

# DORPER NEWS!

MAY 2020



As we all adjust, and reassess our way of operating during the current Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential we maintain high hygiene standards at all times, even around our livestock. As farmers, our daily operations need to continue with as little interruption as possible.

The shepherds course intended for April 2020, had to be postponed. Those who booked will be offered the places first, when allowed and considered safe, for all concerned.

Meantime, Members, please use the Members WhatsApp platform to ask questions, make suggestions. A warm welcome to new members, and trust you will benefit from being part of the Dorper Association.

## **PROFIT FROM YOUR EWES**

For you the farmer, to stay in business, you need to be profitable! This means your ewes must reproduce regularly and efficiently. It is unfair to expect any animal to do this if she is not being fed and dosed properly. From conception, your ewe must maintain body condition. It is a never-ending cycle that should not be broken, or loss of profits will likely result.

A ewe has a heat period of 2 – 3 days, every 14-17 days. Her heat should recommence about 6 weeks after lambing. An underfed or overfed ewe will not come on heat. The middle line of maintaining a ewe in reasonable condition is by far the cheapest and most efficient.

Lack of nutrition at the different stages of the cycle may lead to the following:

1. Poor condition at tugging, results in low or no conception rate.
2. Lack of nutrition after conception, may result in re-absorption of the foetus.
3. Lack of nutrition during last 6 weeks of pregnancy may result in small, puny lambs and a ewe that has inadequate milk supply.

In order to overcome the above:

1. Ewe should be on a rising plain of nutrition, from reasonable to good – NOT from starvation to semi-starvation!
2. Object here, is to maintain the ewes' condition, she should not lose or gain too much.
3. During last 6 weeks of gestation, the lamb foetus does the majority of its growing and good nutrition is essential, to result in a healthy ewe, with good milk supply, capable of raising good size lamb/s.

### REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND SHEEP

<https://mintcreekfarm.com/blog/2019/11/26/regenerative-agriculture-and-the-net-present-value-of-sheep>

An interesting article written by Mint Creek Farm – (excerpt) wrote:

In simple terms “Regenerative Agriculture” seeks to restore the ecological balance to our bioregion that has been degraded by our current industrial farming practices. We have lost half our topsoil, greatly reduced our soil organic matter (carbon content), and destroyed the diverse species habitat on the ecosystem that thrived not so long ago. Contrary to much current news about how bad livestock are for the environment, they actually play an essential ecological role in carbon cycling and restoring biodiversity to our lands.

Following along philosophical lines of Savory and Leopold, Mint Creek were trying to look at what is economically possible on average soil in central Illinois. The idea of Net Present Value is to show the value of a sheep operation, sheep bringing value to the land, being an excellent source of protein and is environmentally sustainable and regenerative.

With current worldwide trends of negative interest rates, very few have the capital investments to live out one's life on one's savings, and money we have is being eroded by time.

Can a well-run flock of sheep provide a reasonable return with little input costs, aided by the implementation of Regenerative Agriculture? The sun doesn't charge for shining and grass grows for free, and, sheep will eat the grass for free! No interest charged. Sheep poop out 80% of what they ingest, and the excrement is enriched biological fertiliser, with a side dress of pee.

The sheep provide us with a complete protein with their meat, reproduction is easy (with correct management), yielding an exponential growth ability. With good management, lots of twin sets – this can be way above 130% annually. How many do you need to sell, for your investment to give greater returns than capital invested. Assuming you can provide all of the care, maintenance and health needs of the sheep, done properly, these animals can be part of a regenerative setup.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE DORPER SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION**, remain at USD\$40 per annum, payable in USD or RTGS at the rate of the day.

If you have any items of interest, questions or suggestions, feel free to send them to us.

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