

# THE BLEAT

*A UGA Extension Newsletter for Georgia Sheep and Goat Producers*



## Lamb and Goat Show Season Is In Full Swing!

*By Caitlin Jackson*

*County Extension Coordinator/ANR Agent  
Monroe County*

While many families enjoyed their vacations there is another activity that filled the summer of hundreds of families across Georgia; showing lambs and goats. As a livestock kid myself, I can honestly say that there is nothing finer than being in the show barn surrounded by good people making lifelong memories. Now as a County Agent I have the opportunity to help both 4-H and FFA youth in the very project that inspired my career. I highly encourage all sheep and goat producers to support these young people as they are the future of the industry. I invite you to support our 4-H and FFA youth by attending either the Middle Georgia Lamb Show hosted at the Upson-Lee Ag Barn on September 14, 2019 at 9 am or the Georgia National Fair State Goat and Lamb Show October 6-8, 2019 in Perry, GA.



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The body condition scoring system is described below. It is preferred to keep animals between a 2 and 4 body condition. Animals that are too fat (or if extremely thin) prior to giving birth may have birthing problems, including possible ketosis (pregnancy toxemia). If animals are overly fattening as replacement females, their overall lifetime milk production may be decreased. Animals that are too thin may have only singles and if too thin when they give birth, may not produce enough milk to raise their offspring. Thin animals also have a harder time fighting off worms and diseases.

## Body Condition Scoring

*by Dr. Niki Whitley, Fort Valley State University*

Body condition is the fat and muscle covering of an animal. For goats and sheep, body condition is scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being emaciated (a walking skeleton) and 5 being obese. To properly body condition score small ruminants, it is important to put your hands on them, especially for sheep with wool or hair sheep or goats with full hair coats. Feeling over the top and sides of the backbone in the area between the last rib and the hip bone (hooks) and over the ribs is the common way to body condition score. As an animal loses weight, they first lose fat, then muscle. The reasons that animals lose weight can include lactation (heavy milkers/nursing twins or more), sickness (parasites, wasting diseases) and poor nutrition. Learning to body condition score can help manage animal performance and health.

There are videos online for meat goats and sheep and, for dairy goats, the American Dairy Goat Association has guidelines available online as well.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 12-18 - Gwinnett County Sheep/Goat Shows  
Sept. 14 - Mid-GA Lamb Show (Upson-Lee Ag Barn)  
October 4-6 - State 4-H/FFA Market Goat and Lamb Show - Georgia National Fairgrounds

**November 16 - Save the Date!!! Sheep and Goat Field Day at Ft. Valley**  
December 1 - Deadline to register 4-H and FFA Breeding Ewe and Breeding Doe projects

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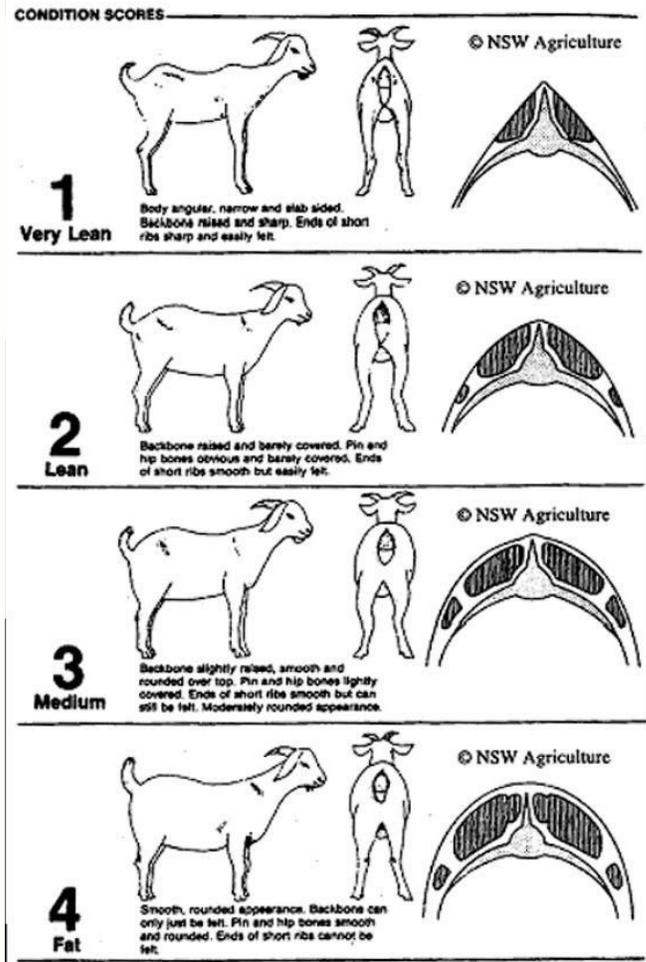
## Body condition score (BCS) ratings

