



# 2023 University of Florida Ram Test & Sale

## **Welcome**

We are very excited to initiate this unique program and to work with producers to quantify the desirable qualities of their rams. We hope that this program will provide value to your operation.

## **Overview**

Rams will arrive at the UF Sheep Unit (2108 Shealy Drive) on Saturday morning June 3, 2023. A 12-day acclimation period will be used to adapt rams to their new environment and ration, mitigate the effect of shrink on calculated growth performance, and assess incoming parasite load with the goal being to reduce parasite levels. Following the acclimation period, rams will begin an 84-day gain test. During the test, rams will be housed on Bahiagrass pastures and supplemented with 'UF Ram Test' concentrate in their respective contemporary groups with a target consumption of 2% body weight. Data will be collected to determine body weight, body condition score, fecal egg count, and FAMACHA score on 14-day intervals throughout the test. These data will be used as an indicator of the ram's ability to cope with parasites and grow during the hot and humid Florida summer. At the end of the trial, rams will be ranked based upon their growth performance and resistance to parasites. The top performing rams will be offered at auction on Saturday, September 30, 2023.

## **Program Purpose**

1. Standardize the environmental conditions for evaluating post-weaning performance of ram lambs as it relates to growth performance and parasite resistance.
2. Provide useful unbiased data for both the consignor and the buyer of performance tested rams.
3. Provide a source of high quality, performance tested rams for sheep producers.
4. Provide educational opportunities for the improvement of the sheep industry.
5. Provide networking opportunities for sheep producers.
6. Provide an opportunity for sheep producers to showcase their breeding programs.
7. Facilitate the transfer of desirable genetics between breeders.

We encourage you to consider consigning your rams to the 2023 UF Ram Test. Please contact us to indicate your intent to consign animals to this program. Rams must be pre-registered by May 22, 2023 in order to be enrolled in the program. Please contact Clay Whitehead for enrollment or questions, at (904) 796-0441 or [jacobcwhitehead@ufl.edu](mailto:jacobcwhitehead@ufl.edu).

## **Schedule of Events**

**June 3, 2023:** Arrival of weaned lambs at UF Sheep Unit (2108 Shealy Dr.). Check-in will take place from 8-11 AM. Administration of anthelmintics and vaccination.

**June 15, 2023:** 84-day gain test begins, vaccination booster, beginning weights and measures collected. Rams with inadequate FEC reduction will be eliminated from the test.

**June 29, 2023:** Interim weights and measures collected

**July 13, 2023:** Interim weights and measured collected

**July 27, 2022:** Interim weights and measured collected; 42-day mid-point test report

**August 10, 2023:** Interim weights and measures collected

**August 24, 2023:** Interim weights and measures collected

**September 7, 2023:** 84-day gain test ends, final weights and measures collected

**September 30, 2023:** UF Ram Test Sale at UF Horse Teaching Unit

## **Rules and Eligibility**

- Rams must be born between December 1, 2023 and February 15, 2023. We encourage producers to consign rams born earlier in this period as we expect them to perform better.
- Both registered and commercial bred rams will be accepted for entry into the test and eligible for sale. Rams that are registered with a recognized breed association will be prioritized with regards to sale order and will be eligible to be sold prior to commercial rams, based on test performance. For breeds with open flocks or appendix registries, breed percentage will be indicated on the ram's pedigree.
- Rams must be weaned prior to May 1, 2023.
- Rams must be pre-registered for the UF Ram Test by May 22, 2023.
- A one-time, non-refundable, consignment fee of \$175.00 must accompany each ram upon arrival on June 3, 2023 to cover the direct costs associated with the UF Ram Test. Cost breakdown below.
- Rams must be vaccinated and boosted against CD&T at least 3 weeks prior to delivery.
- Rams must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection at the time of delivery.
- Rams must have official Federal scrapie tag identification at the time of delivery.
- All incoming animals will be evaluated for health-related issues on the truck before they are unloaded at the University of Florida. The University of Florida reserves the right to turn away or disqualify any animal at their discretion.
- Rams with any of the following will not be allowed in the test: Lameness, pizzle rot, presence of possible contagious diseases (abscesses, swollen lymph nodes, footrot, sore mouth, pink eye, conjunctivitis, boils, ringworm), evidence of inherited undesirable traits (ie. entropion or ectropion, overshot or undershot jaws, wool blindness), rectal prolapse, epididymitis, inguinal hernias, abnormal soft or hard testicles, external parasites, evidence of profuse diarrhea.
- Producers will be allowed to enroll up to 10 ram lambs in the test each year. Producers are encouraged to only enroll their best animals with the greatest breeding potential.
- The UF Ram Test facility has a capacity of 100 animals. Should more than the maximum capacity be consigned, the Sheep Committee reserves the right to reduce consignments in an equitable manner beginning with the largest consignors.

