UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Small Ruminant Update

Vol. 5 No. 2 Spring 2025

In this Issue

Predation Control

Major predators of sheep and goats are coyotes and dogs, but for the young, foxes, bobcats and large birds of prey can also be of concern. Predators are opportunistic hunters, be sure not to allow them the opportunity to pounce.

There are 3 basic methods to aid with predator control: guard animals, special fencing and lethal methods of control.

Guard Animals

Donkeys, llamas and guard dogs are the most common. Guard dogs are typically considered the best option. Large breeds such as Great Pyrenees or Anatolian Shepherds make great guard dogs. They not only stay with the flock/herd but also consistently walk the perimeter of the pasture to monitor for potential danger. They require specialized training to guard the flock/herd.

Fencing

The best fencing is woven wire used alongside electrical wire placed at the top and the bottom of the fence. You can also utilize existing fence by adding a strand of electric wire at the bottom, middle and top of the fence. Be sure to spray or keep trimmed the grass/brush under the fence to avoid short circuiting the electric wire.

Lethal Methods

This method typically can/should be used in combination with the use of proper fencing and guard animals. Killing predators is necessary at times but it is important to not create an imbalance in nature. Also, killing just a few predators will not stop other predators from moving in. Be sure to use multiple alternatives to solve this problem and keep your livestock safe from prey.

Footrot

What is footrot?

It is a contagious disease that affects the skin between the toes (interdigital space), resulting in severe inflammation and lameness. It commonly occurs in sheep, goats and cattle. Sheep are often more severely affected than goats. In small ruminants, it is caused by two anaerobic bacteria: *Dichelobacter nodosus* and *Fusobacterium necrophorum*. These bacteria can survive in the environment for days or months. It is one of the most economically significant diseases in small ruminants.

Clinical signs

Extreme pain, leading to the sudden onset of lameness.

Necrotic lesions in the interdigital space, with a foul odor.

Decreased feed intake.

What environmental conditions propagate footrot?

Warmth, moisture, excessive mud, manure, and high animal stocking density.

Footrot Prevention

Most commonly, the most common means of footrot introduction into a herd/flock is through introducing infected animals to the group.

Only buy or lease breeding stock from footrot free operations.

Quarantine new additions to the herd/flock for a minimum of 30 days prior to commingling with the rest.

Utilize a footbath solution regularly (zinc sulfate, copper sulfate, or formaldehyde).

Perform routine foot trimming (do not over-trim) - typically 2x/year.

Footrot Treatment

Cull infected animals from the herd/flock.

If choosing treatment, antibiotics such as oxytetracycline or gamithromycin (Zactran®) can be used under the supervision of your veterinarian. Both antibiotics require extra-label drug use, as they are not labeled for small ruminants.

It is a lot of work and expense to attempt to eradicate footrot from your herd/flock. Prevention is the best method!

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SMALL RUMINANT PROGRAM

For more information contact us:

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CFLAVS provides ambulatory livestock veterinary services based in St. Cloud, serving Osceola, Brevard, Seminole and Orange County. Dr. Tartaglia is an alumni of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine (UFCVM) where he completed his DVM in 2024. If you are in Dr. Tartaglia's practice region, please reach out to him to schedule an appointment. The practice is accepting new clients and looks forward to an opportunity to work with producers.

Small Ruminant Pregnancy Toxemia

As the kidding and lambing season is upon us, it is important to discuss one of the most common ailments our late gestation animals endure: pregnancy toxemia. As you have invested so much time and resources in order to successfully breed your animals, it is important to understand what pregnancy toxemia is, common clinical signs of pregnancy toxemia, and the best ways to treat and prevent pregnancy toxemia in your herd.

