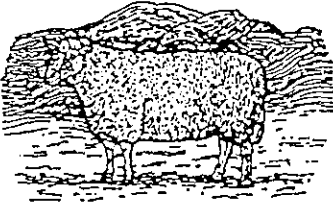


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FNE 93-23



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FINAL REPORT OF THE MOUNTAIN  
 SHEEP PROJECT 1993 FOR THE SARE  
 GRANT PROGRAM

November 3, 1993

The Mountain Sheep Project had a very successful summer. Mt Snow's management was happy with the acreage grazed by the sheep and the condition they left the slopes (John Redd, Mt Snow vice president, told me "The slopes have never looked better."). The sheep owners were pleased with the health and condition of the sheep upon their return home in September. And I was impressed with the effort the Mt Snow employees put into the shepherding work.

The sheep stayed on Mt Snow from July 8 to September 29. One hundred came from Major Farm, fifty from the Dixons in Dummerston, and the sheep were managed in two separate flocks. They spent all summer grazing the higher elevation, very steep North Face of the mountain. Each group was moved every two or three days to a new pasture, and any leftover sapling, bramble and other stems were cut down by hand.

Mt Snow did all its own shepherding work, except that which required a herding dog. They moved the fences, cut swaths at the trails edge for new fences, fed salt, water, and the guard dog. In addition, a Major Farm employee checked on the sheep at least once a week. It should be said that the Mt Snow employees (especially Rod Twig and John Densmore) did an outstanding job -- the fences were erected carefully, the sheep were grazed just the right times, and whatever stems remained were all cleaned up by hand. By the end of the summer the trails were beginning to resemble well tended pastures.

The sheep grazed at least 37 acres in the twelve weeks they were on Mt Snow. They were grazing extremely steep areas, some so steep that if one falls, one keeps falling, and one needs a hard hat to protect against rocks dislodged by the sheep. These areas can only be maintained by hand otherwise, or with a track vehicle lowered down the slope on a cable. These areas have been mowed or cut infrequently in the past - thus the sheep were dealing with some overgrown areas.

The summer's two mishaps seem to have been the result of stray bears or other wildlife wandering into the fence at dusk and setting free the sheep. One sheep died of panic. A guard dog watched over the sheep all summer.

The Mountain Sheep Project also grazed 150 sheep on Killington this past summer. Thanks to the efforts of their marketing department, the Project received a lot of media coverage - on at least three TV stations, a dozen newspapers or magazines, and five to ten radio stations.

I should note that the SARE grant was in large part responsible for the Mountain Sheep Project's existence this summer, and the summer was successful enough that the Project is bound to continue. This past winter no ski area appeared ready to come up with all the cash necessary to pay for the Project. We were ready to give up when we received this grant - that got Mt Snow involved, then Killington at the last minute (June) came up with the full payment for its own Mountain Sheep Project.

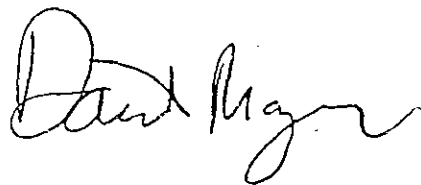
As a whole the Mountain Sheep Project worked out financially in 1993. We got all our fencing, dog, sheep rental, transportation, and other expenses paid for, plus (with the addition of Killington) made a little to cover our time and effort. For the Mt Snow Project, we received \$3600 from the SARE grant, and we came up with \$4157 in matching funds. For the Mountain Sheep Project as a whole (Mt Snow and Killington) we received \$13,650 in income and we had \$11,844 in cash expenses.

Chances are good the Mountain Sheep Project will expand to more mountains and more sheep farms in the future. This summer we had sheep from three farms grazing two mountains. Next summer I expect to have sheep from five or six farms grazing three or four mountains. I expect the emphasis will continue to be on the steepest, most inaccessible trails. As during last winter, I will spend a considerable amount of time this winter communicating with and visiting ski areas and sheep farms to get them involved. This outreach will take place after the lifetime of our SARE grant. Within the lifetime of the SARE grant, considerable outreach work was done. The outreach that was done in the spring and summer included announcements on two radio stations and in Agriview for sheep; communication by phone and mail with eleven different sheep farms, the extension system (Chet Parsons) and agriculture department (Roger Clapp); three visits to Killington to go over details of the Project; information about the Project at the Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival in September; and many (ten to twenty) media interviews by phone and in person.

Materials included in this grant report include: 1) A map of the areas grazed by the sheep on Mt Snow this summer; 2) An article about the Mountain Sheep Project that appeared in the Rutland Herald; 3) An article that the agriculture department put in its Agriview to help us recruit sheep; 4) Pictures: #1 - view from part way up the North Face; trail on right was grazed. #2 - near the summit, looking across a grazed trail. #3 - a view down two trails, the left one was grazed, the right one not yet grazed. #4 - shepherd Rod Twig with guard dog, solar panel, and fence charger in back. #5 - the working sheep.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat that the Mountain Sheep Project was a success in 1993, and its success - even its existence - was due in large measure to the grant received from SARE. Both Mt Snow and Killington appear pleased enough with the results of the Project that it seems likely the Project will continue in an expanded form in 1994.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Meyer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the "Thank you," text.