



Autumn 2023 Newsletter



Letter from the President

Hello,

It's another start to the shepherding year now that it's mid-September. We are all making plans to begin turning in rams and getting excited for next year's lamb crop. If you are still looking for the perfect suitor or two for your ewe flock, there are several great opportunities coming up. The SWAREC Ram Test and Sale is taking place this coming Friday, September 22nd in Glade Spring, VA. The following weekend is the University of Florida Ram Test Sale. There are always lots of delivery options available if you are interested in a ram and can't get to VA or FL, don't hesitate to reach out to the sale contacts or other EAPK members to arrange potential shipping. You can find more information on both of these sales in the pages of this newsletter.

Our 3rd Annual EAPK Symposium and Sale in Morehead, Kentucky at Morehead State University was our most successful event to date. We had nearly 100 attendees for our educational talks, and a record setting sale. Check out the sale results page below for more details.

Our communications committee has been continuing to bring us great information and articles. This fall a few members of our flock were stricken with meningeal worm and we were unable to identify the culprit until the blog post came out. I'm happy to report we had no losses because we were well equipped with great information. I'd encourage you to take the time to read the blogs and join us on our monthly Monday evening zoom calls, where shepherds discuss a wide range of topics and share ideas.

Brad Carothers
President

New on the EAPK Website

[Where to Buy Sheep](#) [Plant Toxicity in Sheep](#) [Meningeal Worm](#) [Buying Parasite Resistance](#)

Timely Tip: Plan Now for Winter Grazing

Winter grazing has many benefits for both sheep and shepherds.

Some benefits include improved animal performance, better animal health, less labor for shepherds and less feeding of stored feed leading to improved profitability. Fall is an excellent time to either stockpile forage for later grazing, or for planting winter forages, depending on your location.

Contact your local seed provider or NRCS or extension office for recommendations for cool-season forages and optimal planting dates for your area. Look for a blog on winter grazing coming soon.





VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
VIRGINIA TECH.

2023 SHEEP FIELD DAY & RAM LAMB SALE

Friday, September 22, 2023

Virginia Tech Southwest Agricultural Research and Extension Center
12326 VPI Farm Road
Glade Spring, VA

Sale Day Phones: (276) 698-6079 or (540) 230-2680
Prior to Sale Day Call: (276) 944-2200 or (540) 231-9159

Ram Videos available at

<https://sas.vt.edu/extension/vtsheep/swarec-ram-test.html>

Schedule

12:00 Noon – Registration & Lunch
12:30 PM - Educational Field Day
3:00 PM - Ram Sale

***Selling 50 forage-tested rams evaluated for
growth and parasite resistance***

Online bidding
available at:
livestockbuyer.com



Field Day Program:

- Selection for Parasite Resistance- Added Benefits!- Dr. Scott Bowdridge, WVU
- Effect of FEC EBV on Animal Health- Kelsey Bentley, WVU
- Sheep Health Update – Chris Fletcher, DVM, VDACS
- Southwest AREC Sheep Research/Facilities Update - Lee Wright, Virginia Tech SWAREC
- 2023 Ram Test - Lee Wright, Virginia Tech SWAREC and Dr. Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech



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[**Link to Sale Catalog, Videos and More Information**](#)

UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Short Course and Ram Test Sale

By: Dr. Brittany Diehl, DVM, MS – UF College of Veterinary Medicine

Here in ‘The Swamp’ our 3rd annual UF Ram Test has been ongoing this summer at the University of Florida! This program is designed to standardize environmental conditions to evaluate and quantify individual ram performance in the harsh southeastern US, with a primary emphasis on natural parasite resistance and growth.

There will be numerous high-quality rams for sale at our auction who demonstrated the ability to perform in the harsh Florida climate. These rams will be sold to the highest bidder through an online auction format with Willoughby Livestock Sales. The sale will be open for 24 hours, beginning on Friday, September 29th at 11 AM and closing on Saturday, September 30th at 11 AM. The sale rams will be available for in-person viewing on September 29-30th during the Small Ruminant Short Course at the UF/IFAS Horse Teaching Unit, 1934 SW 63rd Ave., Gainesville, FL 32608.

[UF Ram Test and data collection results](#)
[Link to UF Ram Test Sale through](#)
[Willoughby Livestock Sales](#)



We encourage your participation and attendance at our 2023 Small Ruminant Short Course and Ram Test Sale on September 29-30th here in Gainesville, FL. Producers, extension specialists and agents, researchers, students, and allied industry members are welcome to attend this in-person, educational event. The program will include lectures and demonstrations from industry experts, including our keynote speaker, Dr. Niki Whitley. Dr. Whitley is an extension specialist at Fort Valley State University and is bringing 20+ years of small ruminant production knowledge.

