

Friday, April 8, 2011

## **Scent of a ...ram**

Well the robins and red wing blackbirds are here, the geese are overhead and the sap is getting close to the end (8 litres of syrup and counting). It was time for the sheep to get naked. Our shearer was here on Monday and 2 huge bags later everyone is shorn. It is amazing what is hidden under those fleeces. Our mature ram was half the size I thought he was and our junior ram needs a few pounds.

The sheep will be heading back outside for another couple of weeks and then coming in for lambing. It is hard to imagine how quickly the time has passed. We bred 15 ewes last fall so I am hoping all of them caught. Most are very obviously pregnant but some of them that were bred at the end of the season are not so obviously pregnant.

A couple of days after shearing our mature ram came up lame in his back right foot. This is one case where I really had to dig deep for information. We do not and never have had foot rot on the farm... thank goodness. His hooves looked good, maybe a touch long so I trimmed him but it looked like the scent gland in between the cloves of his hoof was plugged. I scrubbed out his feet, trimmed them and cleaned out what appeared to be a blockage in the scent gland and 24 hours later he seems to be fine. NONE of the sheep vet manuals mention the scent gland. It was just a fluke that I found out that they exist and if they plug you will end up with and " unexplained" lameness. Fortunately I knew about the scent gland a couple of years ago and knew what to do.

We have a few lambing jugs to build. And so it begins.

TTFN

Laurie