Weak Influence; 4= No Influence. Please check  
 the appropriate boxes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Degree of Influence** | | | |
|  | **1 = Strong** | **2 = Moderate** | **3 = Weak** | **4 = None** |
| Higher Market Prices |  |  |  |  |
| Less Labor Required |  |  |  |  |
| Lower Pasture Costs |  |  |  |  |
| Less Predator Losses |  |  |  |  |
| Increased Summer Stocking Rates of Ewes |  |  |  |  |
| Increased Summer Stocking Rates of Lambs |  |  |  |  |
| Lower Internal Parasite Losses |  |  |  |  |
| More Efficient use of Farmer’s Time |  |  |  |  |
| More Available Markets |  |  |  |  |
| More Available Forage |  |  |  |  |
| Higher Profitability |  |  |  |  |
| Make Use of Barn Space |  |  |  |  |

25) Please rank the following marketing methods used for your lambs in order of importance,  
 with 1 being most regularly used and 5 being least used.

\_\_\_\_\_ Local auctions  
\_\_\_\_\_ Out-of-state auctions   
\_\_\_\_\_ Electronic methods  
\_\_\_\_\_ Direct farm gate  
\_\_\_\_\_ Direct send to consumer

26) What percentage of your lambs are sold during the following months?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ January – March  
 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ April – June  
 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ July – September  
 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ October - December

27) Have you ever heard the term out-of-season breeding?  Yes  No  Unsure

28) Would you be willing to attend a meeting to discuss out-of-season breeding?  
  Yes  No  Unsure

29) Have you ever been invited to attend meetings to discuss out-of-season breeding?   
  Yes  No (Go to # 33)

30) How many times? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

31) Did you attend?  Yes  No (Go to # 33)

32) How many times? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

33) Do you currently attempt to breed ewes out-of-season?  Yes  No (Go to # 37)  
  
34) What percentage of your ewes are bred during the following months?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ January – March  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ April – June  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ July – September  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ October - December

35) Please rank the following reasons for your participation in out-of-season breeding in order  
 of importance, with 1 being most important and 8 being least important.

\_\_\_\_\_ Higher prices for fall-born lambs  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lower feed cost  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less loss of lambs due to predation (coyotes/dogs/bears)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Production of show lambs  
\_\_\_\_\_ More convenient  
\_\_\_\_\_ Meet a specific market  
\_\_\_\_\_ Lower lamb loss due to internal parasites or less deworming required  
\_\_\_\_\_ Encouragement from university or extension agents

36) How satisfied are you with the results from out-of-season breeding?   
  Very satisfied  Satisfied  Somewhat satisfied  Not satisfied

37) If you have **NOT** participated in out-of-season breeding, please rank the following  
 reasons why you have not participated in order of importance, with 1 being most important  
 and 6 being least important.

\_\_\_\_\_ No economic advantage  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Too technical   
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not satisfied with results  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not convenient  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Too much uncertainty in terms of results   
 \_\_\_\_\_ Does not fit my forage production program  
  
  
38) What is your view on the requirements of practicing OSB, as compared to conventional  
 breeding? (Please check all that apply)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Management time** | **Cost** | **Knowledge** | **Labor** | **Land** | **Other (Specify)** |
| **More** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Equal** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Less** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Don’t know** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

39) How familiar are you with practices necessary for high fertility in out-of-season bred ewes?  
  Very familiar  Somewhat familiar  Not familiar  Unsure

40) Do you currently do any of the following on your farm?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Pregnancy Diagnosis of Females |  |  |
| Estrous Synchronization |  |  |
| Use CIDRs |  |  |
| Conduct Breeding Soundness Exams on Males |  |  |
| Flush Females |  |  |

41) What other areas of sheep production, management or marketing would you like additional  
 information or training on in the future? Please specify below.

42) Please add any other comments or suggestions you would like to share with us relative to  
 sheep production on your farm.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**