

the project as a success and will largely use the same procedure, however, with modifications.

First, we will use only lambs and include in each pasture an area that offers shade and relief from flies. In addition to the three one acre pastures, we will also fence a sacrifice area that does not have any marketable trees and offers large amounts of cover and shade. Ideally all of the blocks of trees would include only large trees, those greater than six feet. We found the ratio of eight lambs to three acres to be an appropriate ratio.

We view the acres of grass in nursery and Christmas tree production as a potential benefit to sheep producers rather than a significant management cost for Christmas tree producers. The issue is removing risk, in the form of tree damage, to the tree producer.

In our instance, the Christmas tree producer bears all of the potential downside (damaged trees) while not sharing in any of the benefit (marketable sheep, fed on free grass). This could be addressed in one of several ways: an insurance policy on the trees, sharing in the ownership of the marketable lambs or finally, ownership of the lambs and Christmas trees by one individual.

Outreach Program

We conducted a field day on July 26th at the farm to discuss the project and its results at that time as well as possible applications for other producers. The event was publicized in the Reading Eagle and Lancaster Farmer, which featured a half page article on the project in its monthly grazing insert. Additionally, the event announcement was forwarded to the PA Christmas Tree Producers Association and the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture and was distributed on their email list servers. Finally, notice was also mailed to members of the SE PA Project Grass members.

The turnout was better than expected with approximately 25 individuals from Berks, Lehigh, Lebanon, Bucks, Delaware and Dauphin counties as well as Christmas tree and sheep and goat producers; several people traveled over one and a half hours for the program. Grant advisor Dan Ludwig of Lebanon NRCS was present as were several members of the Penn State Cooperative Berks Extension.