# **Virginia Cooperative Extension**

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University





Animal & Poultry Sciences (0306) Virginia Tech, 366 Litton Reaves Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 540/231-9159 Fax: 540/231-3010 E-mail: sgreiner@vt.edu

# Livestock Update

## Beef - Horse - Poultry - Sheep - Swine

## December 2012

This LIVESTOCK UPDATE contains timely subject matter on beef cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, and related junior work. Use this material as you see fit for local newspapers, radio programs, newsletters, and for the formulation of recommendations.

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Scott P. Greiner, Extension Project Leader Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences

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Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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#### **Dates to Remember**

#### **BEEF**

#### **JANUARY**

 Virginia Tech Beef Cattle Health Conference. Blacksburg. <u>Contact:</u> Ralph Roop (540) 231-7344; email: <u>reroop@vt.edu</u>

#### **FEBRUARY**

1 Virginia Beef Convention. Hotel Roanoke. <u>Contact:</u> Jason Carter, (540) 992-1009; email: jcarter@vacattlemen.org

#### **HORSE**

#### **MARCH**

22-24 EquiSmartz State Educational Weekend. VHC. Lexington. <u>Contacts:</u> Celeste Crisman, (540) 231-9162; email: <u>ccrisman@vt.edu</u> or Jessica Tussing, (540) 231-6345; email: jessit07@vt.edu

#### **SHEEP**

#### **JANUARY**

11-12 Shepherds Symposium, Alphin Stuart Arena. Virginia Tech. <u>Contact:</u> Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159; email: <u>sgreiner@vt.edu</u>

#### **December Beef Management Calendar**

Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

#### Spring Calving Herds

- Market backgrounded, value-added calves
- Feed replacement heifers to gain 1.5 1.75 lbs per day, adjust nutrition based on target
- Monitor body condition of cows
- Test hay for nutrient content and supplement accordingly
- Increase energy during cold periods
- Attend bull and replacement heifer sales
- Evaluate cull cow marketing plan
- Winterize waterers
- Send in soil samples if not done earlier this year

#### Fall Calving Herds

- Begin breeding season on cows; complete AI on heifers
- Monitor body condition on cows and especially first calf heifers
- Manage 2 and 3 year-old cows separate from main herd
- Feed cows extra energy after calving; some protein may be needed also if good stockpiled forage is not available. Cows calving at BCS < 5 should receive special nutritional attention.
- Keep high quality, high magnesium, high selenium minerals available
- Monitor breeding activity, condition and health of all bulls; remove and replace injured or thin bulls
- Winterize waterers
- Send in soil samples if not done earlier this year

#### January Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

#### Spring Calving Herds

- Begin to gather calving supplies
- Keep late pregnant cows gaining 1.0 lbs per day
- Pregnant heifers and 3 yr olds should gain 2.0-2.5 lbs per day
- Conduct forage tests if not done earlier this year
- Keep high quality minerals available
- Review calving assistance procedures
- Stockpile a few gallons of colostrum
- Evaluate herd performance and breeding program- establish selection goals for bulls to be purchases (or AI sires)
- Soil test pastures not tested in last 3 years
- Order clover seed for frost seeding later this winter

#### Fall Calving Herds

- Begin/continue breeding
- Check cow and bull body condition
- Supplement energy to young bulls during breeding season
- Conduct forage tests if not done earlier this year
- Continue to check calves closely for health problems
- Re-implant September and early October born calves that were implanted at birth
- Soil test pastures not tested in last 3 years
- Order clover seed for frost seeding later this winter

#### Beef Webinar Focuses on "Financial Decision Tools" for Cattlemen January 15, 2013 - 6:30pm

Dr. Mark A. McCann Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech



Dr. Alex White, former Instructor, Dept. of Applied and Agricultural Economics at Virginia Tech, will be the featured speaker for the Beef Webinar sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension and scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 15th. Dr. White is an Ag Economist, nationally recognized for his expertise in agriculture finance and financial management. Closer to home, Dr. White was a very popular teacher noted for his engaging classes and real world problem solving examples. He now serves as a consultant in agriculture finance and as personal finance advisor in the Blacksburg area.