- **BCS 1.0** = The animal is visually emaciated and weak. The backbone is highly visible and forms a continuous ridge, individual bones can be felt on the top and sides of the backbone. The area between the top and sides of the backbone is bone with skin covering, dipping down. The flank is hollow and ribs are clearly visible. There is no fat cover and fingers can easily fall in between the ribs.
- **BCS 2.0** = The backbone is still visible with a continuous ridge and easily felt on either side. The area along the top of the backbone is still mostly bone with some muscle starting to form. Some ribs can be see and there is a small amount of fat cover. Ribs are still felt and though it is smooth between them, the fingers can still easily fall between them.
- **BCS 3.0** = The backbone is not prominent, and between them is filling in. The space between the top and sides of the backbone has muscle and some fat cover. The ribs are barely seen and when felt, there is an even layer of fat over them. Space between the ribs can be felt with some pressure.
- **BCS 4.0** = The backbone and ribs cannot be seen or felt. The topline feels level or 'flat'. The side of the animal is sleek in appearance.
- **BCS 5.0** = The backbone is buried in fat, there may be a dip where the backbone should be and the ribs are not visible and cannot be felt. The rib cage is covered with excessive fat.

Reference:

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/body\\_condition\\_scoring\\_in\\_goats](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/body_condition_scoring_in_goats)

For more information, contact your local County Extension Office or Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension program (478-825-6296).



## OUTREACH FVSU PROGRAMS

Fort Valley State University will have the Sheep and Goat Story display at the Georgia National Fair, October 3-13, 2019. Will have information about raising sheep and goats, a milking demonstration, games for children, free goat milk soap samples, free goat milk ice cream samples for one hour daily, and live sheep and goats on display! We are located by the Georgia Grown Building, next door to the Dairy Exhibit.

Fort Valley State also has an indoor (in the FVSU building and the Morton building) and a collaborative outdoor (Sheep and Goat Exhibit in the livestock area) section at the Sunbelt Ag Expo October 15-17, 2019. Tuskegee, FAMU, and the American Dorper Sheep Breeders' Society as well as UGA extension personnel participate at the outdoor livestock area (in the same area as aquaculture). This are will have presentations on nutrition/forages, economics, fencing, health/diseases (with hands on), and emergency/disaster preparedness. There will be a milking demonstration twice a day and we are planning to have free lamb meatball samples for a short period every day. There are experts there to interact with, including University personnel and other producers, and animals on display. I am there every day, all day (except for short breaks), giving away fact sheets and other educational materials and answering questions. A sheep shearing demonstration is planned at 11:30 am on the 15th and 16th. We look forward to seeing folks there!



## SHEEP SAFETY & QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Caitlin B. Jackson**  
**CEC/ANR Agent**  
**Monroe County**

Raising livestock in the twenty-first century comes with unique challenges that generations before us could not have even imagined. Intensive regulation, urbanization, and continuous rising input costs are just a few challenges that livestock producers face every day. However, we do have a few “perks” by being in a modern era. Improvements in genetics, easy access to information and technology have vastly increased efficiency in production resulting in the safest, high quality products in the world. While the sheep and goat industry know this to be fact, how can we prove to consumers that our products are the best?



The Sheep Safety and Quality Assurance program (SSQA) was developed as a way for consumers to be confident in the American sheep and goat producer that they are producing a high quality, safe, and humanely raised product. In turn, the SSQA program will assist producers in developing standard operating procedures that will assist in improving quality and profitability.