- Producers who enter wool breed rams into the test must shear their rams prior to test entry, if they desire them to be shorn for the summer months. No shearing will be performed during the pre-test, test, or post-test period.

**2023 UF Ram Test estimated cost per ram.**

Item	2023 Cost
Feed	\$83.72
Yardage	\$15.00
Codon 171 Genotyping	\$13.00
Vet/Medical	\$63.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$175.00</b>

**Testing**

**Pre-test Period:** Upon arrival, rams will be weighed and dewormed with Levamisole (8 mg/kg), Fenbendazole (10 mg/kg), and Cydectin (0.2 mg/kg). Each animal will also be vaccinated with Ultra-choice 7 (clostridial), soremouth vaccine, and will receive a zinc sulfate solution foot bath. Other data collection upon arrival will include body weight, body condition score and FAMACHA score. Animals will be grouped based upon age and weight at the discretion of the Sheep Committee. Animals will be turned out to pasture in their assigned groups the same day and offered feed. This will begin the 12-day acclimation period. A fecal egg reduction test will be performed on June 15, 2023. Any ram not showing acceptable reduction in parasite load as determined by the consulting veterinarians (fecal egg count >500 epg) will not be allowed to participate in the test due to parasite resistance to dewormers.

**Test Period:** Body weight, body condition score, FAMACHA score, fecal egg count, and scrotal circumference will be collected on 14-day intervals beginning on June 15, 2023 and ending on September 7, 2023. Scrotal circumference will only be collected at beginning, mid-point, and end. Rams will be housed on Bahiagrass pastures and supplemented with “UF Ram Test” concentrate in their respective groups with a target consumption of 2% of body weight. Pastures will be rotated every 14 days. Any ram with a fecal egg count above 3,000 epg will indicate a threshold for deworming. The ram will be allowed the opportunity to mount an immune response (14-days). If the ram’s FEC is > 3,000 epg at a given collection interval and the FEC remains (> 3,000 epg) at the following collection interval (14-days later), this will result in deworming of the ram. A FAMACHA score of >4 also indicates deworming will be performed. Disqualification from ram test sale eligibility occurs after one deworming during the test period.

**Post-test Period:** Body weight, body condition score, FAMACHA score, fecal egg count, and scrotal circumference will be collected on September 7, 2023 at the end of the gain test. Parameters of parasite resistance and growth performance will be evaluated at this time. Rams will be ranked based upon their performance during the test, and ratios within contemporary groups will be calculated. Animals will be ranked based upon Fecal Egg Count and Growth Index. The Growth Index will be calculated by the average of Weight per Day of Age (WDA) and on-test Average Daily Gain (ADG). Rams that achieve an index greater than 90 for both Fecal Egg Count and Growth Index will be automatically consigned to the sale. Any animal who fails to achieve a minimum index of 90 for either trait will not be eligible for the sale. A summary of all test data will be provided to all participating producers. All rams will be inspected at the end of the test period for structural soundness and type by the Sheep Committee. Only those rams of acceptable type, quality, and soundness will be sold. The decisions of the Sheep Committee shall be final. Producers of rams that qualify for the sale have the option to withdraw their animals from the sale at the end

of the test period and take them home. Owners of animals not qualifying for the sale will be notified as soon as possible at the conclusion of the test period. At this time, we would ask the owners pick up rams no later than September 30, 2023 at the conclusion of the Ram Sale to prevent any additional charges. Producers are encouraged to keep all qualifying animals in the sale in order to fulfill the mission of this program. All rams consigned to the sale will undergo a Breeding Soundness Exam prior to the sale. A 'Satisfactory' classification, according to the guidelines published by the Society for Theriogenology, must be achieved on BSE to participate in the sale.

