



## The Basics – Small Ruminant Herd Health Management 101

Brittany N. Diehl

Utilizing an effective herd health program is an essential part of a successful small ruminant operation. Each flock/herd is different, thus creating a specific herd health plan for your operation is key. The development of this plan can be executed through working with your veterinarian as well as other individuals such as extension agents and forage specialists. By using an effective preventative health strategy, you will optimize the best economic returns. Prevention of disease is truly the key to minimizing health risks within your flock/herd.

There are a few basic, key components to an effective small ruminant herd health management program.

### 1.) Biosecurity

A series of management practices which are designed to prevent the introduction, delivery, and spread of disease pathogens into a flock/herd. These practices may also aid in the control of diseases already present within the flock/herd.

Key components include:

- Purchase animals from reputable breeders and sales, not from the sale barn.

- Quarantine new or returning animals to the herd/flock for a minimum of 14 days, but preferably [30 days](#).

### 2.) Vaccination program

There are numerous diseases in which sheep/goats can be vaccinated against.

The only universally recommended vaccine us against the *Clostridial* diseases. This primarily consists of *Clostridium perfringens* Types C & D and *Clostridium tetani* – known as CD&T.

When to vaccinate:

Ewes/Does: An annual booster is recommended. Ideally this will occur during the last 4-[6 weeks](#) of pregnancy, to maximize “passive” immunity in nursing lambs/kids. If not previously vaccinated or vaccine status is unknown, two doses are recommended (initial and booster, 3-4 weeks apart).

Lambs/Kids: Initial vaccine is recommended at approximately [8 weeks](#) of age, followed by a booster 3-4 weeks later. Then an annual booster thereafter.

### 3.) Regular herd health assessments (BCS, FAMACHA)

This primarily includes a regularly scheduled assessment of animals for FAMACHA and body condition scoring (BCS). Developing a strategy to recognize and prevent parasitic infections is key. Perform **individual** FAMACHA and BCS scores.

**Only deworm those that need it** – do NOT blanket deworm entire flock/herd.

### 4.) Record keeping

Keep good records. Individual animal records should be recorded and kept for reference at any time.

Utilize the data collected from regular herd health assessments and from lambing/kidding to aid in culling decisions.



Those who consistently have elevated FAMACHA scores, or fecal egg counts (FEC) should be culled from the flock/herd.

#### 5.) Hoof care

Hoof care is an important part of small ruminant flock/herd health management. Hooves affect the health, welfare, and productivity of small ruminants.

The need for hoof trimming varies from one operation to the next. It is affected by both the environment and the diet. Most commonly, the recommendation is to hoof trim 1-2 times per year.

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## Small Ruminant Producer FAMACHA Training and Certification was a Success!

Lizzie Whitehead

The North Florida Livestock Agents Group (NFLAG) hosted a FAMACHA certification small ruminant producer training at the University of Florida's Sheep Unit this past April. Twenty two producers attended and were educated on internal parasites, what FAMACHA is, when to treat animals with internal parasites, and different deworming techniques. They also completed the FAMACHA certification test and practiced on UF Sheep to complete their certification.

At the end of the training, producers got to talk with county agents and Dr. Brittany Diehl, and ask questions about their small ruminants. It was a great networking event for all producers and agricultural agents.



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Small Ruminant Update



The responses of the event exit survey (n=19) indicated that producers were very satisfied with the training. Among the survey participants, 95% (n=20) of the participants said that they increased their knowledge on internal parasites, FAMACHA scoring, and on how to perform the FAMACHA test. In addition, 100% (n=20) of the participants said they intend to utilize FAMACHA scoring to make deworming decisions in the future. The North Florida Livestock Agents Group (NFLAG) plans to host another FAMACHA certification training at the Small Ruminant Short Course in September! More information coming soon.



