

2010 North American Bluefaced Leicester Breeders Survey Results

December 31, 2010

Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and return it this year. Thank you to Jody McLean for her help in developing the survey questions and doing the publicity. A big thank you goes out to Kris Barndt and BLU for distributing the survey to members along with the Flock Book. Please direct any questions or comments about this survey to Becky Utecht, (email becky@riveroakssheep.com or phone 320-679-4117).

Summary:

The 2010 North American Bluefaced Leicester Breeders Survey was distributed to members with the Bluefaced Leicester Union of North America's Flock Book in April, 2010. Eighteen farms responded. The producers' answers were tabulated and the results are printed in red in the following tables on pages 2-4.

- **Flock Information:** The average total flock size of the responding farms was 28 sheep, and the average number of purebred BFLs per farm was 18. Seventeen of the 18 responding farms bred BFL ewes in the fall of 2009. Fifty percent of the responding farms said they flush their BFL ewes prior to turning the rams in.
- **Breeding Practices:** An average of 8 adult ewes per farm were exposed to BFL rams. Three of the 18 responding farms also exposed their BFL ewe lambs to rams. Only one of the 18 responding farms reported doing AI in fall of 2009. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents used BFL rams for breeding mature ewes of other breeds; and 22% used BFL rams on ewe lambs of other breeds. Three of the responding farms bred Mules (BFL-sired ewes of other breeds) to terminal sires.
- **Lambing Percentages:** The lambing percentage of pasture-bred mature BFL ewes was 197%. The artificially inseminated BFL ewes had a 200% lambing percentage. Adult ewes of other breeds had a rate of 169% and the adult Mule ewes came in at 186% lambing rate.
- **Birth Weights:** Birth weights for purebred BFL lambs ranged from 7 to 17 lbs. Most reported average lamb weights around 11-12 lbs. Birth weights for crossbred lambs ranged from 7-13 pounds with averages anywhere from 8.5 to 13 lbs. depending on dam's breed and age.

Respondents' Comments:

On Purebred BFLs:

- 12.5 lbs avg.
- Blues rock, great mother, loads of milk.
- Weak lambs, only 3 of 4 alive at birth - lost one of the twins at 1 month - she was a bottle lamb who died suddenly.
- 11.85 lb avg., 2nd year with BFLs & much better lambing season this year. Better weights, growth & health. I learned last year they required closer watch for higher resistance to parasites here. New ram in 2009 helped a lot!
- Lowest birth weight was 7 pounds highest was 12 pounds.
- Two ewes bred to ram never caught.
- Both lambs lost were the weakest of a set of triplets. The remaining 2 lambs in set were vigorous and are growing well. This is shaping up to be our healthiest, fastest growing set of lambs. All the lambs were born in a 30 day period, with all but 2 ewes lambing in the first 17 days.
- 12 & 13 pound singles - growing real well, two yearling ewes exposed to 8 month old ram didn't catch
- Birth weights 8-12 lbs. Avg 9.4 lbs. One lamb died at 6 weeks, not sure why.
- Only have three yearling ewes at this time.
- One BFL ewe - ram lamb 17.2 lbs., ewe lamb 13.11 lbs.
- One ewe was cesarean. The two lambs ended up as bottle babies.
- Quads - range 8.5-12 lbs. Rest very consistent around 12-13 lb avg. Vigorous lambs, all born unassisted. Moms cleaned promptly.

On Non-BFL ewes:

- 13# avg for adult ewes' lambs and 12# avg. for yearling ewes' lambs. Largest lambs born to Suffolk cross ewes.
- 9-13 lbs., avg. 11 lbs
- I kept weights but will take way too long to compile. Sorry.
- Very disappointed in conception rate of yearling NCC's as they were a good size and in good condition when bred. No explanation for poor performance - farm that I purchased them from had experienced a severe bear attack on flock in mid-summer - wondered if this would have an impact.

On Mule ewes:

- 8.5 lbs. avg.
- 7-12 lbs. Great moms, plenty of milk, good growth on the lambs. Il de France sired lambs grew faster than the Dorset sired lambs.

2010 North American BFL Breeders Survey RESULTS- Part 1

Producers entered demographic data and the number of **purebred Bluefaced Leicester** sheep in their flocks that fit into each breeding category.

Breeder Name/Address: **18 BLU member farms responded out of ___ sent out with the flock book**
(___% response rate)

Current Total Flock size: Avg. 28 (511 total) (All breeds of sheep)
Current # BFLs (all ages): Avg. 18 (319 total)
BFL Rams (>1 yr): Avg. 1.7 (32 total)
BFL ewes (>1 yr): Avg. 8.2 (149 total)

