

Reducing Cost of Production & Increasing Profitability

- Reducing days on stored feed will lower your cost of production (see “Grazing Management”). Calculate stored feed costs. For example: If hay costs \$0.06 /lb then for every day you extend the grazing season you would save \$36 per 100 ewes.
- Corn silage is an excellent feed and provides economical tonnage / acre in some parts of Canada but requires good management to avoid listeriosis. First time users of corn silage should speak with a knowledgeable sheep nutritionist.
- Avoid purchasing sheep with an unknown health status or from a flock that does not routinely test for disease. Treating your flock for diseases such as footrot is extremely costly. Many sheep diseases do not have vaccines or cures which results in a higher death and / or cull rate of the flock.
- Vaccinate lambs to avoid unnecessary deaths due to pulpy kidney and other clostridial diseases.
- Have lambing dates match your market. For example, a September lambing for the Christmas market, January lambing for the Easter market, and a spring lambing for a lower cost of production. March born lambs miss the market highs and are grown on expensive stored feed.
- Maternal genetic traits and terminal genetic traits are mutually exclusive. Therefore, commercial producers will want to have a ewe flock strong in maternal genetic traits and a ram stud strong in terminal genetic traits.
- Invest in performance tested female replacements.
- For the best lamb growth, purchase terminal sire rams that are performance tested including ultrasounded for fat, muscle & loin eye measurements.