



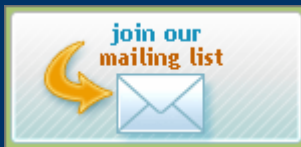
*The Newsletter for
the BEHAVE Research
and Outreach Program*

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Mother Knows Best

Young animals do what mom does and go where she goes. Seems simple enough. Experiences early in life, even in the womb, shape an animal's preferences and behaviors. So if you want certain behaviors in your livestock, keep replacements from females with behaviors you find beneficial. Learning from mom also means you only need to

The BEHAVE Newsletter Gets a Facelift

Change is good or so people tell me. We're trying something new. The BEHAVE newsletter is now being distributed through Constant Contact. This new program will help me quickly publish the letter, manage my contacts more effectively and give the letter a more professional look though I kind of liked the old funky look. I hope you like the change.

Grazing Ewes on Saltbush Improves Productivity of their Lambs

In Australia, some producers graze their pregnant ewes on saltbush. The salt content of the diet, about 20%, doesn't harm the ewes but how it may affect their lambs, especially later in life, was not known. Researchers investigated how feeding saltbush to ewes from the 60th day of pregnancy until 3 weeks after birth affected their lambs.



At three weeks of age, lambs born to ewes browsing saltbush had 85% lower renin activity than lambs from ewes grazing pasture (controls) but differences disappeared by weaning when lambs were three months old. Renin is an enzyme released by the kidneys to help control the body's sodium-potassium balance, fluid volume, and blood pressure. Eating diets high in salt lowers rennin activity in the kidneys and increases elimination of salt from the body.

At 10 months of age, both groups of lambs grazed saltbush for 8 weeks. Lambs from ewes that consumed saltbush had heavier fleece weights, lower renin activity and gained more weight when grazing saltbush than controls. Lambs from ewes that consumed saltbush did not have a higher preference for high-salt diets than controls.

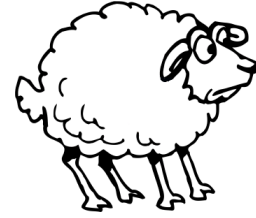
Researchers concluded that grazing pregnant ewes on saltbush alters renin activity of their lambs, which allows them to gain weight when grazing saltbush as adults. Furthermore, grazing pregnant ewes on saltbush would benefits farmers in three ways: (i) allows them to use salt-affected land; (ii) increases weight gain of sheep when grazing saltbush; and (iii) increases fleece weight.

change the behavior of one generation and in most cases the new behavior will be passed on to future generations.

For more info, see the fact sheet: [Mother Knows Best](#)

Anxious Sheep Less Likely to Try New Foods

It's no secret that sheep don't like to be alone. Juan Villalba and his colleagues asked if individual sheep act differently when they are separated from other sheep and if that behavior correlated with the acceptance and intake of new foods.



Sheep used in study had different genetics and experiences. Group 1 was white-faced crossbred lambs, born in a barn, handled daily, and reared on alfalfa hay and barley grain. Group 2 was black-faced (Suffolk) crossbred lambs, born on ryegrass pasture with minimal human contact, and no exposure to supplements. Three weeks before the beginning of the study, lambs were penned together as a single group and fed alfalfa pellets and barley grain.

During the separation trials, a single lamb placed in a pen 15 ft by 9 ft surrounded by sheets of plywood to keep the lamb from seeing other lambs. Each trial lasted 10 min. and during that time researchers recorded number of bleats, changes in body temperature and amount of movement during separation.

During separation, lambs in Group 1 bleated less often than lambs in Group 2. There were no differences between groups in amount of movement and change in body temperature during separation. Later when placed in individual pens and fed novel foods, lambs in Group 1 ate new foods more readily than lambs in Group 2.

The results suggest that lambs that are calmer when separated from others may be more willing to eat new foods than lambs that are more reactive to social isolation.

Let me know what I can do to improve the newsletter!! Hope you all have a great Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

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