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4-H NEWS:

COUNTY LAMB/GOAT & STEER PROJECT SELECTION

Panola County 4-H members and families, with July now upon us, it is hard to imagine that the summer is almost over and that the start of a new school year is just around the corner, and with that brings the beginning of a brand new 4-H year. Across the state and country, 4-H and FFA families are putting the miles on their vehicles in search of that next grand champion. If you are wanting to have that competitor's advantage in the show ring next fall, winter, and spring, getting out on the road and looking now is key. The selection process is the most important decision one must make. The type of lamb, goat, or steer 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, nutritional management, exercise, grooming and finally outstanding showmanship.

Everybody differs in their ability to select animals, some have what is called the natural eye for the selection process being able to determine a high caliber animal, while others might not be able to develop this ability. With this in mind, 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, goats, or steers keep in mind wool length and hair growth along with fat thickness. If possible, select your next project weather it be a lamb, goat, or steer after shearing or at least some selecting clipping. Young market animals that are bloomy and fat always look good while young market animals that are thin do not. Learn to look past the fat or thinness and recognize muscle so that you can pick the genetically superior animal. Other factors to consider during the selection process include structural correctness, which I feel is the most critical aspect to look for. If an animal cannot walk it will not show good in the end. Additional areas of critical importance are observing the volume and capacity, style and balance, and growth potential of your next market animal project. Information to help in these areas can be found in your local 4-H office by contacting your local AgriLife Extension office at (903)693-0380.

Lamb, goat, and steer projects for the up-and-coming show season both major and local shows should be found as soon as possible to help ensure the best quality. If you wait until late August or early September, then most of the time the best animals have already been picked. If anybody needs assistance during the selection process or any other time during the feeding period, feel free to contact me Lee Dudley at (903)693-0300 Ext 161. If we in the AgriLife Extension Office do not hear from you, then we do not know if you need help.

HOME GARDENING

Watering is Everything.

To many people, one of the most enjoyable aspects of home gardening is watering. It is also very important. However, many gardening problems, such as poor yield, poor quality, poor fertility, bitter fruit, sun scald, disease problems and a dozen other things, can be related to poor or improper watering techniques. Gardening is a form of relaxation, so it is not unusual for many gardens to be watered two, three or more times a week. This can result in poor root development. Light, frequent watering causes a concentration of roots in the top inch or two of soil.

Undeveloped root systems do not pose any serious problem early in the season when the plants are relatively young and sufficient moisture is available. But, as the season progresses and moisture becomes scarce, the limited root system needs more frequent watering. Consequently, you may need to water several times a week just to keep the plants from wilting severely. This problem can be prevented by adequate early and mid-season watering. Determine when to water the garden by examining the soil, not the plants. If the soil surface appears dry, scratch the surface to a depth of about an inch to determine if moisture is present. If the soil appears relatively dry, watering is necessary. If sufficient moisture is available an inch beneath the surface, wait a couple of days before watering. Another consideration is the type of soil in your garden. Obviously, a light, sandy soil that drains quickly requires more frequent watering than a heavy soil which holds water. Therefore, check sandy soil more often than heavy clay soil. How much water should you apply? Soak garden soil to a depth of at least 6 inches. If moisture is available at this depth, adequate moisture has been applied. After doing this several times, you learn by experience when adequate water has been applied. An inch or two of water applied once a week usually is sufficient for most vegetable gardens in Texas.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES:

July 8th: Panola Agriculture Industry Breakfast Meeting @ Expo Building

July 13th: Panola 4-H ALPA Program Planning Meeting @ Expo Building

July 14th: Panola Beef and Forage Committee Planning Meeting @ Expo Building

July 28th: Panola Natural Resource and Wildlife Committee Planning Meeting @ Expo Building

August 2nd: Panola 4-H Youth Council Meeting @ Carthage Civic Center Conference Room

August 13th: Panola Master Gardeners Noon Time Meeting @ Expo Building

August 28th: Panola 4-H End of Year Celebration

September 3rd: East Texas Regional Forage Conference

September 7th: Panola 4-H Youth Council Meeting @ Carthage Civic Center Conference Room

September 10th: Panola Master Gardeners Noon Time Meeting @ Expo Building