



News from Northern New York Agricultural Development Program

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Contact: Betsy Hodge, CCE St. Lawrence, 315-379-9192

Dr. tatiana Stanton, Cornell University, 607-254-6024

Note: Dr. tatiana Stanton is spelled with lower case first letter t

Rhonda Butler, Asgaard Farm and Dairy, Au Sable Forks, 518-647-5754



Goats at Asgaard Farm and Dairy in Au Sable Forks, NY; photo: Rhonda Butler.

Northern NY Research Evaluating Parasite Control Options

To help small livestock producers, the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program is funding research into alternative methods for controlling a widespread parasite of sheep and goats. Results of the research will be shared at a series of meetings across the region December 3-5.

The Cornell Sheep and Goat Program - Dr. Michael L. Thonney and Dr. tatiana Stanton, Cornell Veterinary Parasitology Lab - Dr. Dwight Bowman and Janice Liotta - are working in coordination with Northern New York Cornell Cooperative Extension Regional Livestock Team Leader Betsy Hodge and NNY small livestock producers to evaluate promising alternative methods for controlling barber pole worm and other internal parasites in sheep and goats.

Haemonchus contortus is a stomach parasite commonly known as barber pole worm. The parasite has become increasingly resistant to traditional anthelmintic – anti-worming – treatments.

Seventy-three percent of 273 sheep and goat farmers responding to a Cornell survey indicated problems with barber pole worm, a major cause of death in small livestock.

“Barber pole worm is widespread throughout our regional grazing pastures and particularly flourishes under wet and warm conditions as were prevalent throughout the summer of 2013,” Hodge says. “Many North Country sheep and goat farmers already report barber pole parasite resistance to multiple deworming medications,” Hodge says

Two NNY sheep farms and one goat producer participated in the evaluation of the use of copper oxide wire particles (COWP) in conjunction with pasture rotation rest periods to reduce barber pole infections. Sheep and goat producers in the southeastern U.S. have seen good results with this anti-parasitic treatment.

Rhonda Butler of Asgaard Farm and Dairy, a diversified livestock farm in AuSable Forks, tested three levels of the copper treatment on her dairy goats.

“Preliminary indications were that the treatment could be effective at a well-targeted dose. We are looking forward to hearing the complete project results at the December meeting and if the results are definitive or compelling we will add the treatment as another way to keep parasites at bay and keep our animals healthy and strong,” Butler says.

Butler says the project results will guide their dosing size and frequency decisions and notes that the on-farm research has also indicated the likelihood that higher doses of the treatment are not warranted because they are no more effective than mid-level doses.

The anti-worming treatment was administered in combination with rotational grazing on the participating farms and Hodge points out that Asgaard Farm made good use of multi-species grazing by cows and goats to help control parasite load on pastures.

Hodge worked with the participating farmers on using the FAMACHA method of animal evaluation for scoring animals for indicators of infection. The scoring was used for statistical analysis of the treatment methods.

Project results will be shared at NNY Fall Sheep and Goat Week meetings to be held:

- .. December 3, 7 pm, Cornell Cooperative Extension Jefferson County office, Watertown, 315-788-8450
- .. December 4, 7pm, Cornell Cooperative Extension St. Lawrence County Extension Learning Farm, Canton, 315-379-9192
- .. December 5, 10:30am, 911 Emergency Building, Malone, 518-483-7403
- .. December 5, 7pm, Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County office, Plattsburgh, 518-561-7450.

The Cornell specialists will also be discussing methods for treating deer worm infections, and evasive grazing techniques for parasite control.

The results of this Northern New York Agricultural Development Program-funded livestock project will also be shared at the 2014 Winter Research Symposium and Conference of the Northeast Organic Farmers Association of New York.

Learn more about small livestock and other agricultural sectors in Northern New York at www.nnyagdev.org or contact Cornell Cooperation Extension in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis or St. Lawrence County.

