Importance of Ram Breed
In Fat Lamb Production

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Many commercial sheep raisers use the western ewe to which a mutton breed of ram is mated for lamb production. Studies at the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station have been concerned with the adaptability of sheep to the hill-pasture areas of western Oregon in the production of fat lambs. The object has been to find the strong and weak points of several breeds of sheep as sires and breeding ewes that might be best adapted to western Oregon.

From 1942 to 1946, crossbred ewes (Lincoln x Rambouillet) were bred to Romney, Hampshire, and Southdown sires. All the lambs from these matings were marketed to get a sire comparison of these three breeds.

The period from 1947 to 1950 was used to develop four commercial flocks of ewes sired by Romney, Hampshire, Border Leicester and Cheviot rams from the original first cross Lincoln x Rambouillet ewes. During this second period, data were collected on the marketing of all wether lambs produced from these matings.

This study has covered two 4-year periods, 1942 to 1946 and 1947 to 1950. The sheep were pastured on improved and native forages at all times and received hay and grain only when the grass was covered with snow and during the lambing season of three weeks to one month.

The rams in each period were good representatives of the breed concerned. They were of proven fertility and were placed with the ewes for a six week period beginning the 10th of September each year of the study.

Beginning in 1951, it is planned to compare four flocks of commercial ewes which will be of Romney, Hampshire, Border Leicester and Cheviot breeding. These ewes will be first, second, and third top crosses of these breeds developed in the locality in which they will be tested. Each flock will be mated to Suffolk and Southdown rams.
Common Western Ewe  
Bred to Rams of  
Four Different Breeds

Crossbred (Lincoln x Rambouillet) ewe  

Produced:  
97 pounds lamb per ewe bred  
78 pounds weaning weight  
56 per cent fat lambs  
44 per cent feeder lambs  
$19.66 return from sale of lambs per ewe bred

Produced:  
88 pounds lamb per ewe bred  
73 pounds weaning weight  
56 per cent fat lambs  
44 per cent feeder lambs  
$18.36 return from sale of lambs per ewe bred

Produced:  
92 pounds lamb per ewe bred  
76 pounds weaning weight  
45 per cent fat lambs  
55 per cent feeder lambs  
$18.67 return from sale of lambs per ewe bred

Produced:  
78 pounds lamb per ewe bred  
73 pounds weaning weight  
23 per cent fat lambs  
77 per cent feeder lambs  
$15.67 return from sale of lambs per ewe bred

Fat Lamb Production for  
Hill Pasture Conditions  
1947-1950 Results

Bred to

Hampshire ram  
Cheviot ram  
Border-Leicester ram  
Romney ram

Romney ram

Cheviot ram

Border-Leicester ram

Hampshire ram

Produced:

Produced:

Produced:

Produced:
and all the offspring will be marketed to gather data on the efficiency of ewes of this breeding as dams of market lambs.

The conclusion of this study should give some information relative to the value of the breeds concerned as sires and as commercial ewes in the production of market lambs in western Oregon.

**Summary to Date**

**Period 1942 to 1946**  
*Sires used: Southdown, Hampshire, Romney*

1. The survival of lambs in each of the sire groups was as follows: First, Southdown; second, Hampshire; and third, Romney. The total drop was the same for each sire group. This resulted in the following rank of these sires as to lambing percentage: first, Southdown; second, Hampshire; and third, Romney.

2. As to the percentage of fat lambs at weaning, these sires compared as follows: first, Southdown; second, Hampshire; and third, Romney.

3. The pounds of lamb produced per ewe bred was the same for the Hampshire and Southdown sires and exceeded that of the Romney sire.

**Period 1947 to 1950**  
*Sires used: Hampshire, Cheviot, Border Leicester, Romney*

1. Lambs sired by Hampshire rams were larger and the percentage of fat lambs was high; therefore, the return per ewe bred was greatest for this group.

2. Lambs sired by Cheviot rams were small, but the percentage of fat lambs was high, making this group about equal in return per ewe bred to those which were sired by the Border-Leicester rams.

3. Lambs sired by Border-Leicester rams were large but only intermediate in percentage of fat lambs, making this group about the same in return per ewe bred as those sired by Cheviot rams.

4. Lambs sired by Romney rams were no larger than those sired by Cheviot rams and the percentage of fat lambs was very low. This group returned the least per ewe bred of any.

5. The percentage of fat lambs was about the same for the Hampshire and Cheviot sired lambs. One year they were the same, two years the Cheviot sired lambs were first and one year the Hampshire sired lambs were first. Lambs sired by these two breeds had a greater percentage fat than those sired by the Border-Leicester or Romney rams each of the four years. Romney sired lambs were consistent in having the lowest percentage of fat lambs each of the four years.

6. In carcass quality, there was little difference between the sire groups so long as they graded FAT.