



# Athens County Livestock

May | 2015



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### Hitting the Ground Running

I now know that getting here in October was perfect timing. I was able to get out and meet producer groups, help out a little getting the AMW Cattlemen's Association going, form an advisory committee, and learn a little about what's going on here in Athens County. Now the growing season has hit. I am starting to get calls, visit farms and generally trying to make myself useful. One of the highlights of the season was going out with some folks as they were looking at some farm land to buy. As they found a piece, they would call me up and I would head out to help them evaluate the land's agricultural value. They even took soil samples at each place just to help them make a better decision.

Just the other day they called me up and told me that they were buying one of the properties that we had looked at. They have a lot of work ahead of them and I hope that I can be some help along the way. Now I need to get to evaluatin' my own farm and maybe I can help out some of you too.

*Ed Brown*



## AVIAN INFLUENZA DETECTED IN MISSISSIPPI MIGRATORY BIRD FLYWAY

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio – (March 13, 2015) Following recent announcements confirming the presence of highly pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza (HPAI H5) in commercial turkey flocks in the Mississippi migratory bird flyway, State Veterinarian Dr. Tony Forshey is urging Ohio poultry owners to take extra precautions and to monitor their birds for signs of illness. The recommendations are given out of an abundance of caution as there have been no detections in Ohio and no human infections are associated with these viruses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the risk to people from these HPAI H5 infections to be low.

“We have not had any suspect cases in Ohio, but because we are also located within the Mississippi flyway, we want poultry owners to be aware and to take proper precautions. Whether you have a fair project, a backyard flock, or are a commercial producer, you should practice good biosecurity measures and monitor the health of your birds closely, especially if they could come into contact with wild birds or are traveling this spring to poultry shows,” said Dr. Forshey.

“It is important to remember there have been no human infections associated with these viruses. It is perfectly safe to keep eating poultry and eggs. Cooking poultry, including game birds, to the proper temperature and preventing cross contamination between raw and cooked food is always recommended to protect against viruses and bacteria,” said Dr. Forshey.

### Biosecurity recommendations for poultry owners

All bird owners, whether commercial producers or backyard enthusiasts, should continue to practice good biosecurity, prevent contact between their birds and wild birds, and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to their veterinarian immediately.

Good biosecurity practices for poultry owners include the following:

- **Monitor flocks** for unusual signs of illness such as “snicking” (sneezing,) a 1 percent or more decrease in egg production, or an increase in mortality. Other signs to look for are wheezing, lethargy, and depression.
- **Practice personal biosecurity** and avoid contact with sick/dead poultry or wildlife. If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds.
- **Keep unauthorized visitors from having contact** with poultry, a good practice whether there is a disease threat or not. Authorized persons should be required to wear protective clothing and shoes before entering a commercial poultry house.
- **Avoid contact between your birds and wild birds** whenever possible due to the likely migratory nature of HPAI H5. These virus strains can travel in wild birds without them appearing sick.
- **Clean and disinfect** farm vehicles or equipment before moving them on and off your property.

If traveling with birds to a poultry show this spring, Dr. Forshey recommends taking extra care to keep transport and housing areas clean, minimize opportunities for birds to co-mingle and quarantine birds for at least 21 days before reintroducing them to a flock. Sick birds or unusual bird deaths should also be immediately reported to the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Division of Animal Health at 1-614-728-6220 or through USDA APHIS’s toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593. Additional information on biosecurity can be found by visiting [www.ohioagriculture.gov](http://www.ohioagriculture.gov).

