

How I do Things at Gansvoort Farm

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Oct 27, 2012

Outline

- Overview of the farm
- The seasons
- Parasite management



Goals of the farm:

- Work with animals, produce food, be outside
- Improve the ecosystem through management
 - Biodiversity
 - Soil health (organic matter, microbes)
 - Water infiltration, reduce/eliminate erosion
- Do better than break even!



Numbers

- About 50 ewes, 100% grassfed, producing 100 lambs per year
 - Finn x Dorset x East Friesian x Icelandic
- Lambing on pasture in late April/early May
- 86 acres total, 60 pasture and grazed orchards
- Included a small herd of beef cows until 2012
- Direct market custom cut lamb; sell all wool, tanned pelts, and some whole carcasses to shop in NYC

- Very little permanent fencing
- Water lines above ground
- Shade available in all paddocks



Importance of Management-Intensive Grazing (MiG)

- Move animals every 24 to 48 hours
- Leave enough residual (4-5 inches)
- Try to keep stock density high (~15,000 lb/acre)
 - Spring/summer = 0.6 acres, 2 days
 - Late summer/fall = 0.6 acres, 1 day
- Results in:
 - Higher pasture productivity, sward composition
 - Better weight gain
 - Increase in soil organic matter (carbon)

Spring

- Start rotating in April to flush for lambing
- Lamb on pasture unassisted
- Each morning check new lambs, do ear tags
- Check flock ~3 times a day
- Paddocks large, 48 hour moves









Summer

- Lambs growing, move every 24-36 hrs
- Leave enough residual to keep soil surface cool
- I clip all paddocks after first rotation (ideally!)
- Watch for signs of parasites (slow moving, bottle jaw, diarrhea), worm as needed





Summer 2012 – Experiment with tall grazing





Fall

- Wean ram lambs in mid August, set stock
- All rams sold first, ewe lambs stay with moms until rams gone
- Ewes continue to rotate, high stocking density, daily moves
- Expect to graze until breeding begins, early/mid Dec





Post-grazing residual →

Breeding/Winter

- Two rams, two groups
- Time breeding for max fertility, lambing after 1 month of grazing
- Dense evergreen trees for shelter
- Walk the flock 1-2 times/week
- First-cut round bales





Parasite Management

Try to do it all right....

- Multi-species grazing
- Condensed tannins in pasture
- Select for parasite resistance/tolerance
- Rotational grazing
- Parasites still a problem!



Goals for future at Gansvoort



- Fence all fields with woven wire
- Reduce winter hay bills
- Improve sward density
- Plant more trees

Thank you!

<http://www.gansvoortfarm.com>