Pregnancy toxemia, commonly referred to as preg tox or ketosis, is seen in small ruminants that are either under conditioned or over conditioned in the late stages of gestation. In the last 2 months of gestation, 70-80% of fetal growth occurs, and there is an extreme energy demand on does and ewes during this time. As the uterus expands, there is a decrease in the amount of space the rumen can fill, so pregnant animals physically cannot fill their rumens normally. Additionally, the quality of pasture grass typically decreases in winter months, so the forages your animals eat are lower quality grasses. A perfect storm is created and these animals enter a negative energy balance. During these times, the does and ewes will begin to break down fat stores for energy use. As this process continues however, there is an accumulation of ketones that are formed after fat breakdown occurs. This high accumulation of ketones lead to fatty liver, ketosis, and the clinical signs that are associated with preg tox.

Clinical signs in the early disease process include anorexia, dull mentation, and animals that may lag behind the group. In severe cases animals may be recumbent, have a "sweet" smell to their breath due to the accumulation of ketones, and can present neurologically. While there are many different clinical signs ranging in severity, it is important to recognize clinicals signs early, and move towards treating any sick animals.

Understanding why pregnancy toxemia exists, and how to identify early signs of this disease, helps create treatment plans. Since the root cause of preg tox comes from animals not having enough energy, the first step is to provide them with an immediate source of energy orally. Common oral drenches that contain sugars and electrolytes are recommended to give multiple times per day, or as directed by your veterinarian. It is important that these animals receive a source of sugar as soon as possible, so if oral drenches specifically designed for sheep and goats are not readily available, giving karo-syrup or molasses products can provide the sugars needed. If your animals are anorexic, providing them with any additional hay and grain directly and encouraging them to eat can also help them restore proper energy balances. When it comes to our severe cases, contacting your local veterinarian is advised, as some treatments require intravenous (IV) fluid therapy, rumen transfaunation, or even inducing labor. Deciding when to induce can be challenging, therefore it is extremely important to have a defined breeding season so estimations of gestational age can be made. Based on days of gestation, fetal viability, and veterinarian discretion, induction of parturition can result in the birth of live goat kids or lambs. While there are different treatment options based on the severity of clinical signs, there are also husbandry practices that can reduce the instances of pregnancy toxemia within your herds/flocks.

As mentioned above, animals that are under conditioned (skinny), or over conditioned (obese) have a higher risk of developing preg tox, so maintaining proper body condition throughout the breeding season is a great way to reduce the instances of preg tox. Understanding your herds history in regard to preg tox is also important. Changing feeding regimens for animals that have a history of preg tox may be a preventative measure that can be taken within your herd. Adjusting feeding regimens based on pasture quality is also recommended. Instead of waiting to treat sick animals, taking preventative measures by understanding your herd's history of preg tox, current seasonal differences regarding pasture management, and identifying animals at risk can help reduce the instances of preg tox.

In summary, pregnancy toxemia is a common ailment that can affect even the most experienced producers in Florida. While this is arguably the most exciting time of the year as newborns are arriving, monitoring for preg tox will help your herd/flock for this season and years to come.

Producer's Corner—Knowledge Exchange

Are you a producer? Have something to share?!

If you are a small ruminant producer and have a topic area of interest that you believe would be beneficial to share with other producers—please let us know! We are looking to feature one producer in each newsletter issue!

We believe knowledge exchanged between producers of their practical experiences is valuable and we want to provide a space to facilitate that. We would ask that you provide a few paragraphs to be shared in the newsletter on your chosen topic. The content and grammar will be reviewed by our UF Small Ruminant Extension team, and edits will be made as needed prior to publishing.

If you're interested, please contact us via email at bn.diehl@ufl.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

Colostrum: The Foundation of Health and Vitality

By: Laura H. Bennett
UF/IFAS Extension Multi-County Agent—Pasco, Sumter, Hernando

Colostrum is that "magic" milk that all females first produce after parturition. It is typically thicker and yellow and contains a great number of antibodies, laxative properties, protein, and fat-soluble vitamins. Does and ewes are no exception to this marvel of nature and will produce this milk for about 24 hours. The health of kids and lambs is highly dependent on this first-milk to set their path for a healthy, early development period. The ability of newborns to absorb antibodies peaks about 30 minutes after birth and drastically decreases after 12 hours. The faster a newborn nurses, the better.

