

News Release – For Immediate Release

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Sheep and Goat Webinar Addresses Hay Quality, Health and Maintenance

The hay crop of 2019 in the Midwest region is reported to be among the poorest quality in years – a significant challenge to the 10,000 sheep and goat producers in Indiana and Kentucky.

To help with this, Purdue University Extension and Kentucky State University will host the 2020 Sheep and Goat Webinar on Tuesday, Jan. 28 from 7 – 9 p.m. (EST) and 6 – 8 p.m. (CST).

Home viewing also will be available at: www.ansc.tv.

Including the Whitley County Extension office, approximately 25 Extension offices in Indiana and Kentucky area will be host sites for the webinar, created to help farmers identify the consequences of feeding poor quality hay, and instruction on best practices for health and maintenance in the sheep and goat industries.

Purdue's Fulton County Extension Director, Mark Kepler said the first cutting of hay for 2019 was late, due to rainy weather. The additional weeks of maturing, he explained, increased the fiber content and decreased the protein content.

"We found the second, third, and in some cases fourth cuttings made were a much higher quality, so this made quality hay much more expensive, and harder to obtain this year," Kepler said.

Mike Neary, Purdue University Extension sheep and goat specialist explained that animals being fed poor quality hay may lose condition and need supplemental grains and other quality feed sources.

"In the months when pasture isn't available, good quality hay is essential to maintaining a healthy herd. This year brought many farmers a poor hay crop, and as a result, we are reaching out to help provide some tips and helpful solutions for surviving the winter months ahead," Neary said.

He also expressed concern for future goat and sheep offspring born to mothers fed a poor hay diet, which sets up a disadvantaged start at the onset of life, resulting in poor milk quality and low birth weights.

During the webinar, Keith Johnson, Purdue University Extension Forages Specialist will address "The Problem" and the importance of testing. Richard Ehrhardt, Michigan State University Sheep and Goat Specialist will discuss "The Consequences of Feeding Poor Quality Hay" and potential feeding problems that could result, with ways to have a productive year, despite the challenges.

Interested persons can join others for the webinar viewing, and a list of participants is in process and available at <https://extension.purdue.edu/fulton>. Live streaming on Facebook Live also will be available at the Purdue Sheep and Goat Extension Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/purduesheepandgoats/>.

For local residents, viewing is available at the Purdue Extension office in Whitley County at 524 Branch Court, Columbia City, IN. Please call 260-244-7615 by Jan. 26 to reserve your spot at our local viewing. The event is free and open to the public.

“We hope this webinar is helpful to those who choose to watch online, however we strongly encourage office site viewing sessions for producers and Extension Educators who can watch and discuss the webinar in a shared location,” Kepler added.

Purdue University and Kentucky State University have been co-hosting small ruminant workshops for the past 10 years. Additional information about issues facing the sheep and goat industries can be found at the [Purdue Sheep & Goat Website](#).

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