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4-H Sheep Manual



4-H SHEEP MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

For the farm boy who is interested in learning more about the art of sheep husbandry, there is no better way to gain this knowledge and experience than to take an active part in a 4-H Sheep Club.

These clubs are organized for the purpose of teaching the fundamentals in handling sheep, such as the selection of breeding animals, proper methods of feeding and management, control of parasites, the keeping of feed and production records, and the art of exhibiting. Such lessons in sheep husbandry can be learned best by the club boy through the actual experience of doing these things while developing a farm flock of sheep. Nothing can quite take the place of such training in a well supervised sheep club since there seems to be no satisfactory substitute for actual experience in raising sheep.

It is hoped that every sheep club member in Oklahoma will study this bulletin carefully and preserve it for future reference since it will be referred to from time to time by the county agent and through the columns of the Extension News.

OKLAHOMA 4-H SHEEP CLUB RULES

1. Any boy or girl in Oklahoma who is 10 to 21 years of age on January 1st of the year in which the work is done and who will agree to abide by the rules of the club is eligible to membership in the 4-H Sheep Club.
2. Enrollment should be made out on the official enrollment blank and sent to the county agent. Where there is no county agent employed in the county, the official enrollment blank should be sent directly to the Club Department at Stillwater.
3. Any sheep that are exhibited in 4-H Club classes are to be owned, fed, and cared for by the sheep club member.
4. All rams and ewes shown in breeding classes of the 4-H Club Division at the fairs and stock shows must be registered and recorded in the name of the 4-H Club members exhibiting.
5. Club members should read carefully all literature sent to them by the county agent or Club Department and follow instructions as nearly as possible.
6. Each sheep club member will be expected to make an exhibit at the county and state fairs or the Fat Stock Show held in the spring.
7. Each club member will be expected to keep an accurate record of the cost and amount of feed fed and submit his record book to the county agent at the close of the contest.
8. Sheep club members should belong to some crop club.

PHASES OF SHEEP CLUB WORK

There are two phases of 4-H Sheep Club work which may be selected by club members and carried out as 4-H Club demonstrations. A club member may select one or both phases of sheep club work:

* On leave of absence.

1. **Fattening Phase** which involves the growing and fattening of one or more wether or ewe lambs for the market. The lambs may be purebreds, grades or crossbreds.
2. **Breeding Phase** which involves the care and management of not less than two purebred or five grade ewes and their lambs starting at least one month before lambing time. All rams used in the breeding phase of sheep club work must be purebred.

THE FATTENING PHASE

(Production and Marketing Demonstration)

The fattening phase of the Oklahoma 4-H Sheep Club involves the growing and fattening of one or more lambs for the market.

In order for the club member to make the best use of his time, it is usually advisable to feed three or more lambs. Where club members are allowed to show three lambs at the state shows, it is a good plan to exhibit this number. All lambs do not respond alike to their feeding and when a club member has fed five or more lambs it is usually possible to select three creditable ones to exhibit at the county and state shows.

The lambs used in the fattening phase may be purebred, grade or crossbred. Wether or ewe lambs may be used.

The lambs must be weighed at the time they are placed on feed and the feed record started. They must also be weighed at the time of the show or at the close of the feeding period. If the lambs are not exhibited, they must be weighed at home or at the market and a complete record of all feed and expenses sent to the county agent as soon as the contest closes. Club members who exhibit at the state lamb shows will be expected to have their feed reports up to date and ready to hand in at the time the exhibits are judged.

Lambs that are included in this demonstration must be owned, fed and cared for by the club members at least 60 days before they are exhibited at any fair or show. The object of this phase of lamb work is to give 4-H Club members experience and training in feeding and fattening market lambs.

Lamb club members should ordinarily begin with the fattening phase of 4-H Lamb Club work during their first year due to the fact that the fattening or marketing phase will give the club member some valuable information and experience in handling sheep that will assist him greatly in carrying on a demonstration in the breeding phase of lamb club work later. Lambs that are to be exhibited should be placed on full feed 90 to 100 days before the show. A lamb showing in a fat class must be well finished in order to win his class. It is almost impossible for an under-finished lamb to win at our state lamb shows where there is strong competition. The packer buyers base their prices almost entirely upon the weight, quality and finish of the lambs offered for sale. Invariably well finished lambs that are about the right weight bring the most money. Knowing this, it is important that every club member have his lambs well finished by the time they are to be exhibited and sold.

Exhibiting in the Fattening Phase

Under the present plan of sheep club work only fat lambs are to be exhibited in the 4-H Club classes at Oklahoma state fairs and at the Southwest American Livestock Show. Breeding classes for club sheep are not provided at the state shows but are confined to the community and county fairs.

