

# Lakeland Carcass Sire Project

## Producer Update - Spring 2006

Susan Hosford - Project Manager



### Lambing

First lambs were born on Jan. 16, last lambs born on March 9. Lambing was longer than is ideal due to a number of factors at breeding time, including hot weather, thin ewes returning from

summer grazing, large percentage of ewe lambs, etc. Breeding is also earlier than ideal, particularly for ewe lambs, but is determined by scheduling lambing to match various class schedules.

Lakeland College students processed all the lambs, (tails, castration, tagging), and did a remarkable job of keeping the claiming pen records accurate. Kudos to the classes, Dr. Barb!



### Electronic identification

The EID tags have been very successful. About 220 CSIP EID double tags were put in, and so far four lambs have lost the eid button part (which still leaves the dangle tag that can be read manually).



The hand-held reader scans the lamb's tag in the scale. The ID number and weight are displayed and recorded by the scale head. The data is uploaded into a computer at the end of the day. The information is converted into an Excel spreadsheet.

Weighing the lambs is fast – less than half a minute per lamb, easy and absolutely accurate. There is no wrestling with the animals trying to read eartags and no clerical errors.



I wouldn't raise sheep without recording production and I wouldn't record production without them!

## Weaning

Lambs were weaned at about eight weeks old. There are three separate groups. After weaning, the lambs' barley-soya creep ration was replaced by a TMR pellet to ensure even distribution of nutrients to all lambs and to simplify the College's job in feeding out the lambs. The self-feeders provided by Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board were built by UFA, Vermilion and delivered this spring, and are very much appreciated!

Many of the lambs are gaining over a pound a day and look fabulous. All three groups have access to shelter and are consequently staying clean and dry. Lambs are weighed every two weeks.



## Lakeland College

The Producer Advisory Group (John Haarman, Irene Rutledge, Gord Schroeder, Tracy and myself) made a series of management recommendations to the College. The College has been very positive about having

the industry assist it in developing a new management model for the flock. Member of the project team also donated their time to talk to the sheep classes about key issues in sheep production – nutrition, health/handling, lamb marketing and how the our industry fits into global sheep production.



One of the major unexpected 'pluses' of this project has been the willingness of all the stakeholders to work together to make it happen. To look at the lessons learned and to focus on solutions not on the problems. This project isn't going to make or break the sheep industry. A lot of producers have pointed out the obvious – it's not perfect. But it is a very solid step forward in working together.