How can a small ruminant producer capitalize on this great resource? First, be sure to vaccinate females late in pregnancy for overeating disease (Clostridium perfringens type C & D) and tetanus; this is referred to as the CD&T vaccine. Next, females should be on-site where they will give birth at least 3-4 weeks prior to parturition. The ewe/doe's body will create antibodies based on what environmental threats are present. This will then help offspring to fend off any infectious diseases. Also, a high-quality diet for the doe or ewe will increase the quality of the subsequent colostrum produced. One final way to capitalize on colostrum is to harvest and freeze extra colostrum from high producing does or ewes. Females with single births are great candidates as they typically have extra colostrum to share. Frozen colostrum maintains the best quality when stored for no longer than a year, which is thawed slowly and warmed gently.

Sometimes, there is a need to supplement with colostrum when things don't go quite to plan. Usually, kids and lambs miss out on colostrum due to being orphaned. These orphans are under greater stress which exacerbates the situation. Newborns who do not receive colostrum are more likely to be susceptible to pneumonia, diarrhea, and death. Being prepared in advance for such situations is imperative. Ideally, newborns will receive 10% of their body weight in colostrum within 24 hours of birth. This means that a 10-pound lamb should receive one pound (16 ounces) of colostrum within 24 hours of birth. Colostrum should be fed at blood temperature (102 -103°F, 39-40°C), 2 to 4 ounces at 3-to-4-hour intervals. A 60-cc syringe holds 2 ounces of colostrum (Source: Maryland Small Ruminant Page). This colostrum can come from other females in your herd that have very recently given birth, frozen colostrum you have stored, a commercial colostrum replacer (not a colostrum supplement), or cow's milk colostrum. Research from the University of Thessaly in Greece has shown that colostrum from cow's milk provided sufficient passive immunity when ewe colostrum wasn't available. It is generally advised that the volume be increased by one third to compensate for quality difference. So, in the case above they should receive 21 ounces of cow colostrum if 16 ounces of doe or ewe colostrum isn't available.

Colostrum is so very important to the health of newborns. It is wonderful to know there are different options to provide this nutrition to your kids and lambs when things don't go well on the farm. The key is to be prepared in advance of unfortunate situations when they occur. With multiple options available, having emergency colostrum on the farm is totally possible.

Additional resources:
- https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/as/as-657-w.pdf
- https://www.sheepandgoat.com/colostrum

Recent Market Report

The reported data below is compiled by the USDA—Livestock Auction.

Visit the website:
mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/livestock_auction_dashboard

Market report dates:
04/07/2025 to 04/12/2025

Sheep Overview

Wtd Average Price (per cwt)	
Feeder Sheep/lambs	$275.11
Slaughter Sheep/lambs	$210.65

Goat Overview

Wtd Average Price (per cwt)	
Feeder Goats	$294.13
Slaughter Goats	$269.94

Local Price Trend Report— Ocala Livestock Market in Ocala, FL
Market report date: 04/04/2025

Sheep (low to high range)	
Young ewes	$70.00
Young rams	$125– 155.00
Old ewes	$170—220.00
Mature rams	$280—330.00

Goats (low to high range)	
Small does	$75—105.00
Small bucks	$75—125.00
Medium does	$75—125.00
Medium bucks	$140—175.00
Large does	$140—180.00
Large bucks	$340—485.00

Boer –Type Goats	
Does	$ —-
Bucks	$ 310

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Essential Preparations for a Successful Lambing and Kidding Season

By: Allie Williams
UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County

Lambing and kidding season is an important time of year for the small ruminant producer. Proper preparation can help to mitigate issues that arise, leading to increased survival rates and reduced stress on both the livestock and producers. Preparation starts months in advance, making sure the ewe or doe's nutritional and health needs are met.

