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Improved Practices Goal of Sheep Tour

by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension Educator

Ohio State University Extension, Hardin County – The Hardin County Sheep Improvement Association will be touring three sheep farms and two sheep industry related locations as part of the annual Hardin County Sheep Management Tour being held October 26-27. A group of 25 active and retired sheep producers will be making stops in Hancock County, Holmes County, and Marion County to learn about best sheep production approved practices. They will also be hearing about new or different philosophies of raising and marketing sheep and wool. An emphasis on the trip will be innovative and interesting ideas which help in the management of day-to-day production chores as well as finding improved ways of accomplishing tasks.

The group will meet at a restaurant for breakfast to go over the weekend’s plans, and then visit the University of Findlay Animal Sciences Center. This new facility is used to teach students livestock production management practices as well as instruct pre-veterinary students. The group will then travel to Holmes County to tour the Mt. Hope Auction. This auction is a major sheep market for Ohio producers who are looking for steady stream of buyers and sellers to maximize their operation’s profits. The group will then stop at a Holmes County Dorset sheep farm which conducts its own pregnancy tests and practices sound record keeping. They will enjoy Amish home cooking and hospitality in-between stops as part of the tour.
After spending the night in Holmes County, the second day of the Hardin County Sheep Management Tour will include another stop at a Holmes County sheep farm which raises Dorset crossbreds. This farm is unique because it is operated by a veterinarian who feeds barley instead of corn in the sheep rations. The group will then travel to Marion County for its final stop to see how a producer, who is a board member of the Ohio Sheep Improvement Association, uses progressive ideas to raise the Shropshire breed. The group will then conclude its tour by traveling back to Hardin County to share information with other local producers and put their newly acquired ideas into practice.