

Monday, March 26, 2012

Ramblin' Prose

We attended a couple of lectures hosted by Ontario Sheep's District 9 last Saturday. One session was on nutrition and the other on ram assessment and care. The lecture on ram assessment gave us not only things that we need to consider when we purchase our next rams but also what we offer in breeding stock.

We have 4 rams here at Hawk Hill and since we have half of our flock bred purebred this year, we may be reserving the best of our ram lambs to sell as breeding stock. When we have purchased rams in the past, there have been criteria that we have been looking for such as production records, conformation etc. However after the lecture this past week I think we can do a better job in evaluating rams before purchase. While we like the rams that we have I do think there is room for improvement. However it will probably be a year or two before we purchase another ram so we do need to consider the characteristics in ram lambs we have to offer. These are draft characteristics we would like to see in animals we purchase so why not offer this in animals we sell.

Here are some of our preliminary ideas:

- purebred, registered ram lambs will not be offered until they are at least 6-8 months of age
- all purebred, registered rams to be offered will be assessed for breeding soundness by a vet (only ones that pass the examination will be offered), all others will go into our market lamb stream
- all breeding ram lambs offered will have a minimum of 30 cm scrotal circumference
- all registered ram lambs will be genotype tested for scrapie resistance and be at least QR for codon 171
- all ram lambs offered will have production records.

We will need to consider what we offer for purebred, non-registered or crossbred ram lambs. While only superior animals will be kept, we will not be genotype testing nor bringing in a vet to assess them for breeding soundness. Assessment will be the responsibility of the purchaser for these ram lambs.

Still lots to think about.

TTFN,
Laurie