Stock up on essential supplies

Be sure to have the proper supplies on hand a few weeks before the first lamb or kid is expected. Your supply kit should include the essential items for the delivery process, management of offspring after birth, and miscellaneous items that may be needed. You should also have your veterinarian's phone number accessible in case assistance is needed with delivery, or to discuss medical products, proper dosages, and treatment protocol.

-**Delivery/Obstetrical (OB) Process Supplies:** Antimicrobial soap, clean bucket, halters, towels, OB gloves, OB lubricant, OB chains.

-Lamb and Kid Supplies: Thermometer, iodine (7%) for dipping navels, colostrum replacer, bottles, nipples, esophageal tube, ear tags, heat lamps, elastrator and bands, needles, syringes, medications and/or supplements.

-Miscellaneous Supplies: Record book, calcium drench for ewes/does (in case of hypocalcemia), fly spray, electrolytes, Vitamin B complex, veterinarian contact information.

Clean and Prepare Lambing/Kidding Facilities

About a month before the first due dates, spend time cleaning and prepping your lambing or kidding area. Sanitize barns and equipment such as pens, feeders, and waterers to reduce the risk of illness and infection in newborns. Remove old bedding, disinfect the area, and bed with fresh, dry material. Equipment like lambing/kidding jugs, heat lamps, birthing equipment, and bottle-feeding items should also be cleaned and checked for function.

After lambing/kidding, it is common to place the ewe/doe and her kid(s) in a small pen (4'x4' or 5'x5'), called a jug, to bond for a few days. Set up the jugs before the season starts. If you plan to turn out ewes or does and their offspring onto pasture, consider parasite management ahead of time. Keep animals off a specific pasture for at least 60 days to reduce parasite load. This practice helps ensure that young lambs or kids are not immediately exposed to a high parasite burden, giving their immune systems a better start.

Know Signs and Stages of Labor

Understanding the labor process will help you monitor animals closely and step in when necessary. Signs of impending labor include restlessness, kicking or biting at their sides, nesting behavior, isolation from the herd, udder development, a relaxed pelvic area, and mucous discharge usually seen on tail before water sack appears.

Labor occurs in 3 stages:

Stage One: The ewe/doe becomes restless, may paw the ground and experience mild contractions. This stage usually lasts between 4-8 hours for mature ewes/does and 6-12 hours for first time lambing/kidding females.

Stage Two: Active labor and delivery. Contractions intensify, and the water bag breaks. You should see feet and a nose presenting. This stage typically lasts 30 minutes to an hour per birth. If more than an 30 minutes passes without progress after the water sac appears, intervention may be needed.

Stage Three: Expulsion of the placenta. This usually occurs within 1 to 8 hours of birth. If not passed within that timeframe, consult your veterinarian.

Knowing when to assist is key. Intervention may be necessary if the mother appears distressed, no progress is made after active labor begins, or abnormal presentations (like a head but no feet) are observed. Be sure to have clean hands or wear OB gloves and use plenty of lubricant if you need to assist. Professional assistance from your veterinarian may be needed if you've attempted to assist for 30 minutes without success. Consider culling ewes or does that had difficult or unsuccessful births, as this has potential to recur and impact the value of your breeding herd.

Newborn Processing

Once the lamb or kid is born, timely care is essential. Tasks include drying the newborn thoroughly, dipping the navel in 7% iodine to prevent infection, and ensuring the baby nurses within 30 minutes after birth. Colostrum intake is critical for passive immunity. Lambs/kids should consume 10-20% of their body weight in colostrum over 2-3 feedings within 12 hours of birth. If for some reason the dam's colostrum is not accessible, a colostrum replacer (not colostrum supplement) with high immunoglobulin G (IgG) can be used. Within the first 24 hours, consider tagging or marking animals for identification, and record their birth date, weight, dam, and any notes in your record book. Between 1 and 7 days of age, tail docking and castration (if using a banding method) may be performed depending on your management plan. Be sure to use clean equipment and follow best practices to minimize stress and risk of infection. Keep all supplies such as elastrators, bands, tags, and medications in a clean, easily accessible location.