[UF Small Ruminant Short Course event, agenda and registration](#)

Please feel free to contact us with any questions: Clay Whitehead at (904) 796-0441, e-mail jacobcwhitehead@ufl.edu, or Dr. Brittany Diehl at (352) 294-4387, e-mail bn.diehl@ufl.edu.

Timely Tips

Good Contemporary Groups Begin in the Fall

How well you structure your breeding groups in the fall will determine the quality of your lamb contemporary groups in the Spring. Here are a few tips for assigning ewes to rams for breeding:

- Use at least 2 rams so that adequate comparisons can be made based on their lambs' performance.
- Each ram should be given a minimum of 8-10 ewes to ensure that each sire has at least 15-20 progeny.
- Assign a similar mix of ewes of different ages so that one ram doesn't get a majority of mature ewes while another gets a majority of ewe lambs.
- If possible, assign ewes so that each ram gets a fairly balanced number of high performing ewes, average ewes, and underperforming ewes based on EBV values for different traits measured.
- A lamb contemporary group can only include lambs born within 35 days so breeding for all groups should begin at about the same time.

For more information see the EAPK Concept document, [Breeding Group Structure](#)

To make planning breeding groups easier, EAPK member Etienne Richards has created a special tool that includes tutorials. Additional information is included elsewhere in this newsletter, or access the planning tool directly at:

<https://info.sheeptools.com/planning/>

Be On The Lookout!

Just when you thought you were out of the woods. Several diseases occur more frequently in the fall than at other times of year. Listed below are several with links to additional information about each one.

- [Meningeal Worm Meningeal Worm - Eastern Alliance for Production Katahdins \(easternalliancekatahdins.com\)](#)
- [Bluetongue Virus - USDA APHIS | Bluetongue](#)
- [Cache Valley Fever - Cache Valley Fever \(CVF\) | Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#)
- [Abortion Disease - Abortion in Sheep - Reproductive System - Merck Veterinary Manual \(merckvetmanual.com\)](#)

2024 EAPK Sale Results

Thank you to all of our bidders for another successful Katahdin Sale at Morehead State University.

Thanks go out to Morehead State and the Harrelsons for helping us put on another great event.



High Selling Ram lot 28 from Ewe Lamb Right Farm, sold to Morehead State University

Total sales for females: \$28,775

Averaging \$846.32

Total sales for rams: \$51,568

Averaging \$1,074.33

[Click here to view sale catalog and list of buyers](#)

Members in the News

We have a very talented and creative membership! Several of our EAPK members have created useful products or services. Several of these products and services are highlighted here. If you are an EAPK member with a sheep related product or service, let us know and we'll feature it in a future newsletter.



The Grazing Sheep Podcast

with Big Tom Perkins and Dr. Camren Maierle

The Grazing Sheep Podcast offers practical information and education to sheep producers both new and experienced. Hosted by Big Tom Perkins and Dr. Camren Maierle, this podcast takes a behind the scenes look at raising and grazing sheep. Genetic selection, parasite management, and grazing strategies are a few of the many topics covered during engaging conversation between Tom and Cam, along with expert guest stars. Most recently, The Grazing Sheep Podcast has taken a deep dive into understanding NSIP and the EBV's that allow for improved genetic selection. The Grazing Sheep Podcast can be found on Spotify, Apple, and Google platforms, with a new episode every week!

Have a topic or question you would like covered, reach out to us at bigtomperkins@gmail.com

Sheep Tools

from Etienne Richards

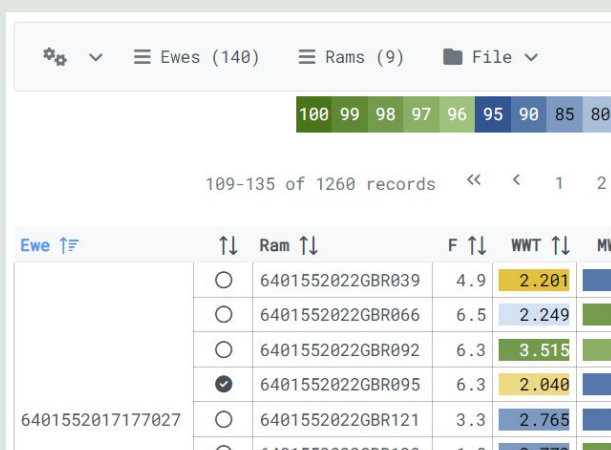
SheepTools <https://info.sheeptools.com> is a collection of tools that allow producers to get extra value out of EBVs. The main site has links to the tools with multiple tutorials on how to use them. Katahdin and PolyPay breeds are currently supported with support for other breeds in the works.