Classes are provided for Shropshire, Hampshire, and Southdown fat lambs at the Oklahoma State Fair and at the Southwest American Livestock show held in the spring. At the Tulsa and Muskogee State Fairs all

fat lambs show in the same class regardless of breed. Practically all of the county fairs and a large number of the community fairs in the state provide classes for fat lambs. Sheep club members who show their fat lambs at the state fairs and at the spring show have found a ready market for their lambs at the close of these shows at attractive prices. The packing plants located at Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Muskogee provide a market for the club lambs exhibited at these places.

THE BREEDING PHASE

(Farm Flock Care and Management Demonstration)

This phase of sheep club work involves the care and management of at least two purebred ewes or five grade ewes and their lambs starting one month or more before lambing time.

In order for the club member to carry out a practical sheep production project that is large enough to engage his time and interest and at the same time be a profitable one, he should have a flock larger than the minimum number indicated here provided he has the only sheep on the farm. If there are from three to five sheep club members in the same community who have small flocks they might be justified in buying a good purebred ram and using him in a cooperative manner if they cannot secure the service of an outstanding purebred ram otherwise. Where a club member has only a few head of ewes he would perhaps do well to use the ram of a neighbor rather than to buy one.

During the first year, the club member will be required to keep a record of feed and expenses from the time the ewes come into his possession until September 15 or the time of the county fair. During the second year, or each succeeding year, a record must be kept from September 15 to September 15, or the time of the county fair. Every sheep club member should be a member of some crop club.

Exhibition in the Breeding Phase

Under the present plan of 4-H Sheep Club work, contests and exhibition in the breeding phase will be confined to the community and county fairs where breeding classes have been provided. Breeding animals will not be shown in the 4-H Club classes at the state fairs and at the Fat Stock Show held at Oklahoma City during the spring.

The Exhibit. At the community and county fairs the exhibit in the breeding phase of sheep club work should include: A pen of three lambs produced and owned by the exhibitor and sired by a purebred ram. (The pen of three lambs may consist of either ewe or ram or both, provided all ram lambs shown are purebred and registered in the name of the exhibitor. Wether lambs should not be permitted to show in this class.)

At county fairs where funds permit, the following classes should be provided in the 4-H Sheep Club Division.

1. Purebred ram, one year old or over.
2. Purebred ram lamb, under one year.
3. Purebred or grade ewe, one year old or over.
4. Purebred or grade ewe, under one year.
5. Fat wether or ewe lamb.

These classes in addition to the pen of three lambs bred and owned by exhibitor provide representative classes which allow a club member to show what he has been doing in flock improvement and in producing market lambs.

CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE FLOCK

Every 4-H Sheep Club member should read carefully the information which Mr. Darlow has prepared on this point in Extension Bulletin No. 203. Other information regarding the care at lambing time, creep feeding the lambs, docking and castrating, treating the flock for stomach worms, etc., can be found in the bulletin prepared by Mr. Darlow (Extension Bulletin No. 203) and his recommendations should be followed by every 4-H Sheep Club member.

Since these points have been discussed, they will be omitted in the 4-H Sheep Club Manual.

PREPARING 4-H CLUB LAMBS FOR THE SHOW

One of the most important points to be considered in preparing lambs for the show is their early care. The early care of the lamb should tend to build a strong healthy-bodied individual that will be able to make rapid and economical gains.

It may be a very profitable thing to drench the lambs and dip them about the time the flock is sheared in order to keep them free of internal and external parasites. Lambs that are to be shown at the state fairs in the fall should be taught to eat grain before they are weaned. A lamb creep can be built for this purpose. When the lambs are weaned they should be kept on good pasture and fed a little grain to keep them growing and in good condition. Lambs should not be allowed to lose flesh during the summer but should be kept growing and gaining in weight.

It is a much better plan to fatten the lambs gradually over an extended feeding period than to try to rush them by heavy feeding over a short period. There is some danger of over-heating lambs if kept too fat during the hottest part of the summer. Large quantities of heat-producing feeds, such as corn, are not satisfactory for lambs during hot weather. Too much corn may cause the lambs to be too soft or lacking firmness of fleshing, and as a rule they cannot be fed as long as lambs receiving a variety of feeds.

If lambs are to be shown at the Southwest American Livestock Show, the condition of the lamb will greatly influence the length of the feeding period. It is a good plan to separate the club lambs from the remainder of the flock not later than December 15. If the lambs are not in good condition, they should be separated earlier than this date. The lambs should be started on grain slowly and gradually increased to full feed.