By planning ahead and knowing what to expect, lambing and kidding season can be a rewarding and successful time on your operation.

Small Ruminant Vaccine Programs

By: Brittany N. Diehl, DVM, MS
UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Extension Specialist

Vaccine recommendations revolve around the animal's life stage or stage of production. Each operation is unique, therefore it is imperative that each producer consults with their veterinarian prior to establishing their specific vaccination and herd health protocol.

Things to Consider

-Read all labels carefully, prior to product administration.
-Be sure to utilize the appropriate size needles for administration. 20-guage needles work well for small ruminants.
-Injections should be given in a manner that upholds proper quality assurance standards. This implies that administration should only occur in the neck region.
-Vaccines have a slaughter meat withdrawal. Read and follow label directions, typically there is a 21-day meat withdrawal period.

Vaccine Storage

-Store out of direct sunlight, in the refrigerator.
-Avoid freezing.
-Shake well prior to use.
-Always only insert a clean needle into the bottle to avoid contaminating the vaccine remaining in the bottle.

Vaccine Administration

Most vaccines are given by the subcutaneous ("under the skin") route, however, always read the label to be sure. Subcutaneous (SC/SQ) injections can be given at the neck or behind the front leg ("armpit" or axilla). Do not administer intramuscular (IM) injections in the axilla—IM injections should be given only in the neck region.

Pre-partum Vaccines

Does and ewes should be vaccinated 3-4 weeks prior to parturition (lambing/kidding) to provide colostral immunity to their offspring.
The standard core vaccine to administer at this time is *Clostridium perfringens* type C & D and *Clostridium tetani*. **This comes in a combination vaccine called CD&T**.
This vaccine will protect neonates against hemorrhagic enteritis, overeating disease and tetanus (at risk from tail docking, castration and dehorning).
Optional vaccines at this stage include Clostridial 8-way vaccine. Typically not advised due to secondary vaccine reactions that may result in abscessation, fever and malaise—potentially resulting in the ewe/doe going off-feed and developing pregnancy toxemia.

Pre-weaning Vaccines (for lambs & kids)

Lambs and kids need a series of 2 vaccine injections of **CD&T** approximately 2-4 weeks apart. Typically, lambs and kids receive the first vaccine 2 weeks prior to weaning and the second vaccine (booster) at the time of weaning or shortly after. After this time, they will receive the CD&T vaccine booster annually.

Pre-breeding Vaccines (for ewes & does)

Vaccines given in this timeframe are used to protect the ewe/doe against agents that can cause abortion. These vaccines are considered elective and not core. Please discuss with your veterinarian prior to administration to determine what is best for your herd/flock.
Vibrio vaccine—*Campylobacter fetus* subspecies *intestinalis* and *jejuni*. Follow product manufacturer label for vaccine timing recommendations.
Chlamydophila abortus vaccine—the results with this vaccine tends to be variable. Administer to ewe lambs/doelings 60 days and 30 days prior to male introduction.

Vaccines for Rams & Bucks

The males should receive the 3-way CD&T vaccine booster, annually.

Other Vaccines

-*Contagious ecthyma or Orf vaccine*—do not use unless orf is already present on the property. This vaccine is highly recommended for show animals. It is a live vaccine, meaning it is infectious to humans (wear gloves). This vaccine is not an injection, you must disrupt the skin surface near the axillary space and then paint the vaccine on with a cotton swab. Immunity typically lasts for ~3 years, so older animals may need to be revaccinated.
-*K-99 E. coli vaccine*—consult with your veterinarian prior to use. If the operation has challenges with E. coli scours, vaccinate the ewes/does pre-lambing/kidding on the same schedule as CD&T.
-*Rabies vaccine*—not a core vaccine for livestock. Must be administered by a veterinarian. Typically only recommended in rabies endemic areas or high valued animals.