	Adult BFL Ewes (>1 yr at exposure)	BFL Ewe lambs (<1 yr old at exposure)	BFL Ewes Artificially Inseminated
1.) # BFL Ewes exposed to ram (or AI'd)	Total - 103 ewes exposed on 18 farms	Total - 8 on 3 farms	Total - 3 ewes AI'd on 1 farm
2.) Did you flush prior to exposure or AI? (Circle one) 2 a.) If yes, with what?	9 - Yes (50%) 9 - No (50%) Grain, gradually up to 1#/day, Shelled corn, apples, Corn Oats Barley Molasses mixture	2 - Yes (67%) 1- No (33%) Shelled corn	1 - Yes (100%) 0 - No
3.) # BFL Ewe deaths prior to lambing (do not report their fetal counts below)	1	0	0
4.) # BFL Ewe deaths at lambing (report their lamb counts below)	1	0	0
5.) # BFL ewes who lambed (include ewes with stillborns and abortions but not ewes who died at lambing)	95 total ewes lambed 93% conception rate	7 total ewes lambed 88% conception rate	3 ewes lambed 100% conception rate
6.) Total # Lambs born (include stillborns and abortions)	187 total 197% lamb rate	8 total 114% lamb rate	6 200% lamb rate
	5a.) # single births: 24 5b.) # twin births: 55 5c.) # triplet births: 13 5d.) #quads or more 3	5a.) # single births: 6 5b.) # twin births: 1 5c.) # triplet births: 0	5a.) # single births: 1 5b.) # twin births: 1 5c.) # triplet births: 1
7.) # live lambs at 7 (seven) days	169 total 90% live lambs > 7 days	8 100% live lambs > 7 days	4 67% live lambs > 7 days
8.) # Lambs stillborn or aborted	9 5% loss rate	0 0% loss rate	1 17% loss rate
9.) # Lamb deaths during days 1 to 6	9 5% death rate days 1 - 6	0 0% death rate days 1 - 6	1 17% death rate days 1 - 6

2010 North American BFL Breeders Survey RESULTS - part 2

Producers entered the number of **non-purebred BFL ewes** in their flocks that produced lambs sired by a **purebred Bluefaced Leicester ram** in the appropriate category.

	Adult Ewes (>1 yr at time of exposure to ram)	Ewe lambs (< 1 yr old at exposure to ram)	Breed(s) of Ewes: Border LeicesterX
1.) Total # Ewes exposed to BFL ram	102 ewes on 9 farms 50% of responding farms	14 ewes on 3 farms	BL/Romney, SuffolkX, Coopworth, BFL/BL(x2), English Leicester, Cotswold, Romney
2.) Did you flush prior to exposure or AI? (Circle)	Yes - 5 (56%)	No - 4 (44%)	Suffolk/BFL, Scottie/BFL, Romney/Corriedale
2 a.) If yes, with what?	Corn,oats, barley, apples	Corn,oats, barley, apples	
3.) # Ewe deaths prior to lambing (do not report their fetal counts below)	0	1	Shetland (x2), NCC (x2), Merino, SBF, MeatX
4.) # Ewe deaths at lambing (report their lamb counts below)	0	0	
5.) # Ewes who lambed (include ewes with stillborns and abortions but not ewes who died at lambing)	95 92% conception rate	4 29% conception rate	
	5a.) # single births: _34 5b.) # twin births: _50 5c.) # triplet births: _9	5a.) # single births: _2 5b.) # twin births: _2 5c.) # triplet births: _0	
6.) Total # BFL-sired Lambs born (include stillborns and abortions)	161 169% lambing rate	6 150% lambing rate	
7.) # live BFL-sired lambs at seven days	153 95% live lambs > 7 days	6 100% live lambs > 7 days	
8.) # BFL-sired Lambs stillborn or aborted	5 3% loss rate	0 0 % loss rate	
9.) # BFL-sired Lamb deaths days 1 to 6	3 2% death rate days 1-6	0 0 % death rate days 1-6	
10.) Birth weight ranges, If collected			8.5 to 13lbs

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to complete this survey!

Questions or comments about these results?

Please email becky@riveroakssheep.com or call 320-679-4117.

2010 North American BFL Breeders Survey RESULTS - part 3

Producers entered the number of **Mule ewes** in their flocks that produced lambs sired by a **Terminal sire** in the appropriate category.

	Adult Ewes (>1 yr at time of exposure to ram)	Ewe lambs (< 1 yr old at exposure to ram)	
1.) Total # Ewes exposed to BFL ram	38 ewes on 3 farms	11 ewes on 2 farms	Breed(s) of rams: Il de France, Horned Dorset, BFL, Charolais
2.) Did you flush prior to exposure or AI? (Circle)	Yes - 1 (33%)	No - 2 (67%)	Breed(s) of mules: Shetland Mules (x3) NCC Mules, Meatx Mules
2 a.) If yes, with what?	Corn, oats, barley	Corn, oats, barley	
3.) # Ewe deaths prior to lambing (do not report their fetal counts below)	0	0	
4.) # Ewe deaths at lambing (report their lamb counts below)	0	0	
5.) # Ewes who lambed (include ewes with stillborns and abortions but not ewes who died at lambing)	36 95% conception rate	7 64% conception rate	
	5a.) # single births: _5 5b.) # twin births: _31 5c.) # triplet births: _0	5a.) # single births: _6 5b.) # twin births: _1 5c.) # triplet births: _0	
6.) Total # BFL-sired Lambs born (include stillborns and abortions)	67 186% lambing rate	8 114% lambing rate	
7.) # live BFL-sired lambs at seven days	64 96% live lambs > 7 days	7 88% live lambs > 7 days	
8.) # BFL-sired Lambs stillborn or aborted	1 2% loss rate	0 0% loss rate	
9.) # BFL-sired Lamb deaths days 1 to 6	2 3% death rate days 1-6	1 14% death rate days 1-6	
10.) Birth weight ranges, If collected			7-12 lbs, 8.5 lbs avg.

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