

The Best Time to Market Sheep and Goats

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Any producer of any product always wants the best price they can get. Sheep and goat producers are the exact same way. To really understand the demand and supply economics of sheep and goats, one must first understand the large groups purchasing them.

The main purchasers for sheep and goats are ethnic groups. The purchasers recognize different holidays and feast days than most Tennessee producers. This is the most important factor to understand in marketing sheep and goats.

Just like all holidays, the demand for certain foods go up. An example would be Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving usually means having a turkey on the table. The same can be said for the Eid-al-Fitr or Eid-al-Adha only with goat and sheep.

It's not only important to know the different holidays that the ethnic groups recognize, but to understand when they are held. Now, it gets complicated. Most of the holidays are not on our calendar year, but follow the lunar calendar. This means the holiday is not the same days year after year. It will be critical to look up the dates each year for the ethnic holidays. Here are some search words and websites to help:

Interfaith Calendar - <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/index.htm>

Cornell University Sheep and Goat Marketing - <http://sheepgoatmarketing.info/calendar.php>

North Carolina State University MEAT GOAT NOTES -

<https://rowan.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Ethnic-Holidays-2014-2018.pdf?fwd=no>

Some sheep and goat producers have heard of Ramadan (a Muslim and Somalis holiday). Some producers believe this is a great time to market, when in fact, Ramadan is a fasting holiday. Usually the groups will have a small celebration before the month of fasting and a festival to break the fast (Eid-al-Fitr). This is a tricky time to sell sheep and goats. Producers need to make sure they understand when the groups eat and when they fast. Also, the demand and supply chain can be thrown off during this time.

Eid-al-Adha is another festival (fall time frame) when the demand is high. This would be an ideal time to sale. Other holidays to focus on would be Christmas, Easter, Passover, Cinco de Mayo and Greek Christmas.

If the focus is only on demand vs. supply, and looking at the normal calendar year, then there are some dates that hope to bring more dollars. The time from Christmas to New Year's and all of January and the first part of February the supply is lower. This means the prices should be higher than in regular auctions.

Sources: Levi Geyer, USDA Market News 717-354-2391, TN Master Meat Goat and Sheep Producers Materials