To become SSQA certified there are three levels producers must complete. Level One: Participation; educates producers about SSQA. Level Two: Certification; focuses on implementation of and development of site specific plans for quality management. Level Three: Verification; verifies what the plan is and practices are in place during production. Producers can complete Level One online and should plan for about an hour to complete, however there is an option to exit out and resume later if you run out of time. Level Two and Level Three require hands-on training and confirmation. Once Level One is completed there will be a contact list for resources to complete the next levels.

Producers can access the online training for Level One of the SSQA program through the American Sheep Industry Association website or by typing in the following link:

<https://sheepusa.org/researcheducation-onlineeducation-ssqa>



## **WATER REQUIREMENTS AND QUALITY ISSUES FOR SMALL RUMINANTS**

**By: Brooklyne Wassel,  
ANR Agent - Pike County**

Water is the most important nutrient for livestock. It accounts for 50-80% of an animal's weight and is involved in every physiological process. Small ruminants must have free access to all the quality water they will consume. Without water, feed intake greatly decreases, the animal becomes dehydrated and body functions fail.

Nitrates from manure and fertilizer are an increasing problem affecting water quality. During periods of drought, pond water and streams become stagnant and evaporate, resulting in higher concentrations of pollutants such as nitrates. Monitor levels of nitrates in the water. When pasture or feed that is high in nitrates is fed, water contamination can become a serious problem. Death can occur when small ruminants consume water high in nitrates. Chronic toxicity causes the animal to eat less and thus have lower performance. Other substances that cause water quality problems include sulfur, iron and manganese. These minerals decrease water intake because of foul flavors and/or odor. Another common problem is excessive levels of minerals that interfere with normal mineral absorption and lead to deficiencies. This is most common with high iron and sulfate levels that bind and prevent the absorption of copper and zinc.

Blue-green algae is a water quality problem usually seen in surface water that is rich in nutrients. Blue-green algae are actually bacteria that, under the right conditions, can potentially produce toxins that can kill small ruminants. Toxicity problems usually occur when ruminants consume large amounts of the algae in the summer or early fall following a rapid bloom of algae.

The best methods to control algae are to eliminate the source of nutrients entering the water, aerate the water or fence livestock away from the pond and pump water to a tank. If the intake pipe in the pond is at least 3 feet below the surface, intake of blue green algae toxins is minimal. Ponds are an important source of water for many herds. To improve water quality in ponds, use fencing to prevent animals gaining access, thereby reducing pond sedimentation. A pipe can be installed to run drinking water to a tank at the base of the dam. Reducing access to ponds can also reduce the potential spread of certain diseases throughout a herd.

Water is the most important nutrient, but providing clean water is often overlooked. Poor water quality can lead to poor performance and poor reproduction that often goes unnoticed, but that can be deadly as well. Using the best quality of water available will contribute to the optimal production of sheep and goats. Drinking water quality should be part of an evaluation when there is a problem with poor performance and as a general best management practice. The only way to know if a problem exists is to test the water for anti-quality factors.



Toxic Algae in Pond

Contact your local county Extension agent for sampling instructions and submission information.

# UPCOMING HOLIDAYS FOR MARKETING MEAT

*By Sarah Greer*

*ANR/4-H Agent - Crawford County*

Keeping up to date with approaching ethnic holidays is an important management tool when you are marketing your sheep and goat meat. Targeting these holidays ensures that you have product in the time frame of your consumer demands. Being in control of your marketing ensures that you are a price maker instead of a price taker. With proper planning and execution you can better serve your customers and increase profit margins for your operation. Many ethnic communities call Atlanta home, and being able to cater to their needs can add sustainability to your farm. The following holidays are approaching and may be beneficial to market towards:

## **Mawlid al-Nabi, Prophet's Birthday** November 10, 2019

This Muslim holiday celebrates the birth of the founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad. For this holiday, both lamb and goat are consumed. There are no specifications for weight or age of the animal.



## **Rosh Hashanah** September 30 – October 1, 2019

This Jewish New Year is a time of reflection and looking forward to what is ahead. Lamb is more common for this holiday and the front quarters of 60-100 pound animals are typically preferred during this 3-day celebration.

