



## January Sheep and Goat Report Training Materials

Below you will find links to a video, PowerPoint presentation, survey information sheet, and practice interviews for NASS's January Sheep and Goat Report. The practice interviews can be used to enter data in CATI or CAPI to get familiar with those data collection instruments.

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Strategic Planning and Business Services Division  
Strategic Planning Branch  
Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section

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## Survey Training

# Sheep & Goat Report: January 1



**United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service**



# Who Uses the Data?

- Producers use the information to refine their production and marketing strategies
- Suppliers, packers, and government agencies use the data to evaluate the expected slaughter volume and to determine potential supplies for export.
- USDA and producer organizations can better prepare and plan for crisis situations

# Survey Information

- Project Code: **155 - January Sheep Survey**
- Questionnaires:
  - Mail Dec 19
- Release:
  - *Sheep and Goats*, January 30, 2026

# Screening for Sheep and Goats

- Were any Sheep, Lambs, Goats or Kids **regardless of ownership**
  - On this operation on January 1?
  - On this operation at any time during the year?
  - OR will there be any at any time in the next year?
    - Yes: Continue with survey
    - No: Were you operating a farm or ranch on January 1?

## Screening continued

- Did this operation *own or custom feed* any sheep or lambs, **regardless of location**:
  - On January 1?
  - At any time during the previous year?
  - OR will there be any at any time during the current year?
    - If Yes, go to Item 3 (proceed with sheep inventory)
    - If No, go to Item 2a. Did this operation *own* any goats or kids, regardless of location:
      - » On January 1?
      - » At any time during the previous year?
      - » OR will there be any at any time during the current year?
        - If Yes, continue with survey
        - If No, Were you operating a farm or ranch on Jan. 1?

# Do We Count Pets, 4H projects, etc?

- Some operations may have very few animals and feel their operation should not be included in the survey
- **All sheep and goats should be recorded even if they are just for pets, 4-H projects, etc.**

# Sheep & Lambs: Current Inventory

- Sheep and lambs for breeding
  - **Ewes** (female) 1 year old and older
  - **Rams** (male) 1 year old and older
    - May also be referred to as “bucks”
  - **Replacement lambs** less than 1 year old
- Sheep and lambs **custom fed by others**
  - Asked only in some Western states
    - How many were being custom fed
    - Who was the custom feeder



# Sheep & Lambs: Current Inventory

- Sheep and lambs for market
  - Lambs under **65 pounds**
  - Lambs **65 to 84 pounds**
  - Lambs **85 to 105 pounds**
  - Lambs **over 105 pounds**
  - **Sheep 1 year old** and older (not used for breeding)



# Sheep & Lambs: Current Inventory

- Total sheep and lambs
  - Confirm what they reported adds back to their total!
  - Then, of the total sheep and lambs, were any **in another state**
  - If so, list the state/s and how many head were in each of these states

# Sheep & Lambs: Production and Disposition

- Lamb Crop
  - How many lambs born (exclude those born dead)
  - Some Western states: Lambs dropped that were or will be marked, docked, or branded

*(Multiple births are common, can have more lambs born than ewes)*

- Death and Losses During the previous year
  - How many **lambs died**
    - Total
    - OR** (in some Western states)
      - *Before* being marked, docked, or branded & *After* being marked, docked, or branded
  - How many **sheep 1 year or older died**
- *Around 1-10% for sheep; 2-15% for lamb crop*

# Sheep & Lambs:

- Wool Production & Price
  - How many **head shorn** (both sheep and lambs)
  - How many **pounds of wool** shorn (include tags and wool not sold)
    - Total pounds **OR** average fleece weight (nearest tenth)
  - What was average price received for **raw (or unprocessed) wool**
    - Price per pound OR total dollars received
    - It is not uncommon to give the wool to the shearer or dispose of the wool without selling it.

# Sheep & Lambs

- **Inventory Values in dollars per head for each type of sheep inventory**
  - Looking for average value per head not cents per pound
  - To the nearest dollar per animal
- **Slaughter for consumption **by this operation****
  - **Not animals sold for slaughter**
    - Lambs and sheep slaughtered at commercial establishments
    - Lambs and sheep slaughtered on this operation

# Additional Questions about Sheep & Lamb Losses

- NASS has external Project Agreements (EPAs) in some states where funding is provided each year so additional questions can be asked to determine the cause of sheep and lamb deaths.
- Every five years, the National Animal Health Monitoring Service (NAHMS) provides funding for similar death loss questions for sheep and goats on a rotating basis. 2026 will be the next year for goats.

