

# Rotational Shepherding in the Mountains

OGS Spring Conference March 8-10 2019

## Introductions...

- What we raise

  - Wool v. hair

  - Lamb v. Hogget v. mutton

- How we raise them

  - Green fed v grain fed

  - Rotational grazing

  - Feedback loops

- Why we raise them

  - Food and fiber

  - Land management

  - Land improvement!

  - Beauty

  - Meaning

- What else do we raise

  - Fruit in silvopasture

- How we sell our meat/wool/sheepskins

  - Direct marketing

  - Recipes and customer education

## Sourcing your flock

- Localized genetics

- Matching management styles

  - Feeding

  - Breeding schedule and cycle

  - Parasite mgmt

  - Lambing

- Start with a few sheep, they'll grow on their own!

## Our 18 month production cycle

### September

- Hoof trimming

- Preparations for breeding

  - Ewe/Ram condition check

  - Flushing?

### October-November

- Tupping / Breeding - based on size of flock

- Very small flock: procuring rams to 'rent'
- Medium to large flock: mgmt of your own rams
  - Fencing and location
  - Raising up replacement sires

#### December - February

- Feeding the flock
  - Stockpiled forage
  - Hay
  - Grain or other boosts

#### January

- Feeding ewes for last month of pregnancy?
- Crutching
  - Lambing ease
  - Shearing prep
  - Managing spring green up on wool

#### February - March

- Lambing
  - Why we lamb at this time
    - Weather
    - Parasites
  - Make a plan
    - Envision your ideal lambing season
    - Interventions- what are you going to do and what are you not going to do?
    - 911- who can you call and when?
  - Jugs
  - Lambing Kit
  - Coccidia control
  - Working lambs
    - Tagging- consider your needs first
    - Banding
      - Tails
      - Balls
      - Tetanus
    - Other vacs?

#### April

- Shearing
  - Timing
  - DIY v. pro shearer

- Fiber storage
- Wool pool v. direct market
- Rotational grazing
  - Fencing
    - Soft / Temporary
    - Hard / Permanent
  - Timing
    - Mob
    - 7-10
    - Slow
  - Method
    - Contiguous is best
    - Call training
    - Bucket training
    - Dogs
    - ATVs
    - Pusher and puller
    - Lambs don't move easily

July - early August

- Pull ram lambs and separate!

July - September

- Parasite watch/control
  - Signs and symptoms
    - Anemia- famacha
    - Bottle jaw
    - Diarrhea
    - Sudden death
  - Remedies
    - Anthelmintics
      - Use 2: 1 white and 1 clear
    - Multi species grazing
    - Fecal analysis
    - Breeding for resistance

July - September

- Separate cull ewes before breeding
- Identify replacement ewe hoggs
- Process hoggs (16-20 months old ideal)
  - Consider your stockpiled forage
  - Process on farm- no sales
  - Send to USDA facility
    - Truck and trailer

Return trips for hides and meat

What's in the future for us...

- Leader follower multi species grazing
- Lambing barn
- Lineage records and performance culling
- Fecal sample analysis
- Dairy cow for orphan lambs
- Fiber processing and collaborations!

Mentors and resources

- Sheep Ailments by Eddie Straiton
- Living with Sheep by Chuck Wooster and Geoff Hansen
- Premier One Supplies for equipment
- Agricultural universities papers and publications
- Forums (beware- can be a rabbit hole!)

Our contact information:

Sharon and Seth Dubuc  
Black Thorn Farm and Kitchen  
blackthornfarmandkitchen@gmail.com  
Blackthornfarmandkitchen.com  
Instagram: @blackthornfarmandkitchen