## **Chanukkah** December 23-30, 2019

An 8-day festival often called the festival of the lights commemorates the rededication of the Temple when it was returned to the Jewish people from the Greeks. Young, milk fed lambs and kids are consumed during this holiday.

## **Christmas** December 25, 2019

For various denominations of Christianity, lamb or goat may be eaten. Lamb should be 30-45 pounds and milk fed. Kids should weigh between 20 and 40 pounds with 30 pounds being the most preferred size, which yield the highest \$/lb price.

While the previously mentioned holidays are approaching soon, in the future utilizing a feed formula and knowing which stages of growth each holiday desires can help you cater your breeding season to specific holidays. The formula below was furnished by the Empire State Meat Goat Producers Association to better calculate when to begin your breeding season.

$$\frac{(\text{Desired Final Weight} - \text{Birth Weight})}{\text{Average Daily Gain}} = \text{Days on Feed}$$

Knowing your herd and keeping accurate records on birth weight and average daily gains will be required to increase the effectiveness of the formula.

You will need to add the following days to your Days of Feed to figure out when to begin your breeding season:

- 10-14 days for slaughter and processing
- 150 days for gestation
- 18-21 for a doe/ewe's cycle

Whether you can meet this upcoming holiday season's demand or not, knowing what is preferred and when is an important consideration when preparing your lambing and kidding seasons. Keeping accurate records of average birth weights of your kids and lambs is vital to your operation. Being familiar with the growth rate of your animals is also very important.



# LAMB GYROS AND TAZIKI SAUCE

PREPARATIONS FOR THIS RECIPE SHOULD BEGIN THE DAY BEFORE YOU ARE EATING IT. THIS ALLOWS FLAVORS TO BLEND AND SETTLE WITH EACH OTHER.

## DAY ONE

### Taziki Sauce

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups Greek Yogurt
- 1 cucumber
- 1 tsp of salt
- 4-6 garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp dill
- 1 tsp rosemary (optional)

#### Directions

1. You can leave the peel on or off of the cucumber. I like to leave a bit on to add to the color of the sauce. Cut up the cucumber and blend it with a blender or food processor. Dump the contents into a cheese cloth, or I just use napkins, and let it sit to drain out a lot of the moisture. Sprinkling it with salt seems to help this process. You want to remove as much of the moisture as possible so it doesn't make the sauce too runny.
2. Combine all ingredients in the blender and mix well.
3. I usually pour this sauce back into the original Greek yogurt container and place it in the fridge overnight.

### Gyro Meat and Toppings

#### Ingredients

- 1 pound of ground beef
- 1 pound of ground lamb
- ½ onion
- 4-6 garlic cloves
- 2-3 tbsp Greek seasoning (rosemary, oregano, thyme, marjoram, salt and pepper)
- Toppings – tomato, lettuce, feta cheese, cucumber, red onion

#### Directions

1. Much like the cucumber in the taziki sauce, we want to process the onion into very small pieces. Putting it in a blender or food processor gives you the flavor of the onion but it also allows for the smooth texture of traditional gyro meat. Drain the liquid out of the onion as well.
2. Combine all ingredients and mix in blender or food processor until smooth and tacky.
3. Allow meat to rest, tightly sealed, in the refrigerator over night

## DAY TWO

#### Directions

There are several ways to cook the gyro meat, but for the average home cook – who does not deal with roasting pans and such – I think this is the best way.

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Remove gyro meat from the fridge and place it onto an aluminum foil lined pan (for easy cleanup). Spread out the meat into a rectangle the size of a white piece of paper.
3. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the internal temperature is 165F.
4. Remove meat to rest while you warm up pita bread and assemble your toppings (red onion, cucumber, lettuce, tomatoes, taziki sauce or feta cheese).
5. Cut very thin slices off of your gyro meat. Lay those slices on a pan and broil them until the edges are crispy.
6. Assemble your gyros or gyro plates and enjoy!