Dr. White will be providing a discussion of "**Financial Decision Tools**". This program will build on his previous webinars in 2011 and 2010 with a focus on how to use decisionmaking tools such as partial budgets and break-even analysis with their financial decisions for 2013. Participants in the on-line meeting will have the opportunity to ask questions through an on-line chat box or over the telephone using a number provided during the program. Check with your Extension Agent about accessing the program at your local office. Producers with high speed internet service can access the meeting at home. The web link to join the meeting is posted on the VT Beef Extension webpage <u>http://www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu/</u>. From the VT Beef Extension site, you can click on the meeting link and go directly to the meeting.

The links to the recording of the Dr. Matt Poore's discussion of Alternative Feeds from November and Dr White's previous webinars can be accessed through the VT Beef Extension page. If you have questions please contact Mark McCann at 540-231-9153.

#### 2012 Culpeper Senior BCIA Bull Sale Results

Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association hosted the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Culpeper Senior Bull Sale on Saturday, December 8, 2012 at Culpeper Agricultural Enterprises near Culpeper, Virginia. Fifty-three fallborn bulls representing the top end of the 86 bulls tested sold for an average price of \$3160. The sale included 43 Angus bulls which averaged \$3047, 2 Purebred Simmental bulls at \$2,050, 6 SimAngus bulls at \$4617, 1 Purebred Gelbvieh bull at \$2100 and 1 Gelbvieh Balancer bull at \$2600.

The high-selling bull was a SimAngus, Lot 407, consigned by Quaker Hill Farm of Louisa, Virginia. Kowpoke Cattle Company of North Tazewell, Virginia became partners with ABS Gobal, purchasing ½ semen interest and full possession for \$14,500. This homozygous black September 2011 son of Ellingson Legacy had a test YW of 1148, ratio 107, and test ADG ratio 122 along with +14.8 CED EPD, -1.1 BW EPD, +30.9 Milk EPD, MB EPD of +0.40 and RE ratio of 113. His API and TI indexes were 139.0 and 71.0 respectively, placing him in the top 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of the breed.

The high sale order index Angus bull was Lot 64, consigned by Edgewood Angus of Williamsburg, Virginia and was sold to Martin Farrier of Newport, Virginia for \$4900. This October 2011 son of Rito 2X15 of Rita 8Z22 EXP had a yearling weight of 1338, ratio 121 and an ADG of 3.64, ratio of 104, along with +0.6 BW EPD, +101 YW EPD, +33 Milk EPD, +0.48 RE EPD, and + 70 \$B value.

The strong Angus offering also included Lot 7, consigned by Quaker Hill Farm of Louisa, Virginia, which sold to David W. Cady of Scottsville, Virginia for \$4200. This low birth weight, high growth son of GAR New Design 5050 had a CED EPD of +11, WW EPD +59 and YW EPD +104, in addition to +0.75 MB EPD, +0.69 RE EPD and \$B value of +\$76.82. Lot 58, a GAR Expectation 4915 son bred by Legacy at Pine Hill of Forest, Virginia sold to Spring Creek Farms of Craigsville, WV for \$4100. This bull scanned with a 15.4 RE, ratio 123 along with EPDs of +96 YW, +26 Milk, and +0.53 RE. Another consignment from Edgewood Angus, Lot 65, commanded \$4000 and sold to Grape Hill Farms of Warsaw, Virginia. This September 2011 B/R New Day 454 son, had a yearling weight ratio of 113, along with EPDs of +29 Milk, +0.66 RE, +37.69 \$W, and +69.31 \$B. Edgewood Angus also sold Lot 63 to Griffin Farms of Freeman, Virginia for \$3900. This calving-ease son of GAR New Design 5050 posted CED EPD +10, BW EPD +0.2, MB EPD +0.63, RE EPD +0.67, and +73 \$B, as well as scanning a ratio of 135 and a 112 on %IMF and RE, respectively.

