

Small Ruminant Webinar Series: Nutrition with Dr. Relling- Fiber Sources for Gestating Ewes

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Script Begins:

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the OARDC Sheep Research Center.

So, today we're here to talk a little bit about some of the research project that is going on and I think we will be able to share with you through a short video.

So, this trial that we have here, we have a nine pens on the trial with 10 animals per pen.

We're trying to evaluate the cost and the effect of different management on fiber intake.

So, just remember sheep are ruminants and ruminants need forage as part of their digestive physiology.

So, the question is... and based on today's numbers on the hay cost, we were just looking at with the team, in Mt. Hope the bale costs 200 dollars per ton. This, today also, corn is at the value of 180 dollars per ton.

So, it's more expensive to buy hay than to buy corn. So based on that, if we have a bale, what do we do?

We feed it to our animals or we sell it and we buy something else?

And those are the questions that we try to ask to do research, so we can give you the answer.

The idea of this project was to compare three treatments, as I mentioned earlier.

In one, you can see treatment one, treatment two, and treatment three, and I just randomly named them.

But in treatment one, what we have, it's a diet that has a concentrate and a fixed amount of hay.

So the diet is one-fourth of a concentrate and three-fourth of hay.

The idea is, they finish everything, so we call them restricted hay.

It is not restricted, but we know exactly how much the animals are eating.

Hey guys, follow me.

On the second treatment, which is, as a concentrate source- soy hulls.

Okay and again, it has the same ratio than the previous diet on amount of a concentrate, that is the more clear, it's a corn-based concentrate, and the soy hulls.

And we work in the same way.

They have to finish everything.

Once they finish, we increase the amount of what they eat.

The third treatment, they have the same amount of concentrate than this group, but ad-libitum amount of hay.

So, we put as much hay as they want.

And I'm going to show you something.

Follow me.

Okay, so we used to use these hay feeders.

That's supposed to be efficient on the amount of hay and other feedstuffs.

But you will see that when you fill in these ones, the animals select and choose if you don't make sure or you don't control how much hay they eat.

So, I'm gonna show you what they left over.

So as I was mentioning, in these ad-libitum animals, we continue pushing, and once a week we collect the refusal to see what is there.

So, they can eat as much as they want in the other ones it's a little bit more controlled.

And if you can zoom in, I want to show you a little bit of the quality.

This is what we feed.

This is what we offered and this is the leftover, the refusal.

Most of the time it's going to be finishing the bed and this has an extra cost.

And you can see, comparing how much short leaves or seed are in what we offer, to just stem, or stems on what is left over.

This, the idea overall on this study, is to be able to have a cost of how much extra will be cost, how much extra it will cost to feed ad-libitum hay and let the animal to choose how much they can eat, versus, can we control how much hay they eat based on their requirements?

Okay, the second question is if price goes too much, can we use an alternative source of forage, like soy hulls?

Remember that this research is kind of follow-up to something that Dr. Loerch did like 20 years ago, using whole corn as a diet for winter sheep.

And probably if you look at the Extension sheep page on the OSU Extension, you will find some of that information too.

So, a follow-up on the study, we start the experiment as soon as we remove the rams off the ewes, maybe in the same week, and were here in December, now we are end of January, and they will be here the entire gestation.

They are pregnant ewes and they will be here the entire gestation, and as soon as we have some grass... we don't know, you know, Ohio, when that will happen... they will be here.

Instead to lamb, we are going to move them to a lambing facility.

They will be continuing the same diet and then they will be grouped with their lambs, and they will have grass.

So this is a long-term study, trying to evaluate what's the best source of fiber and if we can go with a short fiber size, like soy hulls.

And we will see a little bit, what is that of the diet on gestating ewes. Follow me.

So with that, I hope that you enjoy your presentation. You have here, no here, oh, where, Christine is my email?

Okay. Here's my email. Thank you! Have a good day!