# How I do Things at Gansvoort Farm

Jennifer Phillips 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!



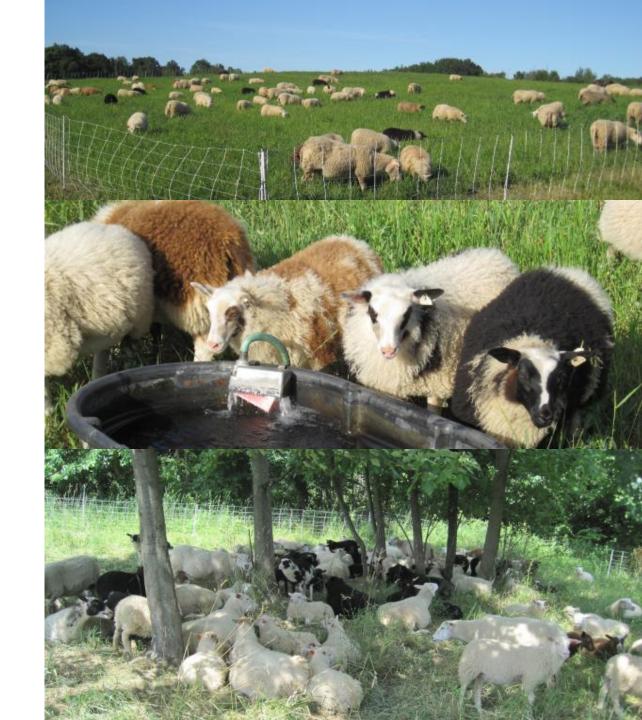
#### Numbers

- 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



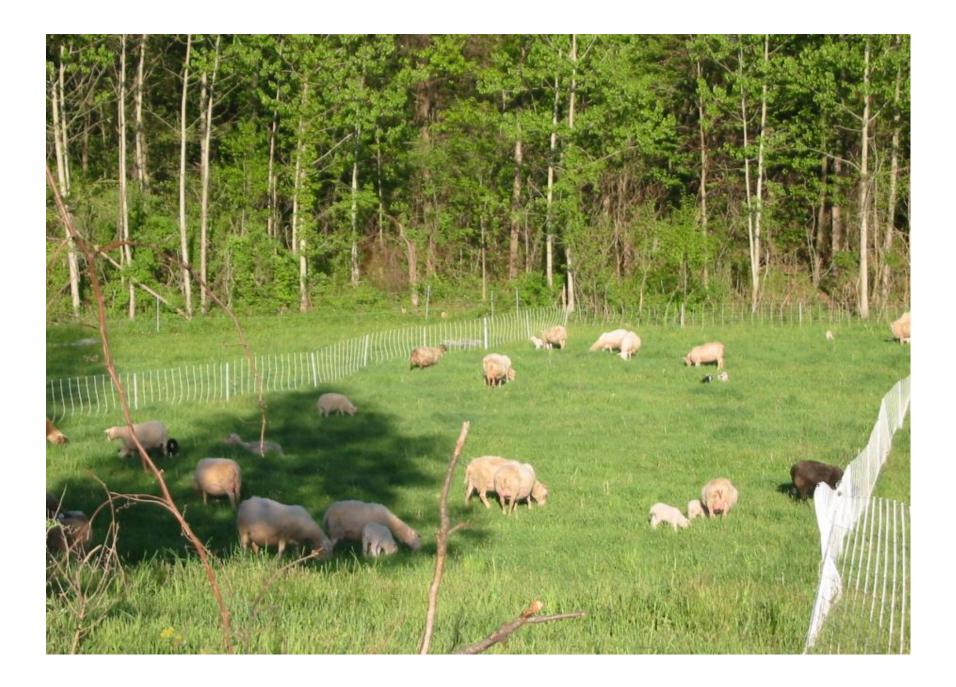
# Importance of Management-Intensive Grazing (MiG)

- 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





## 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