The high station index bull was awarded to Lot 49, consigned by Lucas Farm, Joe and Timmy Lucas of Blacksburg, Virginia and commanded \$2600 from Spring Hill Farm of Marshall, Virginia. This September 2011 born son of HARB Pendleton 765 JH had a test YW of 1257, ratio 114, and test ADG ratio 121 along with +9 CED EPD, +98 YW EPD, and +0.54 MB EPD and scanned a %IMF ratio of 132. The breeder group award was also presented to Lucas Farms for their consignment of Angus bulls. In addition to the high station indexing lot, Lots 48, 50 and 51 commanded prices of \$2800, \$2600 and \$3000, selling to C.J. Parsons of Lunenburg, Virginia, Tom Owen of South Boston, Virginia, and St. Omer Farm of Mitchells, Virginia, respectively. This group of bulls averaged an ADG of 3.90 with a ratio of 117, average YW of 1216, ratio 111.

The strong group of SimAngus bulls also included Lot 409 consigned by Deer Creek Farm of Lowesville, Virginia. This homozygous black, polled son of GAR Predestined commanded \$3300 from Bar-C Farm

of Lebanon, Virginia. This September 2011 bull posted a test YW ratio of 109, ADG ratio of 106, and scanned a 138 ratio for %IMF, in addition to a +71.5 WW EPD, +114.0 YW EPD, +0.81 MB EPD, and +0.69 RE EPD. Lot 405, another Quaker Hill Farm consignment sold to C.J. Parsons of Lunenburg, Virginia for \$2900.

Quaker Hill Farm of Louisa, Virginia was the consignor of both the purebred Simmental lots featured in the sale. A September 2011 homozygous black, polled son of RCR Stetson T17, Lot 401, EPDs of +11.7 CED, +13.1 CEM, +28.3 Milk, an API Index of 132 and sold to Forrest Miller of Bridgewater, Virginia for \$2000. Lot 402, a September 2011 Triple C Invasion R47K son, sold to ICW Farms of Luray, Virginia for \$2100. This homozygous black, polled bull had a test YW ratio of 105, along with a +0.89 RE EPD, -0.07 Fat EPD, and a -0.37 YG EPD, as well as scanned a 108 ratio on RE.

The purebred Gelbvieh bull, Lot 601, was consigned by Little Windy Hills of Max Meadows, Virginia and sold for \$2100 to James Wiles of Amissville, Virginia. This homozygous black, homozygous polled bull was sired by DCSF Post Rock Granite 200P2. Lot 602, a Gelbvieh Balancer bull, also consigned by Little Windy Hills commanded \$2600 from Vaughan Cattle Company of Amelia, Virginia.

In addition to the strong offering of bulls, Glenmary Farm featured 60 commercial females that were sold following the bulls. This group of commercial females included 20 cow/calf pairs, 9 bred heifers, and 20 yearling heifers. Demand was strong and prices steady, as the fall cow/calf pairs averaged \$1937, the bred heifers averaged \$1778 per head and the yearling heifers averaged \$1300 per head.

All bulls in the test and sale were consigned by members of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association. Bulls were tested at the Culpeper bull test station operated by Glenmary Farm, owned by Tom and Kim Nixon of Rapidan, Virginia. The sale was managed by Virginia BCIA and the Virginia Cattlemen's Association, and the auctioneer was Mike Jones.

#### Summary of the National Beef Quality Audit

Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The National Beef Quality Audit was initiated in 1991, and serves the beef industry by providing data and information relative to quality of our U.S. beef supply. Conducted every five years, the recent 2011 NBQA provides insight as to how the industry has improved quality attributes, and provides the necessary benchmarks to guide improvement strategies moving forward.

The NBQA is conducted in three phases consisting of interviews representing all production and marketing sectors of the industry, cooler audits and data collection at beef packing plants, and thirdly producer surveys assessing production practices. The information derived through these methods is analyzed and summarized to provide an assessment of industry progress towards its quality enhancement goals as well as establish priorities for improvement moving forward.

