



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Sheep Tour Takes Producers to Southeast Ohio

by Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension Educator

Hardin County - The Hardin County Sheep Improvement Association toured four Washington County sheep farms as part of the annual Hardin County Sheep Management Tour held October 21-22. A group of active and retired sheep producers traveled to sites in southeastern Ohio near Marietta. This group included 16 producers from Allen, Ashland, Auglaize, Hancock, and Hardin Counties. The local group was joined by additional sheep producers from Noble, Pickaway, and Washington Counties. On the trip, they learned about new and different philosophies of raising and marketing sheep and wool. An emphasis on the trip was innovative and interesting ideas, which help in the management of day-to-day production chores as well as finding improved ways of accomplishing tasks. Some of the individuals participating in this educational trip also attended a similar trip to gain knowledge from western U.S. ranchers by visiting California sheep farms two weeks earlier.

The group met at a local restaurant for breakfast to go over the weekend's plans, and then traveled to Waterford to visit the Brady Campbell Farm. Brady is a fourth generation sheep producer and the new OSU Extension Sheep Team program coordinator. The group enjoyed a pulled pork lunch (they are also swine producers) at his farm and then saw his sheep operation. The Campbell family produces purebred and commercial lambs using purebred Lincolns, Texels, and crossbred ewes. They market their lambs through niche marketing and at the Mt. Hope Livestock Auction.

The local sheep producers then traveled to Greg Allen Farm, also located in Waterford area. Greg is a life-long sheep producer with a purebred fall lambing commercial Dorset flock. He utilizes rotational grazing as a means to manage his flock on a small farm. Greg is in the midst of fall lambing and was able to provide some insight on the ins and outs on this type of management scheme. Like many other area sheep producers, he markets his lambs in Mt. Hope.

The next stop on the tour was the Schwendeman Farm, located near Watertown. Kenley Schwendeman is a biology teacher at Waterford High School. The Schwendeman family members are life-long beef producers that feed and market fat cattle. They also participate in the State Fair Commercial Pen of 3 Cattle every year. With the encouragement of his daughter, the family has also become involved in the sheep business with Dorset ewes for commercial lambs and Hampshire crossbreeds ewes for market lambs.

After spending the night in historic Marietta, the second day of the Hardin County Sheep Management Tour the group visited the Harra Farm located near Stockport. This operation raises both purebred Oxford and Shropshire sheep. The Harra family used to be involved in the show circuit when their kids were younger, but currently raise these sheep to keep their purebred genetics. On their operation, all lambs enter the drylot/feedlot to be finished. Animals that will be kept as replacements will remain in the feedlot until they are over a year of age. This eliminates the risk of production losses associated with parasites.

The Harra farm is also near several covered bridges, such as the Harra and Shin bridges, which the group visited on the way back through Washington County. The final stop before heading back to Hardin County was to see the 'Big Muskie' dragline bucket at Miners' Memorial Park near McConnelsville. The Big Muskie was the World's Largest Dragline and one of the seven engineering wonders of the world. It was a model 4250-W Bucyrus-Erie dragline (the only one ever built). With a 220 cubic yard bucket, it was the largest single-bucket digging machine ever created. In the machine's working lifetime, the Big Muskie removed over 608,000,000 cubic yards of overburden (twice the earth moved during the construction of the Panama Canal), uncovering over 20,000,000 tons of clean coal. The Big Muskie cost \$25 million in 1969 to build and was dismantled in 1999.

Photo caption: Participants in the 2017 Hardin Sheep Management Tour examine sheep pre-mix and free choice vitamin and mineral supplement at an event planned to share ideas with Washington County producers.