

What a difference a little rain can make! I forgot what muddy guard dogs are like...and wet mineral feeders...and walking in tall rubber boots. Ahhh, but that green grass is great! It has come back strong at the Extension Farm and at home. The oat study has started to grow again and the Sudan Sorghum finally outgrew its nitrate problems.

One challenge of the rain and heavy dew in the mornings is the re-birth of the internal parasites. Bottle jaw is showing up again and a “spurt” of diarrhea causing stomach worms. Keep a close watch on your animals for the next few weeks. I found a ewe on pasture at work and a ewe lamb at home showing signs of bottle jaw. Bottle jaw looks like a fluid filled sack under the jaw or chin area of the sheep. It is a sign of anemia – usually but not always caused by the Barberpole worm. Since these animals are really anemic you have to be careful not to chase them too much when you are trying to catch them to treat them with de-wormer. The best treatment is de-wormer and then rest – preferably keep them calm and off the pasture that is causing the problem. When you are moving animals to and from the barn or to another paddock watch for those lagging behind like they are lacking energy. Those are likely to be the anemic animals that will need treatment. A great resource is at <http://www.scsrpc.org/index.htm>. The latest research and ideas on parasite control are at that site. It is a consortium of researchers from all over the country working on internal parasites in small ruminants.

Our ewes at the Extension Learning Farm started lambing in September, then took a ten day break and then had another lambing spell. Maybe it was really hot during the breeding of the time that corresponds with the gap...or maybe really cold if I remember April correctly?

The cows and sheep are back out on the pasture together. After being in the barnyard on hay for a few weeks they had one crazy day when they insisted on getting out – crashing the fence twice in one day – to get to the green grass on the other side. It is a challenge to do lamb checks with the cows in the pasture. I have become very stealthy and use binoculars. Charlie will also take me out in the “buggy” when he checks the charge on the fence. Fortunately, the cows don’t seem to bother the sheep or lambs and it is nice to think that the cows are out there keeping dangerous things out of the pasture.

We are planning to take out April born ram lambs to the other farm to graze grass and a combination of turnips, rapes and beets we have planted there. The idea is to see how they graze them and how the lambs grow on those forages. The day we hoped to move them we found a few of them with possible coccidia so we are checking fecal samples, treating those that need it before moving them.

Pasture days are coming to an end as fall progresses. I think the shrinking daylight is worse than the changing weather. Your window for getting things done before dark is shrinking and for those of us that move temporary fence it is getting challenging already. Before we make the transition to stored feeds it is a good idea to take stock of what you have. It is usually easier to purchase hay now that it is in February or March.

If you want to figure out how much hay you need, a good way to estimate that is to multiply the number of sheep you have times 5, times the number of days you will have to feed. For example if you think you will have to start feeding on October 15 and will start pasturing on May 1 you will have to feed for approximately 200 days. Let’s say you have 50 sheep.  $50 \times 5$  is 250 pounds of hay per day. Then take  $250 \times 200$  days and you get 50,000 or 25 tons, That would be 1,667 - 30 pound square bales, 1250 - 40 pound square bales, 125 400 pound round bales or about 63 – 800 pound round bales. This type of estimate works for most sheep but if you have extra large

sheep you might have to up that to 5.5 or 6. Also take into account that there is more wastage on round bales in general depending on how they are stored and fed. If your lambs are born during barn feeding time you should also allow a little more for them.

**Wool Pool** – The wool pool will be Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup> at the Extension Learning Farm in Canton. At the moment there is a detour on Rt 68 between Canton and the farm. You can use the Potter Rd which is right before the closed bridge. That takes you into Crary Mills where you go right and to the stop sign and then right again on Rt 68 to come back up to the farm.

The pool starts at 10:00 am and we will be done as soon as everyone gets unloaded and checked in and the wool is on the truck. If you have wool to bring, and you haven't talked to me already, please let me know so we can plan what size truck is needed (379-9192 or bmf9@cornell.edu). The last price I heard was 55-65 cents per pound of good white wool and down from there. Please bring your wool – dry – in wool bags or heavy contractor bags. Clean dry cardboard boxes are OK, too. If it is raining, you need to do something to keep the wool dry on your way to the pool!

If the pool is anything like last Saturday's cooperative marketing it will go very well. It amazes me how organized the sheep producers can be. Everyone shows up, fills out their forms and helps with the unloading and loading. Special thanks to Jeremiah Hammill and Bret Martin and kids who helped get animals marked and onto the truck. Some of our best meetings take place in the parking lot!

I am working on a tour for this fall but haven't gotten things nailed down yet. Watch for more information on-line and in the papers.

As the days get shorter and the outside work gets less intense, it is time to work on things like your business plan. Business plans are not easy but they can help you focus your business. Business plans are not set in stone...they evolve over time as other variables change. One way to get the plan done is to take an on-line course like those offered through the beginning farmer group at Cornell (<http://nebeginningfarmers.org/online-courses>). I have taken one on business plan writing and found it very helpful. Just the fact that you have to be at your computer once a week and do homework kind of forces you to get things done. Feedback from the instructors is very good and other class members chime in, too. It takes a little while to get used to the whole on-line thing but it works quite well once you get the hang of it.

One approach you can use on your own is to take it one step at a time. The first step is the Executive Summary. Below is the template for the Executive Summary. Take a few minutes and try to jot something down. This does not have to be long and detailed but is more on the factual side. The Mission Statement will be next month and then you can give your philosophy of farming as well.

This business plan describes {insert brief narrative of farm here. Items you might include farm assets and location, what you grow, what and how you market, findings from your market research and financial statements, the farm business's legal structure, etc. This is your "elevator speech," the few sentences that get others interested in your business and your plans.}

The purpose of this business plan is to {insert brief narrative here. Common reasons for having a business plan in place include providing self with a guide for growing or maintaining a sustainable business, attracting investors, securing loan funding, etc.}

If you like to do things on the computer I recommend looking at [www.agplan.mnu.edu](http://www.agplan.mnu.edu) where there is a great template. You have to register but it isn't hard. You can even make it so I can view it if you want help from me or Anita Figuarus (our farm business management person). I will also post a business plan template on the website [www.ccenny.com](http://www.ccenny.com). Then you can download it and work on filling it in. It is not something you can whip off in an afternoon. Take your time and do one section at a time. Don't be afraid to go back and modify it. If you have questions, email me so I can direct you to more information. Next month we will do mission statements and I'll share examples from my own farm.