Following is a summary of the major findings from the 2011 National Beef Quality Audit:

Findings from Surveys Across All Industry Sectors:

- Market Sectors Define Quality in Different Ways- Sectors closer to the consumer place greater importance on traits connected with social values (animal well-being, sustainable production), yet price-per-pound remains the sole market signal throughout the chain.
- Need for Increased Transparency- The industry needs to do a better job of communicating its story to the public. Consumers want to know the story behind their beef, including how cattle feed affects the beef product, accessibility of health and management records, accessibility of age and source verification, and accessibility of third party audits documenting humane handling practices. "How and Where the Cattle Were Raised" were identified as very important by all sectors.
- Increased Importance of Food Safety and Eating Satisfaction- The importance of food safety is increasing for packers, foodservice, and retailers. Eating satisfaction is the only attribute for which packers, foodservice, and retailers are willing to pay a premium. All beef sectors most frequently define eating satisfaction as being related to tenderness and flavor.
- Additional Opportunities- Beef produced with ideal lean: fat ratios and managing cattle and carcass weights to create more uniform, consistent products are areas with potential to add value.

Findings from the Packing Sector:

- Individual Animal Identification- Nearly all cattle coming into the packing plant are identified in some fashion, with an increase in those individually identified with visual tags (50.6%) compared to the 2005 NBQA (38.7%); and a substantial increase in use of electronic ID (20.1% in 2011 vs. 3.5% in 2005).
- More Awareness of the Importance of Animal Handling- The number of bruises on cattle entering the plant is decreased from the number in the 2005 NBQA.
- Increased Carcass Weights- Carcass weights are increasing (825 lbs. for NBQA 2011 vs. 793 lbs. for NBQA 2005), and 95.1% of carcasses range between 600 and 1,000 lbs.
- Increased Availability of Prime and Choice- The percentage of Prime and Choice is at a 20-year high (61.1% for NBQA 2011 vs. 54.5% for NBQA 2005).
- Increased Percentage of Conforming Carcasses- Carcasses meeting targets of U.S. Select or higher and USDA yield grades 1 3 total 85.1% compared to 81.7% in 2005 NBQA.

• Human and Instrument Grading Are Aligned- Cattle of comparable carcass weight showed similar measurements for ribeye area, adjusted fat thickness, USDA yield grade and marbling scores whether assessed by human graders or by camera.

Findings from Producer Surveys:

- Healthy Cattle Equal Quality- To cattle producers, quality equates to raising healthy cattle and producing safe and wholesome beef. Ninety-six percent of producer respondents believe they can influence quality via activities such as preventative health care and 90% of producers have a working relationship with their veterinarian. Although 95% had some level of routine vaccination and treatment protocols, only 31% had a written plan indicating a greater need for documentation.
- Injection Site Improvements- Educational emphasis through Beef Quality Assurance has greatly reduced injection-site lesions since the 1991 NBQA. However, improvement is still needed, particularly within the dairy segment, with 41% of dairy producers still giving injections in the animal's rump.
- Low-Stress Handling Is a Priority- Use of good stockmanship and animal-handling skills is the producer's primary method of intentionally influencing quality. Ninety-eight percent do not use an electric prod as their primary driving tool.
- BQA Is Being Adopted- Eighty-seven percent of respondents say they have heard of BQA and 71% have attended a BQA training or completed an online training. Receiving a premium for following BQA protocols is an ideal.
- Animal Identification and Traceability- Seventy-eight percent of respondents used individual animal ID as a means to keep track of withdrawal times for animal health products.

While there is strong evidence that all segments of the industry have made significant improvements to enhance beef quality, the 2011 NBQA has identified additional challenges and provides opportunities for further improvement. The major challenges to quality have been categorized as food safety, eating satisfaction, how and where cattle are raised, lean/fat/bone, weight/size, and genetics. Next month, we will examine opportunities for cow-calf producers to address these areas of focus to enhance quality.

For more details and results of the National Beef Quality Audit, visit the national Beef Quality Assurance website at <u>http://bqa.org/</u>.

