

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INNOVATIVE NATIONAL SHEEP EVENT SET FOR SPENCER, IOWA AUG. 2

— *Performance backed by expected progeny differences (EPDs), shorn entries* —

SPENCER (Iowa) June 23, 2008 — Sheep producers seeking more return on rising feed and fuel costs are relying on proven genetic tools, like the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) to enhance profitability. Producers using NSIP data can earn a greater return on their sheep operations, since top NSIP sheep are expected to produce more prolific, productive offspring in less time on feed.

The third annual Center of the Nation NSIP Seminar and Sale will be held in Spencer, Iowa, in the Swine barn on the Clay County Fairgrounds on Saturday, August 2, with educational seminars starting at 9:30 a.m. and the sale featuring rams and ewes beginning at 1 p.m.

Limited exclusively to breeding sheep featuring NSIP expected progeny differences (EPDs) providing accurate predictions of an animal's ability to produce offspring with certain genetic traits, the sale attracts satisfied buyers across the United States. NSIP EPDs help predict a variety of essential traits from a ewe's ability to milk, a ram's ability to sire offspring that reach weaning and market weights more quickly, and to the ability to produce uniform fleeces in wool breeds.

"The beauty of this sale is that sheep are sold objectively on the basis of true performance, rather than simply on one person's opinion on one day like traditional shows and sales," said event chairman Mike Park of Woodhill Farm of Woodbine, Iowa. "Every single animal sold at this industry-leading event is backed by objective data backed up by EPDs to help producers get the most for their time and money."

The combination of slick-shearing and EPDs has proven very popular with buyers and consignors. Every animal, with the exception of wool-breeds, is sold slick-shorn, so the buyer can truly see the animal's true confirmation. Wool breeds like Targhees sell in fleece so buyers can evaluate the actual fleece along with wool EPDs.

"The Center of the Nation NSIP Sale is a great place to buy seed stock," said Terry Smith of Hoppwell Livestock of Macksville, Kansas. "This is the only place where you can find this many production-oriented stock with EPD numbers to best select for the traits that you desire to improve, said Nancy Smith, of the same operation.

In 2007, buyers from nine states enjoyed "one-stop shopping" and purchased registered maternal and terminal sire breeds including Polypays, Suffolks, Dorsets, Hampshires, Targhees in a single setting. Those same breeds, along with Columbias and Katadins will be sold at the 2008 event featuring lambs and yearling entries.

In the 2007 sale, 103 and two-thirds sheep sold, averaging \$511 per head.

About the event

Members of NSIP volunteer to direct the sale, managed by Conover Auction Service of Baxter, Iowa, with Col. Al Conover serving as auctioneer. Mike Park of Woodbine, Iowa, chairs the event. Scott Rinehart of Sioux Rapids, Iowa, serves as barn manager and Kathy Krafka Harkema of Montezuma, Iowa, manages media relations and marketing for the only event of its kind in the country.

Dennis Dewitt of Spencer, Iowa, of Iowa State University's Extension Service, coordinates the educational component, designed to provide sheep producers with the latest in technology and research to enhance their flock's performance and profitability.

"If you'd like to get more out of your sheep investment, plan to invest in your next stud ram and your replacement females at the 2008 Center of the Nation NSIP Sale August 2 in Spencer, Iowa," Park encouraged.

For more information

To obtain a sale catalog at no charge, contact Conover Auction Service at P.O. Box 9, Baxter, IA 50028 or call 641-227-3537. Sale information will also be available online at: www.conoverauction.com

For more information on the National Sheep Improvement Program log on to <http://www.nsip.org>.

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