In selecting rations for feeding lambs, it is a good plan to select the ones that will give the greatest gains at the least cost and at the same time use feeds that are palatable and cooling. Such feeds as oats, barley, bran, beet pulp, linseed meal, and alfalfa hay are excellent summer feeds.

The amounts of feed should be judged by the appetite of the lambs, their condition, and the length of time until the show. Following are a few suggestive grain rations:

I	II	III
Oats one half	Oats one-third	Oats two-fifths
Barley one-half	Corn one-third	Bran two-fifths
	½ lb. cottonseed or linseed meal	Corn one fifth

In addition to the grain the lambs should be fed some succulent feed. Such feeds as silage, beets, beet pulp, cabbage, alfalfa hay, etc. will add variety and succulence to the ration. The lambs may be fed all the alfalfa hay they will eat.

Burl Winchester of Waukomis, who has exhibited a number of grand champion 4-H Club lambs at the state shows, gives the following as his

method of feeding his lambs for the show: "Oats, bran, and alfalfa hay are fed at the beginning of the fattening period. As the lambs increase in flesh and eat more feed, linseed meal and barley are added gradually. From two to four months before the lambs are to be finished and the final show is held, beet pulp is fed. By feeding beet pulp, dust in the feed can be controlled. The pulp is fed as a succulent feed and is cooling to the body. It is moistened and as a result it swells and the moisture from it settles the dust. The troughs should be kept clean and water and salt kept before the lambs at all times."

It is important to watch the lambs and not feed them more than they will eat. Feed that is left over from one feeding to another should be removed from the troughs and fed to other livestock. The amount of feed that the lambs receive should be regulated by the condition and appetite of the lambs.

TRAINING THE LAMB FOR THE SHOW

The club lamb should be handled a great deal so it will be quiet when shown. It should be trained to stand squarely on all four feet and brace itself when pressure is put on the back. If a lamb has a tendency to let its back down it can be remedied somewhat by keeping its hind feet well under its body and also by pushing back on its head.

PREPARING THE LAMB FOR THE SHOW

About a month before show time, the lambs should have their fleeces trimmed or "blocked out." This consists of trimming off all the loose ends of wool making the back appear wide and level and the sides straight. This will improve the appearance of the lamb greatly. In blocking a lamb you should get a stiff fiber brush, wet it and rub it back and forth over the wool vigorously. This will cause the ends to stand up so that they may be clipped off. When this is finished take a wool card, and pat the fleece over the sides and back of the lamb. This makes the wool firm and pulls up more loose ends. This should be repeated once or twice before show time. The lamb should receive its final blocking at the show. You should get some experienced sheep men to help you with the blocking if possible.

SHOWING THE LAMB

When showing a sheep, you should be on the left side of the sheep with your left hand placed under the chin and your right hand at the dock. In this position you can easily handle your lamb. The club member should be alert and on the job at all times. Every judge likes to see a club member show an interest in his entry. If the judge asks you to change your position in the line, do so quickly and without comment or commotion. Do not engage in conversation and neglect your entry while the judge is making his decisions. Watch the judge and do not let him see your lamb out of position. Be a good winner or a graceful loser but above all, be a gentleman and a real sheepman.

FEED REPORTS AND RECORDS

Every sheep club member should keep an accurate record of his sheep club work from the very beginning until the close of the contest. Unless an accurate record is kept the club member can not tell what his profit or loss has been during the year and besides only accurate records have any value to the club member or the club department.

The record should include the original weight and cost of the animal, the kinds and amounts of feed used, days on pasture, final weight, daily gain and any other points of information that might have some value. Since a number of out-of-state trips, scholarships, and special prizes are based upon the livestock records and reports, it is important that the club member keep an accurate and complete record of his work.

One of the best ways of becoming an outstanding sheep club member is to keep an accurate account of your work and have a well written report ready to hand in to the county agent at the time you make your exhibit.

TEAM DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstrations are intended to "show" or "explain" how some approved practice is done. Every sheep club member should have the ambition to represent his county in the state livestock team demonstration contests which are held each year during the 4-H Round-Up at the Oklahoma A. and M. College. Such demonstrations form a very valuable part of the training of 4-H Club members. Sheep club members should prepare a demonstration showing some approved practice related to sheep husbandry. A demonstration carried on by the person is called an "individual" demonstration. When it is put on by two or more members it is called a "team" demonstration. As a rule, most demonstrations can be carried out best as a team demonstration. Such demonstrations may be given at 4-H Club meetings, at meetings of community or civic clubs, at judging schools or demonstrations, and at local, county, or state fairs, as well as the state 4-H Round-Up.

The following outline will give the club members an idea of the procedure used in presenting a team demonstration.

