KERN COUNTY
SAMPLE COSTS FOR 1000 EWES
by
Winston L. Engvall, Farm Advisor

Feed

- Alfalfa - 5,000 head months $8,000
- Range - 7,000 head months 5,250
- Supplementary hay, grain, minerals 4,000

Replacements

- 200 ewes - net cost 5,855
- 6 rams - net cost 285

Labor

- 1,000 ewe share 4,000

Shearing 1,000
Hauling 2,000
Marketing 1,000
Miscellaneous 4,000

DIRTI (depreciation, interest, repairs, taxes, insurance) 4,000

$39,390

Income at 3 lamb price levels

- Wool - 10,000 lbs. @ 70¢ 7,000 7,000 7,000
- Unshorn lamb incentive 1,000 1,000 1,000
- Lambs - 1000 - 100 lb. lambs @ 30¢ 30,000 @ 40¢ 40,000 @ 50¢ 50,000
- Income $38,000 $48,000 $58,000

100 cc
Oct. 1976
FARM MANAGEMENT SHORT COURSE FOR COMMERCIAL BANKERS

Sheep Industry - Kern County
by
Winston L. Engvall, Farm Advisor

Kern County is number one in California as far as sheep numbers are concerned. This is so in spite of the fact that from April to September only a few herds of sheep remain here. Of the 870,000 head of sheep in California on January 1, 1976, 17% or 145,000 were in Kern County.

Sheep numbers in the county have followed the national trend, decreasing about 20% in the last 10 years in Kern. As the following statistical picture shows this trend appears to have slowed locally, more than likely due to the increase in lamb prices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Jan. 1, sheep inventory</th>
<th>1bs. sheep &amp; lambs sold</th>
<th>price per cwt.</th>
<th>value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>156,100</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>27.30</td>
<td>4,914,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>145,300</td>
<td>178,000</td>
<td>33.07</td>
<td>5,886,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>146,200</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>38.76</td>
<td>6,008,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>151,300</td>
<td>169,000</td>
<td>37.80</td>
<td>6,388,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In late September the ewes are trucked into Kern County. Typically they are pastured on alfalfa fields, confined by movable fencing. Lambing begins soon after the ewes arrive and continues through the fall months.

The lambs are crossbreds, offspring of black faced, "meat type" rams and the wool type ewes. Since they aren't suitable for flock replacements all will be marketed as soon as they reach a desirable weight.

If rain has produced good forage growth the flocks will leave the relatively expensive alfalfa for the hills and desert about February 1.

The unfarmed land on the west side of the valley, which was another feed source, is rapidly becoming irrigated farmland, so much is now unavailable for grazing. In addition to the disappearance of this feed source crop residues are becoming scarce.
as a feed source due to the double cropping of farm land leaving no time for sheep
to move in and clean up.

Most of the lambs will reach market weight by May. At this time the ewes will
be trucked to rangeland--to Inyo and Mono Counties or to other states.
While in these summer ranges the rams are turned in to breed the ewes and in the fall
they again return to the alfalfa fields to complete the cycle.

Shearing takes place in the early spring. Wool prices have fluctuated widely
in recent years. This fluctuation, however, is not a major factor in returns be-
cause of the wool incentive program which tends to shift returns toward the incen-
tive price level set by the USDA. This is a program to encourage the production of
better quality wool.

One of the more recent developments to boost the sheepman's efficiency has been
the introduction of new methods to increase lamb production per ewe. Twice a year
lambing, three lamb crops in two years are both possibilities. Increased multiple
births is possible with new bloodlines. These practices may be of great value to the
farm flock producer but do not fit in well with the typical range operation.

Predators, especially coyotes, have caused losses in all locations. Dogs are
often a problem especially in areas near population centers.

With the prices received this year, the sheep industry may continue at the
present level but the future is not at all clear.

Cost studies for the sheep industry are difficult to devise. There is such a
great variation in feed costs from year to year and individual operations. Alfalfa
pasture that was rented for $10 per acre in the winter of 1964-65 increased to as
much as $45 per acre in 1975-76.

Consider these precautionary statements when reviewing sample costs and incomes.

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