RECIPE CORNER

American Lamb Sirloin Chop Caprese Sliders

12 slider buns
1.5 lb American lamb leg steaks
12 tomato slices
12 mozzarella slices
Fresh basil leaves
Balsamic glaze
Olive oil
Kosher salt, freshly ground

Directions: Preheat the grill to medium-high heat. While grill is heating, place the leg steaks on a baking sheet to come to room temp for at least 30 min. Season lamb leg steaks with olive oil, salt & pepper. Grill the lamb leg steaks for 5-7 min on each side or until internal temp is 145 degrees. Allow steak to rest for 3 min before slicing to 1/4 inch slices. Assemble steak and toppings on bun. Enjoy!

Announcements

2nd annual UF Buck Test

Pre-registration opens (online): March 17, 2025
Pre-registration due: May 27, 2025
Drop-off date: June 9, 2025 @ **9AM – 3PM EST**
Visit our website: animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/buck-test/
Contact Us:
Clay Whitehead, jacobcwhitehead@ufl.edu, (904) 796-0441
Dr. Brittany Diehl, bn.diehl@ufl.edu, (352) 294-4319

5th annual UF Ram Test

Pre-registration opens (online): March 17, 2025
Pre-registration due: May 27, 2025
Drop-off date: June 7, 2025 @ **7:30 - 10AM EST**
Visit our website: animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/ramtest/
Contact Us:
Clay Whitehead, jacobcwhitehead@ufl.edu, (904) 796-0441
Dr. Brittany Diehl, bn.diehl@ufl.edu, (352) 294-4319

UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Short Course

Save the date: October 10-11, 2025
Come join us for our 4th annual conference and trade show in Gainesville, FL— a tremendous opportunity to be educated and to network with industry professionals and producers.
UF Ram & Buck Test Sales will also take place during this event!
Contact Us:
Dr. Brittany Diehl, bn.diehl@ufl.edu, (352) 294-4319
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NORTH FLORIDA FAMACHA CERTIFICATION

HYBRID COURSE

In-person training will be held
FRIDAY, MAY 2ND
10AM - 12PM
GAINESVILLE, FL

BRING HOME YOUR OWN FAMACHA CARD!

This course includes a self-paced online class and certification exam to be completed before the hands-on training.

$35

REGISTER HERE:
https://bit.ly/NFLAG-FAMACHA-Cert
or scan with your phone!

Registration includes:

- **online class***
- **hands-on training**
- **Q&A session**
- **FAMACHA certificate and card**

*All information for the self-paced online class and exam will be sent to your email once you sign-up.

WHAT'S FAMACHA?

The **FAMACHA score** is a method of measuring anemia in small ruminants infected with Barber Pole Worms. Scores can be used to inform de-worming protocols and prevent parasitic resistance from developing in herds and flocks.

ALL SHEEP AND GOAT PRODUCERS NEED THIS TRAINING!

CONTACT US

Contact Cassidy Dossin with any questions at cdossin@ufl.edu or (904) 284-6355.

