“Taking that Big Step: Financial Considerations in Starting a Sheep Business”

David Galton
Meat Sheep Operation

Dorset-Finn Crosses

Mature Ewes - 1100

Market Lambs – 1400 – 1600 per year
Markets *(40 – 55 lbs live weight)*

Christmas

New Year’s

Western Roman Easter

Eastern Orthodox Easter
Lambing Statistics

1.8 to 2.0 live lambs/ewe

Percent of ewes lambing
Financials

Capital

Land-pasture based

Housing-lambing

Equipment
Operating Expenses

Grain commodities

High quality and quantity pastures/forages

Labor efficiency

In combination with another production animal enterprise
Profits

Quantity and quality of lambs

Niche markets
2011 Profits

$110 to $125 per ewe
Dairy Sheep Operation

East Friesian

Lacaune

Mature ewes – 1100+
Why?

Continuous, predictable cash flow

Similar to dairy cattle farming

Growth opportunities
Financials

Capital

Farm – leasing

Animals – acquiring

Housing – farm with milking facility

Farm (land) - future
Financials

Operating

- Grain commodities
- High quality and quantity
- Pastures/forages
- Labor efficiency
- Replacements
- Bedding
Feeding Lactating Ewes

TMR – quality

Pasture

Grain feeding
Management

Replacements -12-15 months of age

Lactating ewes
  150 – 180 DIM
  Milk production records
  Breeding
  Year-round lambing
Profits

$135 to $175 per lactating ewe