Comparison of Ram, Wether and Ewe Market Lamb[*] Slaughter and Carcass Characteristics
(3 year preliminary report)

D. H. Kropf, C. S. Menzies, Dorothy L. Harrison and Lois Anderson

Lambs used were sired by Hampshire rams the first two years; by Hampshire, Suffolk, Southdown, Dorset, and Rambouillet rams the third year. All lambs were from western ewes and were individually slaughtered as they reached 95 lbs. Carcasses were graded and chilled carcass weights were obtained after a 48-hour chill. Fat thickness measurements were taken over the loin eye muscle at the 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 points and loin eye cross-sectional area was determined.

Kidney and pelvic fat were removed and weighed. The wholesale leg and loin were trimmed to a fat thickness of approximately 1/4 inches.

Rams had heavier pelt weights than wethers or ewes. Rams also had lower warm and chilled carcass weights and consequently lower dressing percentages. Rams had lower carcass grades; whereas, wethers and ewes graded similarly. However, ram carcasses graded only 1/3 grade lower than ewe carcasses. In terms of fat thickness over the loin eye and pounds of kidney and pelvic fat, ewe carcasses were fattest, wethers were intermediate and rams carried the least finish. No sex difference was found in carcass cooler shrink, rib eye area or pounds trimmed leg plus loin.

Table 28
Comparison of Ram, Wether and Ewe Market Lamb Slaughter and Carcass Characteristics

| | Group averages[1] | | |
	Ram	Wether	Ewe
Number of animals	58	48	113
Slaughter wt., lbs.	89.8	88.6	87.7
Pelt wt., lbs.	10.6	9.4	9.2
Hot dressed carcass wt., lbs.	47.9	49.7	50.2
Cold dressed carcass wt., lbs.	47.8	48.5	49.1
Cooler shrink, lbs.	1.1	1.2	1.1
Hot dressing, %	53.4	56.0	56.1
U.S.D.A. carcass grade[2]	8.5	9.1	9.4
Rib eye area, sq. in.	2.26	2.28	2.17
Fat thickness over loin eye[3]	0.15	0.25	0.22
Trimmed leg + loin, lbs.	18.9	19.3	18.8
Kidney & pelvic fat, lbs.	0.7	1.1	1.5

1. Lot averages underlined with same line are not significantly different at 5% level of probability.
2. U.S.D.A. Carcass Grade - Av. Prime = 10, Low Prime = 9, High Choice = 8.
3. Fat Thickness - average of 6 measurements.