## Making Quality Hay

- **Forage Test.** Knowing the quality of your hay will save you money in the long run and help you to properly supplement. It only costs \$14.
- **Harvest Early.** Forage maturity is the number one indicator of quality.
- **Rake and bale to minimize leaf loss.** Leaves are higher quality than stems.
- **Fertilize correctly.** Low fertility leads to weeds, low percentage of forage leaf, poor forage persistence, and stemmy hay.
- **Add Legumes.** Legumes with grasses can improve hay quality.
- **Cover Hay if Possible.** Barns or tarps work well. If no cover is available stack in rows at least 3 ft. apart in the open, high on a well drained slope, preferably on poles, crushed rock, or pallets. Storage losses can easily exceed 25% on poorly stored hay.
- **6 tons of fescue hay removes 1176 lbs. of fertilizer.** That is over \$500 in fertilizer value.
- **It takes 40-50 lbs of N to produce 1 ton of forage** AI as 10-15 lbs P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and 40-50 lbs K<sub>2</sub>O
- **To replace the nutrients (N, P, K) in one ton of average grass hay, the cost would be \$54**

## Hay Quality Is Improved by Understanding How it Dries

[Stan Smith](#), PA, Fairfield County OSU Extension

The late spring and seemingly slow early growth of our forages this year may fool some into thinking that we can delay harvest in order to capture more tonnage without sacrificing quality. Don't be fooled! While the early growth of forages may have been less than we hope for, maturity of those forages is arriving right on schedule. See the orchard grass that was photographed in Fairfield County last evening. Fescue and cereal rye can also be found coming into head. Regardless how tall a forage may be, maturity dictates it's time to make hay.

University of Wisconsin Extension Forage Agronomist Dan Undersander says in his fact sheet that if we understand and use the biology and physics of forage drying properly, not only does the hay dry faster and have less chance of being rained on, but the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of the harvested forage are higher. Specifically, Undersander offers 3 key recommendations:

1. Put cut forage into a wide swath at cutting that covers at least 70% of the cut area.
2. For haylage: If drying conditions are good, rake multiple swaths into a windrow just before chopping (usually 5 to 7 hours later).
3. For hay: If drying conditions are good, merge/rake multiple swaths into a windrow the next morning after mowing (when forage is 40 to 60 % moisture) to avoid leaf loss.

For more detail on getting hay harvested efficiently, see Undersander's *Focus on Forage* fact sheet entitled, [Field Drying Forage for Hay and Haylage](#). For additional detail, you may also want to review the University of Wisconsin publication, "[Best Practices to Hasten Field Drying of Grasses and Alfalfa](#)" which Undersander also contributed to.



*First person to identify this spring weed will be the winner. Your name will appear in next month's newsletter.*





Photo by Craig Madsen, Healing Hooves LLC

# Multi-species Grazing

Steven M. Jones, Associate Professor - Animal Science

Linda Coffey, NCAT Agriculture Specialist

## Continued from April

Multispecies grazing may also benefit pastures that are less diverse by encouraging more even grazing. Cattle will tend to graze taller grasses that sheep may reject. It has been shown that sheep graze near cattle manure deposits, which cattle avoid.<sup>3</sup> This too results in more even use of the pasture. Carrying capacity and pasture productivity are improved, and animal gains are also increased. Diversification of species results in diversification of income sources. Also, some researchers have found that adding cattle to a sheep flock may help reduce predation losses, after a period of bonding.

Parasites are a major concern with sheep and goats under any system. Worm eggs are deposited on the pasture in the manure; the eggs hatch and larvae are consumed by grazing animals. If left untreated, concentrations of parasites will increase with time as this cycle is repeated. Higher concentrations of animals on a pasture may tend to magnify the infestation. Parasites are species-specific; that is, cattle parasites affect cattle but not sheep, while sheep parasites affect sheep but not cattle. The cattle act as “vacuum cleaners,” ingesting the sheep worm larvae and preventing them from affecting the sheep. This is most helpful when sheep and cattle follow each other in a grazing system. However, goats and sheep do share parasites, and grazing them together does not improve parasite control. Because parasite eggs are deposited in the manure and larvae only travel a short distance up grass blades, animals grazing taller forages (well above ground level) will not consume worm eggs or larvae. Therefore, goats that are given ample browse will be much less likely to become infested with parasites. If goats are forced to graze at ground level, however, the goats may acquire a serious parasite load.