The first tool that is currently available (there are more tools being developed) is the Planning tool. The planning tool helps NSIP breeders do breeding planning. Once you have selected the ewes and rams you plan on using, the tool generates a list of all the possible ewe and ram pairings, showing you what the inbreeding will be for each pairing as well as what the pedigree EBVs are for each pairing. The user can color pairing pedigree EBVs by percentile ranking and filter pairings to narrow down options to pairings that better meet their breeding goals. Users can save their work in progress and resume planning at a later date with EBVs automatically being updated when the NSIP Searchable Database is updated. Selected or all pairings can be exported to Excel or other formats where the user can manipulate the data further. There's over an hour of video tutorials covering specific features. Most tutorials are broken down into 10 to 15 minute tutorials for easy consumption that can be accessed at <https://info.sheeptools.com/planning/>

Other tools planned or in development:

- Compare - Allows you to easily compare large groups of animals with each other
- Detail - A tool that shows all the information available for an animal including pedigree hierarchy of EBVs and EBV Radar Charts
- Search - Advanced searching of the NSIP data
- Report - Flock-level reporting including enhanced genetic trends, ewe flock genetic trends, viewing changes of EBVs over time, etc.
- Other - Miscellaneous productivity tools

You can contact me at <https://info.sheeptools.com/contact/> if you have suggestions, requests or issues. Hope you find it useful.



The screenshot shows the SheepTools web interface. At the top, there are filters for 'Ewes (140)' and 'Rams (9)'. Below this is a color-coded bar representing percentile rankings from 100 to 80. The main table displays a list of pairings with columns for Ewe, Ram, and various EBV metrics. The table is currently showing records 109-135 of 1260 records.

| Ewe ↑↓ | ↑↓ | Ram ↑↓ | F ↑↓ | WWT ↑↓ | MWWT ↑↓ | PWWT ↑↓ | WFEC ↑↓ | PFEC ↑↓ | NLB ↑↓ | NLW ↑↓ | Index ↑↓ |
|------------------|----|------------------|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|----------|
| | ○ | 6401552022GBR039 | 4.9 | 2.201 | 1.375 | 4.769 | -74.495 | -68.075 | 0.048 | 0.145 | 103.855 |
| | ○ | 6401552022GBR066 | 6.5 | 2.249 | 1.768 | 3.822 | -55.605 | -45.405 | -0.046 | 0.086 | 103.130 |
| | ○ | 6401552022GBR092 | 6.3 | 3.515 | 1.693 | 4.944 | -65.840 | -53.835 | -0.048 | 0.080 | 103.125 |
| | ● | 6401552022GBR095 | 6.3 | 2.040 | 1.378 | 3.575 | -73.080 | -70.255 | -0.013 | 0.109 | 103.285 |
| 6401552017177027 | ○ | 6401552022GBR121 | 3.3 | 2.765 | 1.524 | 4.831 | -62.690 | -50.220 | -0.003 | 0.095 | 103.095 |
| | ○ | 6401552022GBR139 | 1.8 | 2.772 | 1.846 | 4.378 | -61.770 | -51.680 | -0.044 | 0.074 | 102.930 |





SheepThings Podcast & Store

from Robert Walker

SheepThings was started as I saw a need for new designs and ideas for apparel for Katahdin producers. Since I was a kid, graphic design and computers have always been a hobby so it just was a natural fit for me. Plus, it scratched the itch almost lost over the years of drawing and painting. Designing t-shirts and caps for a niche sheep market led to a couple other website stores with apparel/gifts as well. That turned into an idea for a one-stop-shop website for sheep heads alike, anchored by a podcast that connected shepherds who wanted to learn with shepherds with years of experience. One thing I learned from my time on the KHSI Board and as the Facebook admin of a couple of groups is that people are starved for information. Hopefully the SheepThings podcast has helped fill that need for the last three years. The goal of the podcast is to stay fun and educational with a common-sense approach and not so technical that it loses a majority of the audience.