# Additional Questions about Sheep & Lamb Losses

- Types of Sheep & Lamb Deaths and Losses
  - Asking about both lamb and sheep losses
    - Lambs BEFORE being marked, docked, or branded
    - Lambs AFTER being marked, docked, or branded
    - Sheep, 1 year or older
- **Lost to predators** (broken out by each cause)
  - Bears, coyotes, wolves, etc.
- **Non-predator losses** (broken out by each cause)
  - Disease, weather related causes, lambing problems, other non-predator causes, etc
- *Sum of these losses must match total Deaths and Losses reported earlier*

# Things to Watch Out For

- Ratio of Lambs to Ewes low or high
- High ratio of Rams to Ewes
- High Death Loss
- High or Low Inventory Values
- Large number of Sheep or Lambs for Home Consumption

# More Things to Watch Out For

- Large change in current to previous inventory
  - Compares individual inventory items and totals
- Sheep and lambs present but no wool production
- High/low average fleece weight
- High price received for wool

# Goat & Kid Screening

- Goat or Kid “presence”
  - Depending on the state:
    - On the operation **regardless of ownership**
    - OR
    - Own any **regardless of location**
  - On January 1?
    - If Yes, go to Item 2 (proceed with goat inventory)
    - If No, will there be any at any time during the current year?
    - Were there any the previous year?
      - » If Yes, go to Item 5 (Kid Crop and Other Disposition)
      - » If No, go to Conclusion

# Goats & Kids: Current Inventory

- Inventories broken out by Angora; Milk; Meat & Other
  - All breeds are based on utilization
- January 1 reference date
- Goats & Kids for Breeding
  - **Does** (female) 1 year old and older
  - **Bucks** (males) 1 year old and older
    - *May also be referred to as “billies”*
  - **Replacement kids** less than 1 year old

# Goats & Kids: Current Inventory

- Goats & Kids for Market
  - **Market kids** less than 1 year old
    - Include kids that will not be kept for breeding
  - **Market goats** 1 year old and older
    - Include goats not used for breeding
- Confirm Total Goats & Kids
  - By types: Angora; Milk; Meat & Other
    - *Again to make sure their total equals what they've reported*

# Goats & Kids:

## Production and Disposition

- Kid Crop the previous year
  - How many **kids born** (exclude kids born dead)
- Death and Losses During the previous year
  - How many kids died **before** weaning (exclude kids born dead)
  - How many kids died **after** weaning
  - How many goats died



# Goats & Kids

- **Inventory Value in dollars per head**
  - For each of the different inventory items of goats
- **Slaughter for consumption by this operation**
  - Not animals sold for slaughter
  - Kids and goats slaughtered at commercial establishments
  - Kids and goats slaughtered on this operation

# Goats & Kids

- Mohair Production and Price
  - How many **Angora goats and kids clipped**
  - How many **pounds of mohair** clipped (include tags)
    - Total pounds **OR** average fleece weight (nearest tenth)
  - What was **average price** received
    - Price per pound OR total dollars received

# Things to Watch Out For

Very similar to Sheep & Lambs:

- Ratio of bucks to does is low/high
- Total number of goats seems high
- Ratio of kids born to does is high/low
- Ratio of kid deaths to total kid crop is high
- Ratio of goat deaths to total breeding stock is high
- Breeding/market inventory values are high/low
- Slaughter for home consumption seems high
- Mohair production per goat is high/low
- Mohair price is high/low

# Things to remember

- No Sheep or Goats?
  - May very well still be in business
- Out of business?
  - Be sure to work through the screening questions
  - And determine what happened/current status
    - Capture as much new operator information as possible
- Encounter something odd?
  - Be sure to leave a detailed comment about the situation
  - Statisticians in the field offices really appreciate that extra information

# In Summary:

- Know the different “parts” of the inventory
- Be aware of the inventory “sum of parts”
- Notes are always welcome
  - Anything odd or unexpected leave a good comment
- Work through some practice interviews



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## Sheep & Goat Report Additional Information

Screening for Sheep and Goats differs in some states based on ownership or on the acres operated.

Animals kept as pets, 4-H projects, etc. should be recorded, even if only a few head.