#### Virginia Shepherds' Symposium January 11-12, 2013 - Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena, VA Tech, Blacksburg, VA

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Program Ove	erview:							
9:00 am- 5:00 pm	Sheep Management 101 Workshop All day workshop for beginning shepherds covering topics related to basic sheep production and lambin management. Workshop will include hands-on activities with sheep. (*additional registration fee, limited to first 20 participants registered)							
4:00 pm Virg	inia Sheep Industry Board Meeting (open to public)- Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena							
6:00	Virginia Sheep Producers Association Board Meeting (open to public) Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena							
<u>Saturday, Ja</u> 8:15 am Regi	nuary 12- all activities at Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena stration & Commercial Exhibits							
9:00	<b>"Sheep Health- Common Problems, Mistakes, and Remedies"</b> Dr. Andy Meadows, DVM, Springwood Livestock Mgt. Services, Wytheville, VA							
10:00	<b>"A New Approach: Forage-Based Ram Test for Evaluation of Performance and Parasites"</b> Dr. Scott Greiner, Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech Mr. Lee Wright, Southwest AREC, Virginia Tech							
	Break							
10:45	<b>"Utilizing Fecal Egg Counts as Parasite Management Tool"</b> Dr. Anne Zajac, DVM, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine							
11:45	Roy Meek Outstanding Sheep Producer Award Presentation Virginia Sheep Producers Association Annual Business Meeting							
12:15 pm	Lunch							
	<b>"The Sheep Business- National Perspective from ASI"</b> Dr. Will Getz, ASI Executive Board- Region II Director, Georgia							
	<b>"What's New with the American Lamb Board"</b> Mr. Leo Tammi, Director- American Lamb Board, Mt. Sidney, VA							
1:30 pm	<b>"Flock Nutrition Strategies"</b> Dr. Mark McCann, Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech							
2:00	Sheep Management Workshops (hands-on sessions) Ram Selection- Dr. Scott Greiner Flock Health Tips- Dr. Kevin Pelzer, DVM, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine Fecal Egg Count Lab- Dr. Anne Zajac Evaluating Feed Options- Dr. Mark McCann							
3:30	<b>"Successful Marketing- What You Need to Know"</b> Mr. Jeff Lawson, Green Hill Farms, Churchville, VA Mr. Gary Hornbaker, Mutton Bustin' Farm, Berryville, VA Mr. Mike Carpenter, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services							

Early Registration Deadline: January 5, 2013 (registrations also taken on-site day of program)

For registration information visit <u>http://www.vtsheep.apsc.vt.edu</u> or contact Dr. Scott Greiner, Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech, phone (540) 231-9159, email <u>sgreiner@vt.edu</u>

If you are a person with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this symposium, please discuss your accommodation needs with Scott Greiner at (540) 231-9159 at your earliest convenience.

#### Winter Sheep Management Tips

Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

#### 4-6 Weeks Before Lambing

- 1. Provide supplemental energy (TDN) to ewes the last month of gestation. The majority of fetal growth occurs during the last 4-6 weeks of gestation. The increased energy requirement is often met by supplementing 1-2 pounds of grain ration per day in addition to hay. Provide calcium and selenium fortified trace mineral salt, or provide these mineral through a complete feed.
- 2. Supplementation of tetracycline pre-lambing has been shown to reduce the incidence of abortions. Consult with your veterinarian on a flock health management protocol.
- 3. Make sure there is plenty of feed trough space so that ewes do not crowd each other at feeding time.
- 4. Shear the wool from around the head, udder and dock of pregnant ewes. If covered facilities are available, shear the ewes completely. Sheared ewes are more likely to lamb inside, the inside of the barn stays drier because less moisture is carried in by the ewes, more ewes can be kept inside, and it creates a cleaner environment for the lambs and the shepherd. Sheared ewes must have access to a barn during cold, freezing rains, and they must receive additional feed during periods of extremely cold temperatures.

