

SATURDAY'S SHEEP FARM TOUR

Today we are privileged to enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at 3 Pennsylvania sheep farms with entirely different operations in terms of marketing strategies and production methods. We are grateful to them for taking time to share their knowledge.

SHOW RING FOCUS

Jerry McCarty, Columbia County

Jerry McCarty was honored with the Outstanding Pennsylvania 4H Sheep Leader Award at the 2019 Farm Show, capping off 30 years as a youth leader and a lifetime of sheep production. Jerry sells breeding stock and 4H club lambs. He raises Suffolk and Tunis, with some Hampshires for cross-breeding. His flock is managed to produce high quality lambs for the show ring, from winter lambing to targeted feeding programs to selection of breeding stock. The flock is enrolled in NSIP, using data and ultrasounds for EBVs (expected breeding value) and breeding decisions.

COMMERCIAL LAMB PRODUCTION

Eli K. DeHart Farms, Northumberland County

The DeHart family runs a grass-based flock of around 175 commercial Dorsets. They lamb three times a year, marketing to both retail and wholesale channels. Lambs are finished on grain, and ewes grained in the first 30 days of lactation. Market lambs are held to a standard of 125 pound live weight in under 5 months. Selection criteria for the ewe flock is based on mothering ability, multiple births, and lamb performance. Producing and selling hay is also a key component of the operation.

SUSTAINABLE HOMESTEAD & LAMB DINNER

Lilac Hill Farm, Lycoming County

Our last stop will be Lilac Hill Farm in Muncy, Pennsylvania, where Rick and Vivianne Lapp raise Katahdin sheep, Cream Legbar chickens, and Pilgrim geese. Rick is an expert woodworker, and you will see this influence everywhere you look. Lilac Hill Farm is a gorgeous property with beauty and practicality in every detail from fenceposts to buildings.

Viv is proficient not only at managing sheep, but cooking them as well. Yes, Lilac Hill Farm is also our dinner stop. You will enjoy a feast of Owens Farm grass-fed lamb prepared by the Lapps: the perfect close to a day of adventure.