

## Why Show Youth Livestock?

Georgia 4-H uses all kinds of projects to accomplish our main objective - positive youth development! Livestock projects are special because young people learn what it truly means to care for and be responsible for another living being. Youth learn time management, budgeting, record keeping skills and many animal husbandry skills. They also learn about the livestock industry and its role in the larger agricultural economy.

Georgia 4-H believes there are four essential elements to positive youth development: Mastery, Generosity, Belonging and Independence. The 4-H Livestock Program fosters all four elements. Attend a livestock show and you cannot miss the sense of community. Maybe no other 4-H program demonstrates a sense of belonging like the livestock program. Youth build mastery as they practice and compete. Getting up early to feed and care for animals builds a "can do" attitude important for independence. How does one rightly describe generosity? The livestock shows again offer fine examples - adults sharing what they know with youth with no thought to the competitive nature of the event, youth sharing supplies...generosity is everywhere.

We are excited that you are interested in joining this dynamic part of Georgia 4-H! This fact sheet is a start-up document. You will find county agents, UGA Specialists and friends of agriculture everywhere willing to help you take next steps.

## The Basics of Raising a Breeding Ewe

### Cost of Showing a Breeding Ewe

**Purchase of Breeding Ewe:** Breeding Ewes will cost \$200+ for an initial investment. Many youth members will likely be capable of recouping some of this cost in selling the animal following conclusion of the project.

**Feed:** Most projects will have an average duration of four months. During these four months, project animals should average feed intake of 3.0-3.5% of bodyweight. If we use an average of three pounds of feed per day with an average daily cost of \$0.75-\$1 cost per day, that would be approximately \$90 - \$120 feed costs for the project.

**Equipment:** Many counties have shared resources that youth participants can use such as lamb tables, clippers, blow dryers, hoof trimmers, etc. Youth participants will be responsible for halters, feeding trough, and water bucket.

### Facilities

- Pasture is not necessary to raise a breeding ewe or market lamb.
- Sheep should be contained in fencing or paneling that is appropriate for size of the animal. Most importantly, this containment facility **MUST BE DOG PROOF**. The area should be well drained and adequately ventilated to maximize health of the animal.
- Shelter is important to keep animals dry and reduce exposure to the elements.

## Health

Internal parasites, coccidiosis, and hoof related issues are the most common health related events encountered in sheep projects. Consult with your county agent or veterinarian on proper methods to address these health related issues.

## Feeding

- Lambs should be fed a 15-20% Crude Protein feed.
- Purchase a Commercial Feed from a reputable show feed company or dealer.
- Your choice of lamb show feed may solely depend on what is available in your area.
- Don't feed your show lambs a ration that contains copper!
- As your lamb grows you want to increase its feed to where it is eating 3 - 3.5% of its body weight per day.
- Of course, you have to look at the body condition of your lamb and determine if your lamb needs more or less feed to reach its ideal show weight.

*Important Note:* Do not feed show lambs commercially available cattle feed or supplement that contain copper. Sheep have a high sensitivity to copper, with small amounts leading to toxicity and death.

**Additional Opportunities** – Livestock Judging Contest, Georgia Junior National Livestock Show, District Project Achievement

- Refer to the Georgia Junior National Livestock Show Rulebook and always read show rules for any exhibition you are preparing to attend!
- Complete and mail entries with payment, and be sure your forms are signed by your county agent!
- Complete Code of Conduct and Medical Info & Release Forms and turn them in to your county agent for the Georgia Junior National Livestock Show!

**Additional Resources** – The following links can be accessed and utilized for more information regarding shows, contests, clinics, care for your project, scholarship opportunities and more!

Georgia 4-H Livestock Program's Breeding Ewe Web Page: <http://georgia4h.org/livestock/sheep/default.htm>

Virginia 4-H Ewe Flock Project Guide: [https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/410/410-089/410-089\\_pdf.pdf](https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/410/410-089/410-089_pdf.pdf)

4-H Show Lamb Guide – Texas A&M: [http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/animal/4hyouth/AS34059-showlamb.pdf](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/animal/4hyouth/AS34059-showlamb.pdf)

4-H/FFA Market Lamb, Sheep Selection and Management Checklist – Washington Co. Extension Office, Ohio: <http://www.tvsp.org/picklamb.html>

Georgia 4-H & FFA State Livestock Show Rulebook: <http://georgia4h.org/livestock/GaJrLivestockShow/default.htm>

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