### **Health Management**

1. The health of all animals will be overseen by the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.
2. Rams showing significant parasite burden during the test period will not be eligible for the sale. These animals will be identified by the UF College of Veterinary Medicine at the scheduled 14-day health assessments. Parameters for disqualification are fecal egg count (FEC) > 3,000 epg at two consecutive health assessments and/or FAMACHA score of 4 or 5.
3. Consignors will be notified if an animal becomes ill or dies unexpectedly.
4. Any ram that dies will be necropsied by the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and the consignor will be provided with the necropsy results at no cost.
5. Rams may be removed from the test by the Sheep Committee in the case of a chronic condition impairing the usefulness of the animal. The consignor will be notified and required to remove the animal within 7 days in such a case. Potential events that may result in animal removal include but are not limited to, chronic lameness, infectious disease, or persistent parasite burden.
6. Additional veterinary healthcare costs due to illness will be the responsibility of the consignor. In such a case, the consignor will be contacted, consulted, and provided with a cost estimate from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine. The consignor reserves the right to remove the animal without treatment, and at no cost, if they so desire.

### **Administration and Management**

The program coordinators will be solely responsible for consignment, record keeping, correspondence, and general oversight related to the program. All daily management of the rams will be conducted by the UF Department of Animal Sciences staff. Faculty from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine will serve as consulting veterinarians for the program. The program coordinators will share the test data for all rams enrolled in the test on the UF Ram Test webpage at midpoint and final data collection. The program coordinators will provide consigning producers with data points at each 14-day collection, beginning at the second test data collection interval. All consignors agree to this data release when consigning rams to the test.

### **Liability**

University of Florida personnel will make every reasonable effort to safeguard the health of the animals and to obtain professional veterinary services when necessary, but will not be responsible for the loss by fire, theft, injury, sickness, death or in any other way.

## **UF Ram Test Sale**

- The 2023 UF Ram Test Sale will be held at the UF Horse Teaching Unit (1934 SW 63rd Ave) on Saturday, September 30, 2023. Currently we are exploring the idea of an online format sale this year to be more accommodating to producers across the country and make it easier to purchase animals without having to be present at the sale. We will keep everyone updated as the sale format progresses. In the event of an online sale the animals will still be on display for viewing September 30th at the Horse Teaching Unit. In the case that we do not have an online sale, we will continue with a live sale as in the past on Saturday September 30th, 2023 at the Horse Teaching Unit at 1:00pm.
- A maximum number of 30 of the highest performing rams will sell.
- To qualify for the sale, rams must achieve an index greater than 90 for both Fecal Egg Count and Growth Index.
- Any ram that has a fecal egg count > 3,000 epg at two consecutive health assessments and/or FAMACHA score > 4 during the test, will not be eligible for sale.
- Both registered and commercial rams are eligible for sale. Sale order priority will be given to rams registered with a recognized breed association, followed by commercial rams. Sale order will be determined by test performance with those rams who performed the best, highest FEC and Growth Index, will sell first.
- Sale order will be determined in descending order beginning with the highest ratioing animal for the combined traits of Fecal Egg Count and Growth Index. In the event of a tie, the tie will be broken by the Fecal Egg Count ratio.
- All rams will sell with a Satisfactory Breeding Soundness Exam performed within 30 days of sale by a licensed UF Veterinarian.
- UF Veterinarians will be on site to provide an official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) for interstate or intrastate travel to the purchaser's facility.
- A sale commission of 10% will be deducted from the sale price of each sale animal in order to recover sale costs and additional feed costs since the end of the gain test.

## **Sale Day**

September 30, 2023 Ram Sale and Small Ruminant Short Course at Horse Teaching Unit.

Sale day schedule TBA

**Please note:** Attending the Small Ruminant Short Course (SRSC) is not required to come to the sale. Lunch will be available to SRSC attendees and available for purchase by Ram Sale attendees who did not attend the Short Course.

