

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Reproduction / Physiology

IMPROVING RANGE EWE PRODUCTIVITY

Tim Ross, Clay Mathis, Shad Cox and T.J. Stow

A study was conducted at the Corona Range and Livestock Research Center to determine the efficacy of breeding Suffolk rams to increase pounds of lamb weaned. Additionally, we attempted to determine the time of reproductive wastage in range ewes. Ewes (94) were sorted into four groups and assigned to either Suffolk rams or Rambouillet rams (2 groups per sire breed). Within each sire group, ewes were assigned to shed lambing or pasture lambing. Ewes in the shed lambing group were brought into the corrals a week prior to the onset of lambing (lambing began May 8). As ewes lambed, the ewe and lamb(s) were placed in jugs for 24 h and then returned to their original pastures. At birth, these lambs were weighed and ear tagged. Pasture lambing ewes were managed per standard practices. All ewes and lambs were gathered on June 18 when lambs were weighed, docked and males castrated. Pasture lambs were also ear tagged at this time. All lambs were weaned on October 17 and the final lamb weight was recorded. Birth weights were similar between sire groups (based on shed lambs only). Lambs in the Suffolk sire group were heavier ($P = .06$) at marking than the Rambouillet sire group (40 vs. 35 lbs.). At weaning the weights were similar ($P = .28$) for the sire groups (89 vs. 82 lbs. for Suffolk and Rambouillet sire groups, respectively). Weights for sheep and pasture lambing groups were similar. Not statistically tested, Rambouillet sired lambs had greater death loss from birth to marking and marking than Suffolk sired lambs. Of the 68 lambs born to the shed lambing ewes, 62 were alive at marking and 57 were alive at weaning. Ultrasound data determined in the second trimester of pregnancy predicted 71 lambs to be born to this shed lambing group of ewes. In conclusion, Suffolk sires maybe a viable option for range producers to increase pounds of lamb at weaning.

EFFECTS OF PROGESTERONE THERAPY ON EMBRYONIC SURVIVAL AND PREGNANCY RATES IN EWES

B. R. Faris, T. T. Ross, A. S. Carmen, C. H. Martinez, B. J. Herron,
J. R. Saenz, D. M. Hallford

New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, 88003 USA

This study was conducted to determine the effect of supplemental progesterone (P_4) on embryonic survival and pregnancy rates in multi- and nulliparous ewes. Multi- and nulliparous ewes ($n=84$ and 17 , respectively) were randomly assigned to four treatments (control, Time 4, Time 6, and Time 8). Animals were group fed with ad libitum access to water and mineral. Three vasectomized rams were penned with the multiparous ewes and nulliparous ewes were exposed to one vasectomized ram. Ewes were bred via natural service after estrus (d 0) detection using vasectomized rams and the HeatWatch® system. Treatments Time 4, 6, and 8 correspond