

For News Release
Prepared by: Lee Dudley
CEA-Agriculture & Natural Resources
Texas AgriLife Extension Service
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4-H NEWS

County Lamb/Goat Project Selection

Attention, 4-H Families, and members, it is time again, time to start looking for the upcoming show season goat or lamb projects. The selection process is the most important decision one must make. The type of lamb or goat you select will have a major influence on the success of the project. However, remember that a winning project is a combination of good selection, good nutritional management, good exercise program, proper grooming and outstanding showmanship.

Everybody differs in their ability to select animals, some have what we call a natural eye for the selection process being able to determine high caliber, while others might not be able to develop this ability. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance from your local extension agent or club leaders during this or any other phase of the project's life. Also, many breeders are more than willing to assist in the initial selection of a desirable show project.

In looking at the selection of lambs, keep in mind wool length and fat thickness. If possible, select your club lamb after shearing. Young lambs as well as young goats that are bloomy and fat always look good while young lambs and goats that are thin do not. Learn to look past the fat and recognize muscle so that you can pick the genetically superior lamb or goat. Other factors to consider during the selection process are structural correctness, muscle, volume and capacity, style and balance, and growth potential.

If you are needing assistance in locating a goat or lamb for the 2021 Panola County Jr. Livestock show, fill free to contact your AgriLife Extension agent to get a list of potential breeders or to even work out a date for us to take a trip in search of that next champion project. Additional information or help in these areas can be found in your local AgriLife Extension office by contacting them at (903)693-0300 Ext. 161.

BEEF & FORAGE NEWS

Understanding the Marketing of Cull Cattle Part I

Even with excessive levels of moisture producing abundant supplies of forages for area cattle, every successful manager should still look to capitalize and streamline their operation management system. In exploring the different options, one that every good manager should have a strong concept on is in understanding the marketing and management of cull cattle. Regardless of your breed type or management program, it is inevitable that every beef operation is going to produce cull cattle yearly. What separates the good managers from the superior is the approach each take in maximizing returns on even this smallest segment of our beef operations.

It is in the understanding of the factors affecting cull cow and bull values, including management practices to maximize/minimize these factors. Especially when you consider that in an average year, cull cows and bulls represent 10-20% of a ranches' annual gross revenue as stated by Dr. Ron Gill, Extension Livestock Specialist.

As noted by Dr. Ron Gill, informed marketing, rather than simply selling, can add to income from cull cow and bull sales. When factors affecting value are understood, culls can be marketed to take advantage of seasonal trends and fluctuations in cow condition. Some of the factors affecting value in our cull cattle are sale weight, body condition, muscling, quality, and blemishes, all of which can be managed at the ranch to add value to the culls.

For the most part, cull cattle value is determined by percent lean meat yield and live weight. With culls being graded into four broad categories, canner, cutter, utility, and commercial. Canner cattle being the thinnest, most emaciated having lost muscle mass due to poor nutrition or health conditions. Cattle falling into the next category are called cutters; these are thin to moderate in flesh with little muscle mass being lost but no excess condition is being carried. Cattle that fall into either the canner or cutter grades are typically the cheapest cattle on a per head and or per pound basis in the market, however if purchased and managed properly could have the biggest gains potential, however that a topic for another article.

Moving into the next grade level we reach what is referred to in the industry as the "Fat Cow Grade" (Utility), cattle falling here carry higher levels of condition. Utility cattle can be further broken down into Boning and Breaking classifications. With most of our tenders, strips and top rounds coming from those grading Boning Utility, while those falling under breaker utility, tend to have sufficient marbling and muscle for primal cuts, particularly from the rib and loin, greatly increasing their value over other grades. From a rancher's standpoint, it is worth noting how difficult it is to determine if cattle will fall into the breaking utility classification before processing, making it impractical to manage cows with the goal of hitting this grade. Our final grad of cull cattle carcasses we will look at is for those that fall into the (Commercial) category. Cattle carcasses that find their way into this category typically come from younger cattle that fall into the C maturity (approximately 42 months old or older). Their value is greatly increased because primal cuts are routinely pulled from these cattle and traded in the restaurant industry. Have you wondered how some places can advertise a \$30 steak for \$12, well know you know?

Catch the continuation of this topic next week as we investigate the management practices producers can implement to help maximize the value of the cull cows and bulls. If you have any question pertaining to this topic or any others, contact Lee Dudley at the Texas AgriLife Extension Office at (903)693-0300 Ext. 160. Additionally, keep your eyes out starting August 1st for this article in its entirety located in our Monthly AgriLife Newsletter “The Panola Extension”.

DATES OF UPCOMING EVENTS:

August 2nd: Panola 4-H 2021-2022 Youth Council Kickoff Meeting
August 10th: Panola 4-H Adult Leaders Planning Meeting
August 13th: Panola Master Gardeners Monthly Lunchtime Learning
August 16th: State Fair of Texas youth entries due into office
August 16th: East Texas State Fair Tyler entries due into office
August 16th: Four State Fair, Texarkana entries due into office
August 21st: Panola County 4-H Celebration