### **Sheep**

Definitions:

- Ram: Male sheep usually kept for breeding.
- Ewe: Female sheep usually kept for breeding.
- Lamb: Young sheep, less than 1 year old.
- Wether: Castrated male sheep.
- Sheep & Lambs for Breeding: Ewes and rams one year and older used for breeding; ewe and ram lambs under one year old kept for breeding replacement.
- Sheep & Lambs for Market: Sheep and lambs being raised for slaughter market.
- Ewe Age When First Bred: Usually during the first breeding season after they are one year old; but can be as young as 9 months.
- Breeding Time: Natural breeding time is late summer and fall.
- Ewes per Ram: Normally 1 ram per 25-50 ewes.
- Gestation: 142-154 days (approximately 5 months).
- Lambs Docked: Lambs with tails removed.
- Death Rate: Sheep: 1-10 percent of total adult sheep. Lambs: 2-15 percent of lamb crop.
- Sheep Shorn: Number of sheep from which wool was shorn.
- Fleece Weight: Adult sheep average pounds of wool shorn per clip are 7-12 pounds. Lamb average pounds of wool shorn per clip are 3-6 pounds.
- Tags (crutches): Wool clipped from face and crotch area.

Breeds commonly used for breeding and wool production are Merino, Rambouillet, Debouillet, Columbia, Corriedale, Panama, Targhee, Montadale, Suffolk, Hampshire, Shropshire, Dorset, Oxford, Southdown, Cheviot, Finn, Polypay, Lincoln, Cotswold, Leicester, and Romney.

Lambs generally weigh between 50 and 80 pounds when placed on feed.

Lambs fed for slaughter generally weigh between 100 and 120 pounds when slaughtered.

Deaths of sheep kept for breeding (stock sheep) in farm flocks usually fall between 1 and 4 percent of the breeding sheep inventory per year.

Normal death rates for breeding sheep (stock sheep) in range flocks range between 4 and 10 percent of the breeding sheep inventory per year.

Death rates for all lambs in farm flocks are normally between 5 and 10 percent of the lamb crop per year.

Death rates for all lambs in range flocks are normally between 10 and 15 percent of the lamb crop.

Normal death rates for feedlot sheep and lambs range between 1 and 2 percent per year.

Lambs for market must be less than one year old and be intended for slaughter market.

Sheep for slaughter market must be one year old and older.

Pounds of wool shorn from sheep and lambs should include tags and wool not sold.  
(Tags or crutches are the wool shorn from face and crotch areas)



Wool prices should typically range between \$0.30 and \$2.50 per pound. Leave notes if higher prices were received for specialty wool. Only wanting the price for raw or unprocessed wool.

Value per head: Be sure the operator actually gives you the value per head and not the \$ per CWT or \$ per pound.

Slaughter for Consumption by the Operation: Be sure only animals actually consumed by the operation are reported and not animals that were sold for slaughter.

Predator Losses + Non-Predator Losses Total must equal deaths (by Lambs and Sheep) asked earlier.

Sheep/lambs that 'leave the operation' must have permanently left. Possible reasons for leaving: movement or sale of sheep or lambs to sale barns, another sheep operation, a backgrounding operation, a feedlot, a buyer/dealer, a consumer market, etc.

### **Goats:**

Definitions:

- Doe: Female goat
- Buck or Billy: Male goat
- Mutton or Wether: Castrated male goat
- Kid: A young goat less than a year old.
- Gestation Period: Around 5 months
- Angora Goat Breed of domestic goat raised for production of its long silky hair, called mohair.
- Milk Goat: Straight-haired type of goat selected and raised for milk production.
  - Popular U.S. breeds include Saanen, Toggenburg, and Alpine.
  - Less popular breeds include LaMancha, Nubian, Oberhasli, and Pygmy.
- Meat/Other Goat: Straight-haired type of goat raised for meat production.
  - The most popular U.S. breed is Spanish, but Angora and all Milk breeds are sometimes used for meat production.
  - Goats raised for Cashmere fiber. These goats are not for milk or meat but are considered "other".

Goats and Kids are divided into 3 types of breed or utilization: Angora, Milk, and Meat & Other.

Angora is a specific breed, mostly used for mohair production.

Milk goats comprise several different breeds, as do Meat goats. Each breed or type can be used for different purposes.

- For instance, Angora does bred to Angora bucks to produce kids for mohair production would all be classified as Angora. Angora does bred to a meat breed buck (likely Spanish) would produce kids used for meat production. In this case, all would be classified as meat.

Does are generally seasonal breeders, and kid once a year.

Does have twins often; so, the number of kids born in a year should be between 100 and 250 percent of the total doe inventory.

Total kid and goat losses should be within a range of 0 to 10 percent of the inventory.

Slaughter for Consumption by the Operation: Be sure only animals actually consumed by the operation are reported and not animals that were sold for slaughter.

Pounds of mohair produced should be recorded either as weight per fleece or total pounds produced.

Report goats and kids only once, even if they were clipped in both the Spring and Fall.

Average fleece weight per head clipped will generally range from 1.5 to 10 pounds.

Mohair value should be recorded in dollars and cents per pound. Price should generally range between \$2.00 to \$8.00.