I got my first computer when I was a freshman in high school. The school only had two at the time. The Internet fascinated me when it came out and website design has been something I have been doing since 1995 with my previous business. With several websites under my belt, people started asking for me to build websites for them as well. So now website design has been added to the SheepThings platform. Hopefully other breeds of sheep will be added to the portfolio of podcasts and apparel soon, as we can learn something from every producer no matter the breed. <https://sheepthings.com/>

[Shop Home](#)
[All Sheep](#)
[Katahdin](#)

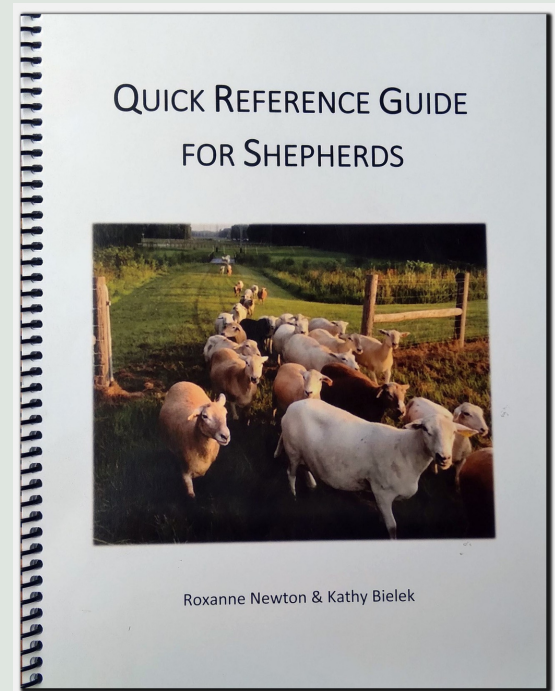
Featured Products

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>BOOKS & STICKERS, BOOKS & STICKERS Quick Reference Guide for Shepherds \$30.00</p> | <p>CAPS, CAPS Sheep FarmHer Cap \$22.00 – \$23.00</p> | <p>ACCESSORIES Easy Lift Rake \$60.00</p> | <p>CAPS Katahdin Script Classic \$22.00 – \$23.00</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

Quick Reference Guide for Shepherds

by Roxanne Newton and Kathy Bielek

EAPK members, Kathy Bielek and Roxanne Newton have developed a Quick Reference Guide for Shepherds to assist new and experienced shepherds look up relevant information quickly and conveniently on subjects including flock goals, management, nutrition, lambing, parasite control, and descriptions of numerous illnesses and conditions that may require prompt veterinary treatment. In addition, the guide includes useful reference tables and forms to keep all your treatments and data easily accessible. The resource section will direct you to some of the sources they have found useful when more in-depth information is needed. Head to the link under the cover photo to order your copy.



[Quick Reference Guide for Shepherds - SheepThings](#)



Round Mountain Consulting Service from Jim Morgan

Help with submitting NSIP data is as close as your phone.

Have you been wanting to participate in the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) and didn't know where to start? Or maybe you just need some help and encouragement to take the first steps? Our service will provide the technical and computer expertise needed to get the job done. We work with shepherds that don't have computers, don't know how to use a computer for data submission or don't have access to the internet. We also train shepherds so that they can submit their own data in the future with confidence.

Ten years of experience submitting all NSIP data from more than 45 Katahdin flocks in the 2000s and more than twenty years advising flocks in NSIP on data collection, submission and using EBVs. We can help with designing breeding groups, suggestions on how and when to collect data and interpretation of the results. \$25/hour. The first hour of consulting is free to determine how we can help and work together.

Jim Morgan, Round Mountain Consulting. 479-236-9569, jlmm@earthlink.net

NC SMALL RUMINANT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FALL FIELD DAY



Friday, October 6, 2023
10AM - 3PM

10 am: LeeDer Farm- Hiddenite, NC
Ram Selection 101
Native Warm Season Grass Project Update
Silvopasture

12 pm: Complimentary Lunch

1 pm: Red Rock Farm - Hiddenite, NC
Multi-species Grazing
Grazing Infrastructure (Fence, Water,
and Shade)
EQIP Funding
Stockpiling Fescue for Winter Grazing

Visit
go.ncsu.edu/smallruminantfallfieldday23
or scan the QR code to register



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Check out the
American Sheep Industry Podcast
[On Apple Podcasts](#)



Upcoming Events

**September 23rd, 2023 - SWAREC Ram Test
Field Day and Sale
Glade Spring, VA**

**September 29th, 2023 - UF/IFAS Small
Ruminant Short Course and Ram Test
Sale
Gainesville, FL**

**2024 EAPK Symposium and Sale coming
July, 2024
Date and Location TBA**

**The 3rd Monday of each month at 7PM EST -
Open Forum Discussion via zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81720266013>**



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