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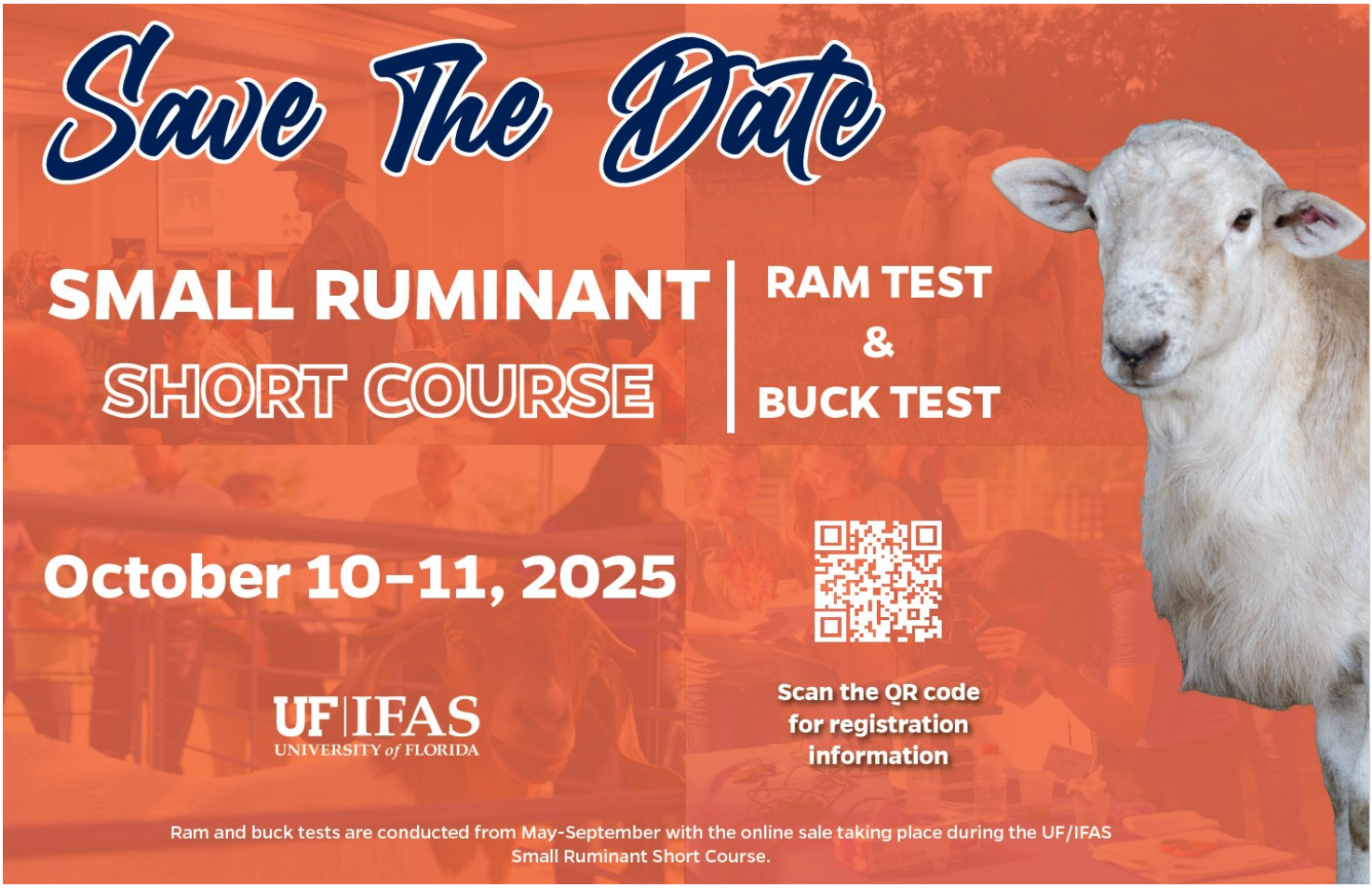