4-H SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION

(Team Demonstration)

Treating Sheep for Stomach Worms

<i>No. 1—Captain</i>	<i>No. 2—Team Mate</i>
Captain speaks Captain introduces team and states purpose of the demonstration	No. 2 arranges materials and assists captain by indicating points referred to on a chart
No. 1 discusses: 1—History in the United States 2—Importance of parasite in Oklahoma 3—Life history of the stomach worm	
No. 1—Assists team mate by making reference to points on chart (If a lamb showing symptoms is killed at this point, the Captain of the team may follow the directions of his team mate in conducting the autopsy)	No. 2—Speaks. Discusses symptoms: 1—Usually detected among the lambs 2—Dullness and lack of vigor 3—Loss of flesh 4—Scouring (If a lamb that shows symptoms could be killed at this point, the presence of the stomach worms could be demonstrated)
No. 1—Speaks. Outlines the copper sulfate and tobacco treatment as given in Circular 58 of the Oklahoma Experiment Station, "Care and Management of Sheep," pages 7 and 8	No. 2—Exhibits the materials used and prepares the mixture as directed by the Captain of the team
No. 1—Assists team mate by exhibiting drenching equipment, measuring dosage, administering solution, etc, as directed	No. 2—Speaks. Discusses: 1. Drenching equipment 2. Preparing sheep for drenching 3. Correct position in drenching 4. Proper dosage 5. Administering the solution 6. Care of sheep after drenching
No. 1—Summarizes the most important points of the demonstration. Gives the audience an opportunity to ask questions	No. 2—Clears away the materials and equipment used in the demonstration

SUGGESTIVE TEAM DEMONSTRATIONS AND REFERENCES

1. Judging Fat and Breeding Classes of Sheep.
Farmers' Bulletin 1199.
2. Feeding Lambs for the Market.
Bulletin 379, Texas Experiment Station, College Station, Texas.
Circular 57, Oklahoma Experiment Station, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
3. The Value of a Purebred vs. a Scrub Ram.
Circular 73, Oklahoma Experiment Station, Stillwater.
Bulletin 151, Oklahoma Experiment Station, Stillwater.
4. Drenching Sheep for the Control of Stomach Worms.
Farmers' Bulletin 1330.
5. Preparing the Club Lamb for the Show.
6. Rations for Breeding Ewes.
Bulletin 136, Oklahoma Experiment Station, Stillwater.
7. Equipment for the Sheep Farm.
Feed racks, hurdles, lambing pens, dipping vat, lamb "creep," grain trough, salting equipment, wool tying box, etc.
Farmers' Bulletin 810.
8. Docking and Castrating Lambs.
Farmers' Bulletin 1134.
Bulletin 262, Texas Experiment Station, College Station.
9. Preparation of Wool for the Market.
10. Breeds of Sheep for the Farm.
Farmers' Bulletin 576.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RELATING TO SHEEP RAISING

Available for Free Distribution by the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Breeds of Sheep for the Farm. (Farmers' Bulletin 576.)
Sheep Scab. (Farmers' Bulletin 713.)
The Sheep Tick: Its Eradication by Dipping. (Farmers' Bulletin 798.)
Equipment for Farm Sheep Raising. (Farmers' Bulletin 810.)
Farm Sheep Raising for Beginners. (Farmers' Bulletin 840.)
Parasites and Parasite Diseases of Sheep. (Farmers' Bulletin 1150.)
Diseases of Sheep. (Farmers' Bulletin 1155.)
Farm Slaughtering and Use of Lamb and Mutton. (Farmers' Bulletin 1172.)
Raising Sheep on Temporary Pastures. (Farmers' Bulletin 1181.)
Judging Sheep. (Farmers' Bulletin 1199.)
Sheep-Killing Dogs. (Farmers' Bulletin 1268.)
Stomach Worms in Sheep. (Department Circular 47.)

For Sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Lip-and-Leg Ulceration of Sheep. (Bureau of Animal Industry Circular 150.) Price, 5 cents.
The Management of Sheep on the Farm. (Department Bulletin 20.) Price, 10 cents.
Domestic Breeds of Sheep in America. (Department Bulletin 94.) Price, 25 cents.
Judging Sheep as a Subject of Instruction in Secondary Schools. (Department Bulletin 593.) Price, 10 cents.

For Free Distribution from the Oklahoma Experiment Station at Stillwater.

Circular 58, Care and Management of Sheep.
Bulletin 125, Comparative Rations for Wintering Breeding Ewes.
Bulletin 136, Rations for Sheep.
Circular 73, Purebred vs. Scrub Ram.