Picture 2: Producers learning about deworming techniques and why we use the FAMACHA system. (Photo credit: Lizzie Whitehead)



Photo 3: Agriculture agents are working together to put on a FAMACHA training. (Photo credit: Lizzie Whitehead)

Lizzie Whitehead is a Livestock Agent in Bradford County. Contact her by email at: [liz.whitehead@ufl.edu](mailto:liz.whitehead@ufl.edu)

## Small Ruminant Update



## Recipe Corner

### Chocolate Goat Milk Ice Cream



#### *Ingredients*

3 cups of goat milk (1 quart)  
1 cup of heavy cream  
3.5 oz of dark chocolate chopped  
1 tsp of vanilla  
3/4 cup of sugar (split 1/4 cup and 1/2 cup)  
5 egg yolks  
Pinch kosher salt

#### *Instructions*

1. Add the goat milk, heavy cream, 1/4 sugar, and the chopped chocolate into a sauce pan. Bring to a simmer, whisking the chocolate to melt and incorporate into the milk. Turn off the heat.
2. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and 1/2 cup of sugar. Whisk a cup of the hot milk mixture into the egg yolks and sugar. This will temper the eggs and help prevent them from curdling in the hot milk. Whisk in another cup of the hot milk and then pour that mixture back into the pot with the remainder of the milk mixture.
3. Turn the heat back on a medium-low and cook, stirring, until the mixture begins to thicken. Remove from heat and strain through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl. Whisk in the vanilla.
4. Refrigerate, stirring occasionally until completely cold. Make sure the mixture is ice cold before going into an ice cream machine
5. Freeze according to the ice cream machine's directions.
6. Churn and freeze



# Upcoming Events

## SMALL RUMINANT SHORT COURSE

September | 29-30 | 2023

The second **UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Short Course** will be held on  
**September 29-30, 2023.**

The event is a collaboration among UF/IFAS Extension, the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, the UF/IFAS Agronomy Department, and the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences. Producers, extension specialists and agents, researchers, students, and allied industry members are welcome to attend this in-person, educational event. The program will include lectures and demonstrations from industry experts, including our keynote speaker, Dr. Niki Whitley. Dr. Whitley is an extension specialist at Fort Valley State University and is bringing 20+ years of small ruminant production knowledge.

The event will be held in conjunction with the **2023 University of Florida Ram Test and Sale.**

**Registration for general admission will open June 1, 2023.**

### Questions?

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Small Ruminant Update



# SMALL RUMINANT SHORT COURSE

September 29-30, 2023

Straughn Professional Development Center  
Gainesville, Florida

## Sponsorship Opportunities

### Why Become a Sponsor?

Never will there be a better time to reach Florida small ruminant producers and interested parties. Producers, extension specialists, researchers, students, and allied industry members will be in attendance at this in-person educational event. The program will include lectures on parasite control, herd health programming, marketing, management, and more. Dr. Niki Whitley, will be bringing industry expertise as the featured speaker. Research updates will be provided by UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Faculty and Staff. The event will be held in conjunction with the 2023 University of Florida Ram Test and Sale.

## Sponsorship Levels

Lunch Sponsor (2 Opportunities)	\$1,000	<b>INCLUDES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Registrations</li> <li>• Organization logo displayed on table tents during educational programming on Friday and event website</li> <li>• Organization mention in programming</li> <li>• Table at reception &amp; trade show</li> <li>• Opportunity to put one item in the goodie bags</li> <li>• Single logo table tents during lunch service</li> </ul>
Refreshment Sponsor (2 Opportunities)	\$750	<b>INCLUDES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Registrations</li> <li>• Organization logo displayed on table tents during educational programming on Friday and event website</li> <li>• Organization mention in programming</li> <li>• Table at reception &amp; trade show</li> <li>• Opportunity to put one item in the goodie bags</li> <li>• Single logo table tents during refreshment service</li> </ul>
Gold	\$500	<b>INCLUDES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Registrations</li> <li>• Organization logo displayed on table tents during educational programming on Friday and event website</li> <li>• Organization mention in programming</li> <li>• Table at reception &amp; trade show</li> <li>• Opportunity to put one item in the goodie bags</li> </ul>
Silver	\$300	<b>INCLUDES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Registrations</li> <li>• Organization logo displayed on event website</li> <li>• Organization mention in programming</li> <li>• Table at reception &amp; trade show</li> <li>• Opportunity to put one item in the goodie bags</li> </ul>
Exhibitor	\$150	<b>INCLUDES:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Registration</li> <li>• Organization logo displayed on event website</li> <li>• Organization mention in programming</li> <li>• Table at reception &amp; trade show</li> </ul>

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The UF Small Ruminant Update Newsletter is published quarterly by the IFAS/ UF Extension, as an educational and informational service. Please address any questions to Izabella Toledo, the Dairy Regional Specialized Agent of the Northeast District and Editor of the Small Ruminant Update Newsletter. E-mail: [izatol@ufl.edu](mailto:izatol@ufl.edu)