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TDA Gives Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Sheep and Goat Research a $300,000 Boost

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LUBBOCK – Sheep and goat research in West Texas got a strong financial boost thanks to more than $300,000 in Texas Department of Agriculture funding that was awarded earlier this week.

"This particular funding source is very important to our area," said Dr. Dan Waldron, a funding recipient and Texas Agricultural Experiment Station geneticist at San Angelo. "The Texas Department of Agriculture monies allow our scientists to target specific research efforts aimed at helping the producer in the short term.

"These projects are generally production oriented and are tailored to the needs of West Texas producers or those who raise sheep or goats in similar climatic conditions."

Todd Staples, Texas Department of Agriculture commissioner, announced the funding Sept. 10 at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The agency awarded $1.2 million in grants to five Texas universities to fund 39 research projects designed to "bolster and enhance the state's food and fiber industry."

Recipients of the sheep and goat research funds to be awarded over the next two years, were researchers at the Texas A&M University System Research and Extension Center at San Angelo and the Sonora Research Station, one of the center's satellite stations.

One of the projects is a comparison of Texas Rambouillet sheep with Australian F1 crosses. Dr. Chris Lupton, head of the center's wool and mohair laboratory, heads that project.

"The crossbred, fine-wool sheep we are attempting to produce should grow more wool and finer wool, which is more valuable, than our current flocks without any reduction in lamb production," Lupton said.

"Thus, net income per sheep will be increased without increased management or increased use of resources. Any time value can be added to a product with no further inputs involved, it's a plus to the producer's bottom line. Eventually, that savings could be passed on to the consumer."

Other projects include:

Breeding strains of meat and Angora goats to better manage cedar; testing the effectiveness of redberry cedar as a possible goat de-wormer; determining the digestibility of certain Edwards Plateau plant species; evaluating the economics of Spanish and Boer goat crosses, Dorper and Barbado sheep crosses, Angora goats in low input West Texas grazing systems, and evaluating early season breeding goats.

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