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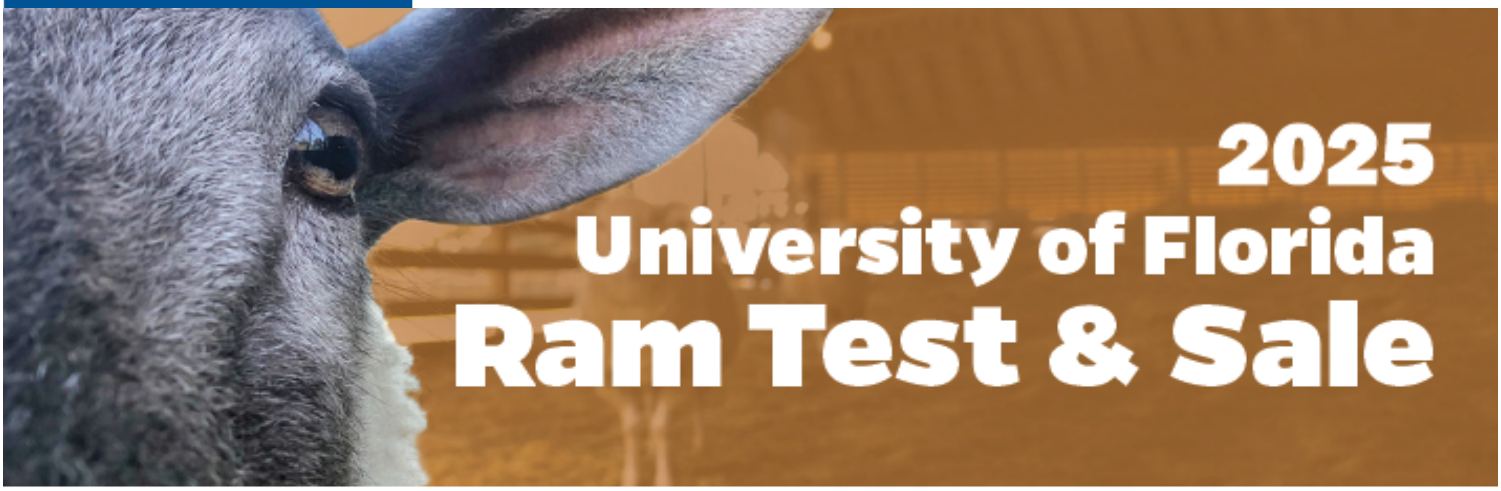

2025 University of Florida Ram Test & Sale

We invite you to participate in the **2025 University of Florida Ram Test and Sale.** We are very excited to continue this unique program and to work with sheep producers to quantify the desirable qualities of their rams. We hope that this program will provide value to your operation.

This program is designed to standardize environmental conditions in order to evaluate individual ram performance, provide a source of high-quality performance tested rams to producers, offer educational opportunities for the improvement of the industry, and facilitate networking among producers.

Important dates:

· May 27	Pre-registration deadline
· June 7	Rams arrive at UF Sheep Unit
· June 19	84-day gain test begins
· Sept 11	84-day gain test ends
· Oct 10-11	Small Ruminant Short Course & UF Ram Test Sale

We encourage you to consider consigning your rams to the **2025 UF Ram Test and Sale.** Please contact us for further information or to consign animals to this program.

Registered and commercial rams will be eligible for the test and sale. Eligible rams must be born between 12/1/24 - 2/15/25 and weaned by 5/15/25.

For full program details and registration visit our website.
https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/ramtest/

Program Coordinators

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We invite you to participate in the **2025 University of Florida Buck Test and Sale.** We are very excited to continue this unique program and to work with goat producers to quantify the desirable qualities of their bucks. We hope that this program will provide value to your operation.

This program is designed to standardize environmental conditions in order to evaluate individual buck performance, provide a source of high-quality performance tested bucks to producers, offer educational opportunities for the improvement of the industry, and facilitate networking among producers.

Important dates:

· May 27	Pre-registration deadline
· June 9	Bucks arrive at UF Sheep Unit
· June 26	84-day gain test begins
· Sept 18	84-day gain test ends
· Oct 10-11	Small Ruminant Short Course & UF Buck Test Sale

We encourage you to consider consigning your bucks to the **2025 UF Buck Test and Sale.** Please contact us for further information or to consign animals to this program.

Registered and commercial bucks will be eligible for the test and sale.
Eligible bucks must be born between 12/15/24 - 3/1/25 and weaned by 5/15/25.

For full program details and registration visit our website.
https://animal.ifas.ufl.edu/smallruminant/buck-test/

Program Coordinators

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