

Virginia Fall-Lambing Budget

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Fall lambing reduces the need for covered facilities at lambing, increases the utilization of fall forages by lactating ewes, and gives producers more time to finish lambs for the traditionally high winter and spring markets. Lambing occurs during the months of September, October, and November. Because of the seasonality of breeding inherent in most breeds of sheep, fall is a difficult time of the year to lamb. By incorporating breeds of sheep that are recognized for their extended breeding season, such as Dorset, Rambouillet, Finnsheep, or the hair breeds, into the commercial

4. A portion of lamb gain is derived from forage, and more time is available to finish lambs on grain for the traditionally high winter and spring markets (Figure 1).

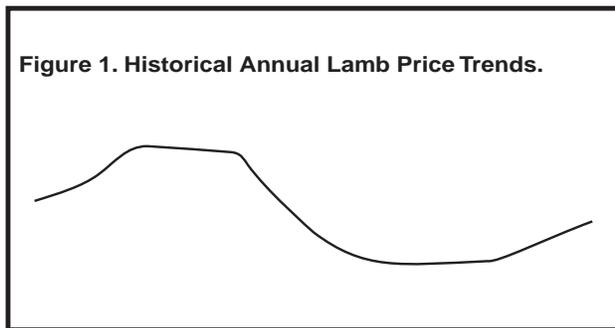


Figure 1. Historical Annual Lamb Price Trends.

Starting in April, rams are placed with the breeding flock for a period of approximately six weeks. In August, rams are placed back with the flock for another six-week breeding period for ewes failing to breed in the spring. Fall-lambing ewes are sorted and handled separately from ewes bred to lamb later in the year. Starting four weeks before lambing, fall-lambing ewes are supplemented with one pound of grain daily. After lambing, grain supplementation is discontinued and ewes and lambs are placed on high quality fall pasture. Annual fall forage crops such as small grain or turnip may be used for late fall and early winter grazing. Pasture creep feeders have been used successfully in Virginia to supplement lambs nursing ewes on stockpiled fescue. Lambs are weaned at two to two and one-half months of age. After all forage resources are depleted, lambs are placed on a high concentrate diet and fed to market weight. Management of winter-lambing ewes and their lambs is discussed in VCE Publication 410-012, *Virginia Winter-Lambing Budget*. For winter-lambing ewes to have an opportunity to breed back for fall lambing, their lambs should be weaned at least two weeks before they're placed back with the breeding flock in April.

crossbred flock, spring-breeding success rates are improved. Pregnancy rates of 75 to 80 percent for fall lambing are considered exceptional. Therefore, it is important to lamb the remainder of the flock in the winter so that open ewes are not carried over from one year to the next. The profitability of fall lambing is tied closely to the number of lambs marketed per ewe annually and the ability to take advantage of high quality fall forages for lactating ewes and growing lambs. Lambs weighing 40 to 80 lbs may be sold for slaughter on ethnic markets, or heavier lambs weighing 110 to 125 lbs may be sold on more traditional slaughter markets. Advantages for fall lambing include:

The information provided in this publication is best used as a guideline for decision-making. Market prices for lamb and wool vary, and every farm has different costs of production. A separate line is provided beside each variable to be used for the calculation of individual farm expenses and receipts. Bottom-line figures are based on return to land, labor, and investment. Other than market price, the percentage of lambs marketed per ewe per year has the greatest impact on profitability of production. Conception rate, lambing rate, lambing percentage (lambs born/ewe lambing), and lamb survival rate are all important flock performance characteristics affecting the percentage of lamb crop marketed. No single system of production is right for everyone. However, every system must emphasize those practices that enhance the overall well-being of the sheep flock.

1. Excellent weather conditions for lambing.
2. Lower requirements for labor and facilities. Ewes can be lambed on pasture with a minimum of assistance.
3. High quality fall forages are used for the lactating ewe flock, resulting in lower grain requirements.

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FALL LAMBING^a

Market Lamb Production
125% Lamb Crop Weaned
(105 lambs sold; 20 ewe lambs retained for replacements)

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Per Ewe</u>	<u>100 Ewe Flock</u>	<u>Your Farm</u>
Choice, Yield Grade 1-3 (115 lbs x 100 hd x \$0.80/lb)	\$92	\$9200	_____
Feeder Lambs (90 lbs x 5 hd x \$0.90/lb)	\$ 4	\$ 405	_____
Cull Ewes and Rams (150 lbs x 18 hd x \$0.30/lb)	\$ 8	\$ 810	_____
Wool (6.5 lbs x 103 hd x \$0.90/lb)	\$ 6	\$ 603	_____
Total Receipts			
\$110	\$11,018		
<u>Expenses</u>			
Hay - 28 tons @ \$60/ton ^b	\$17	\$1680	_____
Corn - 171 bu @ \$3/bu ^c	\$ 5	\$ 513	_____
Lamb Feed - 14 tons @ \$145/ton ^d	\$20	\$2030	_____
Replacement Ram	\$ 3.5	\$ 350	_____
Vitamins and Minerals	\$ 3	\$ 300	_____
Health	\$ 3	\$ 300	_____
Supplies	\$ 2	\$ 200	_____
Pasture - 30 acres @ \$20/acre	\$ 6	\$ 600	_____
Building and Fence Repair	\$ 2	\$ 200	_____
Shearing (Ewes and Lambs)	\$ 2.5	\$ 250	_____
Miscellaneous Costs	\$ 1	\$ 100	_____
Interest on Operating Capital - 6 mos @ 12%	\$ 4	\$ 407	_____
Hauling and Marketing	\$ 3	\$ 300	_____
Total Expenses	\$72	\$7230	_____

^a 70% Lamb in Sept.-Oct.; 30% Lamb in Dec.-Jan.

^b 550 lbs hay/ewe/year; \$60/ton cost of production

^c 60 lbs corn/ewe (Fall); 180 lbs corn/ewe (Winter)

^d 200 lbs feed/Fall lamb; 280 lbs feed/Winter lamb

Financial Implications at Selected Percentages of Lamb Crop Weaned Expressed As Income Per Ewe

<u>Item</u>	<u>125%</u>	<u>140%</u>	<u>160%</u>
Receipts	\$110	\$124	\$142
Expenses	\$ 72	\$ 75	\$ 79
Return to Land, Labor and Capital or Amount to Service Debt	\$38	\$49	\$63