### Potential Problems

Problems may arise in the practice of mixed-species grazing. One problem is aggression by one species to the other. Another problem is supplemental feeding, including the feeding of trace minerals. The mineral supplement that is adequate for sheep may not be so for cattle, and a mineral supplement that is best for cattle may be toxic to sheep, as sheep do not tolerate much copper. This difficulty, and the one of aggressive animals, may be overcome by simply rotating the animals. If the sheep are grazed for a few days then moved to a fresh pasture and the next species put on the first pasture, you may get the benefits to your pasture and avoid these problems.

Fencing is another issue to consider. Electric fencing is generally considered to be the most economical and convenient. Another idea, if cattle fence is already in place, is to string offset wires inside the fence. This should be set in about 8 inches and be 12 to 14 inches above ground. Also, it is a good idea to train sheep or goats to electric fence.

Predators are a major problem for sheep and goats. Electric fencing helps to discourage predators, but it may also be necessary to employ a guardian animal. Some producers prefer livestock guardian dogs, such as the Great Pyrenees or the Anatolian dogs, while others are strong proponents of llamas or donkeys. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

In conclusion, while multispecies grazing requires more thought and management and more investment in facilities, it can have big payoffs for your pasture and your wallet. If you decide to add one or more species to your operation, be sure to investigate your market options and your fencing options, and then start slowly. Select healthy stock, and be observant.

# 2015 OHIO SHEEP DAY



**SATURDAY, JULY 11 • 8 A.M. – 4 P.M.**

**Schoolhouse Shropshires**  
Jim and Denise Percival  
961 Hoop Road  
Xenia, OH 45385

## Program Topics

- Approved Pasture Renovation Practices
- Approved Hay Crop Establishment Practices
- Approved EQIP Practices for Sheep Farms
- Basic Sheep Management Practices
- Lambing Barn Arrangements
- Proper Selection of Sheep Equipment
- Calibrating Manure Spreaders for Proper Nutrient Distribution
- Livestock Mortality Composting Certification
- Predator Control Technology
- Sheep Farm Euthanasia Standards

## Registration

**\$15** for Ohio Sheep Improvement Association members. Cost includes lunch.

**\$25** for non-Ohio Sheep Improvement Association members. Cost includes lunch.

Ohio Sheep Improvement Association memberships can be purchased during registration

## For more information

Roger A. High  
614-246-8299  
rhigh@ofbf.org  
www.ohiosheep.org

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Have ewe herd, come join our flock!

## Sheep & Goat Clinic

June 13th 10-2 at the  
Barlow Fairgrounds



Join the Washington SWCD, NRCS, and OSUE for a sheep and goat clinic

**Topics include:**  
**Health/nutrition ( FAMACHA Parasite Monitoring )**  
**Predator control**  
**Forage for sheep and goats**  
**Marketing**

Your \$20.00 registration fee also includes a one year membership in the newly formed sheep and goat council and covers the material for the FAMACHA certification. For more information or to RSVP contact the SWCD office at 740-373-4857.



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## The Last Word

Spring is the time when we all get out there and start putting our plans into action. Most of us have been thinking about what we would do differently once the weather got better.

Well, now we are out there. The weather has cooperated and things are moving right along. On the home front, folks are calling about all sorts of insects, bats, and snakes getting into places they shouldn't. Some are easy fixes and some I just have to tell them to move on and work around the problem. I wish that I can solve everyone's problems with an easy solution, but it just doesn't seem to work out that way.

One group that I haven't gotten many calls from are livestock producers. I am not sure if they already have things figured out, are too embarrassed to ask, or found out who the new Ag. Educator is and figured he can't know that much since he moved up here from Arkansas.

Well, the only way to find out if your assumptions are true is to call him up and find out.



*Send in pictures of your livestock. They may appear in future editions of this newsletter  
[brown.6000@osu.edu](mailto:brown.6000@osu.edu)*