SUBMITTED BY SARAH GREER

# BREEDING STOCK SELECTION

Dr. Niki Whitley, Fort Valley State University

If you have not already started your breeding season, here are some simple tips for selection of animals for breeding. Remember that males provide genetics to all offspring, including future offspring for those replacement females sired by him that you decide to keep. Thus, it is important to choose the best (performing) male you can afford. This is not necessarily the most expensive animal.

## In general:

*Select animals that:*

- Were born and raised as at least twins; parents were born and raised as at least twins
- Had good growth rates (heavy weaning weights, good post weaning growth)
- Have proper overall body structure/conformation (dental pad and teeth meet evenly, no extreme sway or dip in back; legs not crooked, especially if expensive show/breeding stock)
- Have two normally shaped teats; no fish/fused teats; no small, non-functioning teats
- Are apparently healthy (no abscesses/bumps, lameness, runny nose, swollen joints, scabs on face or legs, diarrhea/scours or pale eyelids)
- Do not have malformed hooves
- Do not need to be dewormed often (based on records)
- Are not aggressive towards people

*Select males that also:*

- Have strong male features and behavior
- Have two testicles outside the body (descended into the scrotum) that are normally sized for age of the male with no swellings, bumps or scar tissue
- Do not have a split scrotum over 1"
- Have passed a breeding soundness exam and/or have been proven as a breeder

*Select females to breed that also:*

- Are no more than three years old
- Birthed and raised healthy twins every year since they were two years old
- Have a well-formed and attached udder with no swellings, bumps or scar tissue
- Have normally formed teats that are not too large for newborn kids
- Were from a mother birthing and raising twins or better each year
- Never prolapsed (uterus, vagina or rectum came out of the body)
- Have a deep body for carrying kids

If you are selling purebred/registered breeding stock, you also want to make sure animals exhibit the breed characteristics required by the breed association, that their conformation (the way they are put together) is correct, and their paperwork is in order. If selling show stock, a popular pedigree may be important.

To prepare for breeding, make sure hooves are trimmed, animals have been checked/dewormed if needed, have had any vaccinations needed, and any animals that need to be culled have been removed from the breeding herd. Also note that flushing (feeding extra energy/feed) 2-4 weeks prior to breeding and 2 weeks after the start of breeding may help increase the number of offspring born.



For more information, contact your local County Extension Office or Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension program (478-825-6296).

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## GEORGIA SHEEP ASSOCIATION WOOL SHOW & SALE

### Local fleeces for sale

Georgia Sheep Association members will be presenting fleeces for viewing and purchase at the Gwinnett County Fair. The fair attracts over 220,000 visitors during its 10-day run.

**Wednesday, 09/18**, is the date Georgia Sheep fleeces will be judged and first offered for sale. Judging occurs in the morning. The fair opens to the public at 5:00 p.m.

Judging categories include specific breeds plus white-faced and black-faced commercial sheep. Fleeces are judged based on staple length and strength, luster, color, crimp and weight.

Wednesday, 09/18, is also the date of the Open Sheep Show, where shepherds from Georgia and other states compete for ribbons and cash awards. Come join us for a fun and educational night at the Fair!

Gwinnett County  
Fairgrounds  
2405 Sugarloaf  
Pkwy  
Lawrenceville GA  
30046

Fleeces will be  
available for sale  
Wednesday 09/18  
from 5:00 p.m. –  
9:30 p.m. and on  
Saturday 09/21  
from 11:00 a.m. –  
6:00 p.m.



# Contributing County Agents

## CAITLIN JACKSON

Monroe County

### CONTACT

E-mail: [crbenn@uga.edu](mailto:crbenn@uga.edu)

Office: 478-994-7014

## SARAH GREER

Crawford County

### CONTACT

E-mail: [sarah.greer@uga.edu](mailto:sarah.greer@uga.edu)

Office: 478-836-3121



## HAILEY ROBINSON

Lamar/Upson Counties

### CONTACT

E-mail: [hrobinson@uga.edu](mailto:hrobinson@uga.edu)

Office: 706-647-8989

## BROOKLYNE WASSEL

Pike County

### CONTACT

E-mail:

[brooklyne.wassel@uga.edu](mailto:brooklyne.wassel@uga.edu)

Office: 770-567-2010



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