#### 2-4 Weeks Before Lambing

- 1. Vaccinate ewes for overeating disease and tetanus. These vaccines provide passive immunity to baby lambs through the ewes' colostrum until they can be vaccinated at 4 to 6 weeks of age. Work with your veterinarian regarding feeding of antibiotics for prevention of abortion diseases.
- 2. Check and separate all ewes that are developing udders or showing signs of lambing. Check and remove heavy ewes once a week during the lambing season. Increase the grain on all ewes showing signs of lambing to 1 lb daily and feed all the good quality grass/legume hay they will clean up.
- 3. Observe ewes closely. Ewes that are sluggish or hang back at feeding may be showing early signs of pregnancy disease.
- 4. Shelter heavy ewes from bad weather.
- 5. Get lambing pens and lambing equipment ready. There should be one lambing pen for every ten ewes expected to lamb.
- 6. Stock lambing supplies such as iodine, antibiotics, frozen colostrum, stomach tube, selenium and Vitamin E, OB lube, lamb puller, ear tags, etc.

#### At Lambing Time

- 1. Check ewes on a frequent basis (every 3 to 4 hours), as feasible.
- 2. After lambs are born, move the ewe and her lambs to a lambing pen with a minimum dimension of 5' X 5'. Check the ewe's udder to see that she has milk, strip each teat to remove the waxy plug that may be present at the end of the teat, and make sure lambs nurse within 30 minutes.
- 3. Colostrum is critical for baby lamb survival. For ewes without milk or for lambs that fail to nurse, lambs must be given colostrum via a stomach tube. If sheep colostrum is not available, cow or goat colostrum should be used. Colostrum can be frozen in ice cube trays or stored in plastic storage bags. Colostrum should be thawed using indirect heat. Thawing by direct heat destroys the antibodies that are present. Lambs should receive 20 ml (cc) of colostrum per pound of body weight. It works best if feedings can be 4 hours apart.
- 4. Only use a heat lamp if lambs are weak and chilled. Avoid danger of fire by hanging heat lamps 3' above the bedding and in the corner of the lambing pen. Block off the corner so that the ewe cannot get under the lamp.

- 5. Check on the health of the ewe and her lambs at least twice daily. Lambs that are lying down should be made to get up. Those that fail to stretch after getting up may have a problem that requires further examination. The biggest cause of baby lamb mortality is starvation.
- 6. Virginia is a selenium deficient state. If selenium deficiency has been a problem, lambs should be given an injection of 0.25 mg selenium per 10 lb of body weight immediately after birth. A good quality mineral provided to the ewe flock on a year-round basis has been shown to be the best way to prevent selenium deficiency.
- 7. A general rule of thumb is for the ewe and her lambs to stay in the lambing pen one day for each lamb. Weak or small lambs may require a longer stay.
- 8. Ewes should receive fresh water and high quality hay the day of lambing. Don't feed grain until the second day. One pound of grain plus 5 lbs of good quality hay will take care of their needs until moving to a mixing pen.
- 9. If ewes were not treated for internal parasites within 3 weeks of lambing, they should be treated prior to removal from the lambing pen.
- 10. Keep records on all ewes, noting those that had problems. Individually identify lambs so they can be matched with the ewe. The ability to match ewes and lambs is important to monitor performance, and individual identification is critical for making selection and culling decisions.
- 11. All lambs should be docked and castrated by the time they are 2 weeks old.

#### 2012 Virginia Fall Bred Ewe & Doe Sale Results

#### Dr. Scott P. Greiner Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The 2012 Virginia Sheep Producer's Association Fall Bred Ewe & Doe Sale was held Saturday, December 1 at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds in Harrisonburg. A total of 67 bred ewes sold for an average price of \$520, along with two meat goat does for an average price of \$613. Sale results by breed and age were as follows:

	Ewe Lambs		Yearling Ewes		Mature Ewes		All	
Wether Dams								
Crossbred	39	\$534	11	\$435	5	\$573	55	\$518
Dorset	2	\$1000					2	\$1000
Hampshire	2	\$575					2	\$575
Suffolk	1	\$575					1	\$575
All Wether Dams	44	\$558	11	\$435	5	\$573	60	\$537
Foundation Comm. Ewes	2	\$495	2	\$340	3	\$320	7	\$376
All Ewes	46	\$555	13	\$421	8	\$478	67	\$520
<b>Boer Goat Does</b>	2	\$613					2	\$613