

**LOW INPUT PASTURE FINISHING OF LAMBS  
2002 SARE GRANT REPORT**

**JUST HANGING ON**

EXPERIENCES OF PRODUCER 2 - MINIMUM INPUT

2001 left us with 100 more ewes than we had the year before. By Spring, we had 600 sheep, so all summer was spent scrambling to keep them moving across 50 acres of fescue pastures.

No seeds were broadcast over the pastures, and no grazing crops were planted, therefore there was no extra forage cost. We have 10 acres of alfalfa and got two cuttings off of this acreage. The sheep grazed the other two cuttings. Baled alfalfa will be fed in February and March of this next year.

We do not de-worm on a routine basis, nor do we give vaccinations, so no labor was spent on these jobs.

Purchased inputs: (includes feeding 30 small cows; sheep probably consume 3/4).

78 bales of fescue hay @ \$17/bale. We expect this to feed 275 sheep this winter.

Eleven blocks of white salt @ \$2.78 / block

3 bags mineral /salt mix \$8.60/ 50 lbs.

MLS tubs (50 lbs.) 24 tubs @ \$40.42/cwt

Sheep awaiting shipment were delayed in departure, and forage levels became so low in July that we found it necessary to feed the sheep (the purchasers paid for their part of the feed). The feed mixture was composed of whole corn, molasses, soy bean oil meal, limestone, and vitamins. This number of sheep were fed 192 pounds per day in July, dropping to 144 pounds per day after the first group shipped, until October when the second group shipped. Lambs were not fed separately from the ewes, so it is not possible to estimate how much the lambs received.

We had so many lambs to deal with that we couldn't spare the time and labor to weigh them, so we have no gain data. Slaughter lambs were sold on the commercial slaughter market for about \$42-45/cwt. The lambs averaged about 65 pounds. We certainly weren't happy with this price.

Plans for next year:

1. Sell down to a lower number of ewes until we regain better control of our operation.
2. Try to preserve our existing forage base and expand. We have a total of 56 acres CRP, and will take out 31 acres next year to extend our grazing.