How to start a farm on limited acreage

Presenter:
Debbie Webster
Small Farm Entrepreneur & Educator
Whispering Pines Farm
Seneca, South Carolina

Host/Moderator: Jay Parsons

July 30, 2019

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Why do it?

Debbie Webster
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Return on Investment
Memories versus Money

Start small- spend less, leave room for growth-in flock size and experiences.
More labor intensive= less upfront costs.
Labor saving equipment= more initial cost.

Ways to make money- early and later.

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Things to Think About

• Harvest? Multiuse Breeds?
• Location-Predators, Neighbors
• Resources- Time, Money, Mentors
• Acreage- Rotational Grazing? one sacrificial pasture? one isolation area?
• Biosecurity- visitors, new stock
• Grow or not- Closed Herd?
Dairy

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Wool

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Meat

Contact Your County Extension Agent.
Learn about Meat Fabrication
Apply for a Meat Handler’s License.
Meaty Dog bones sell for $4 per pound.
there’s a big push for raw meat for dogs.
Strategies and Schedules

• Fall Breeding season
• Gestation- 140-150 days
• Lactation- varies
• Weaning- varies- 30 days- 4 months
• Harvest
  – Meat- varies but 6 mos-364 days=‘lamb’
  – Milk- while nursing, Milk share, or after weaning.
  – Wool- once per year or more, usually before lambing
• Accelerated breeding program
• Next generation- terminal, breeding stock, etc

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Set Up- Safe Spaces

Fences, Catch Pens, Cross Fencing, Oh My

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Set Up - Safe Spaces

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Sheds or Natural Shelter
Set Up - Nutritional Needs

- Feed=Need, Feeders- labor saving
- Water- electrolytes, apple cider vinegar
- Minerals- salt, copper

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Sheep and Goats
Upgrade
Healthcare

• Parasites-internal and external. Prevention, good practices- FAMACHA, BCS, BOSS, keep a consistent routine- change can be stressful
• Veterinary care versus Home Healthcare
• Culling
• First aid kit, lambing (birthing) Kit

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Top 4 Beginner Mistakes

#1- Feeding too much grain
#2- Not enough hands on
#3- Lack of Salt and Minerals
#4- Milking out

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Transitions- Growing Pains

Sales of Offspring and Products

• For Pets, Meat, Dairy, Breeding Stock
  • **Meat**- ‘On the Hoof’. Growing into Meat Handler’s License- Meat Label-selling per pound increases.
  • **Dairy and Cheese making**
    • Home use, friends and family, Barter with other Homesteaders, Pet use?
    • Check state laws for Licensing.
    • Growth= More Investment, but Economy of Scale- milking, cheese making
  • Growth in Experience and Knowledge
Resources

- Purdue Sheep and Goat Podcasts
- ASI newsletter
- DSANA newsletter
- Premier 1 Supplies
- State University for Extension Offices
- America Lamb Board
- Coburn Land O’ Lakes
- Southern States
- Reliable Social Media Sites-
  - Maryland Extension Small Ruminant Program
  - Fias Co Farm

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