

## LAKELAND CARCASS SIRE PROJECT UPDATE SPRING 2007



1. The new barn was finished (or close enough) in time for the first lambs born on Feb 20. One hundred and sixty two ewes lambed during the first cycle, dropping 304 lambs. We were surprised at the prolificacy of these range ewes - they produced 20 sets of triplets and two set of quads! The remaining 65 are due in the next cycle, starting March 26.
2. Cliff Metheral sheared the ewes Feb 13, just a week before lambing. This was to save space in the barn and so the ewes were more comfortable in the claiming pens. Cliff did an excellent job tidying up the ewes, carefully shearing their woolly faces and legs.
3. The ewes had ideal body scores at shearing and were in excellent shape going into lambing. Credit for this goes to Darrell Hickman, the new farm manager at Lakeland College. Darrell found some great sheep-quality hay this winter, and the result has been good flesh on the ewes and big healthy lambs at birth. Average lamb birth weight this year is about 12 lb., which is four lb. heavier than last year.



4. Joanne Dickson, the shepherd at Lakeland College, has done an extraordinary job of lambing under very difficult conditions. She's working with a new barn, new students, new college staff and a new sheep flock that are full of surprises!
5. Lakeland College students in the Sheep Production class were in charge of lambing again this year; checking the lambing barn around the clock, processing lambs and providing any medical treatment required, under the supervision of Dr. Brenda Hymanyk. The new ewes came from range flocks and have been a challenge to handle. A handling system will be set up in the new facility once the frost is out and the ground dries, which should make routine catching and handling much less stressful for sheep and humans alike.
6. A PowerPoint presentation about the Lakeland Project was developed in January for the new staff and agriculture students at Lakeland College. The presentation covered the "who, what, when and why" of the project, along with photos from 2006 and a global perspective on lamb carcass quality. Tracy Hagedorn also gave the presentation to Animal Science students and staff at Olds College.
7. The project has been approved for a third year, with funding from ACAAF (Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) and DLFA (Diversified Livestock Fund of Alberta). Funding for research depends on industry support, so many thanks to the stakeholders and industry organizations that make this project possible.



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