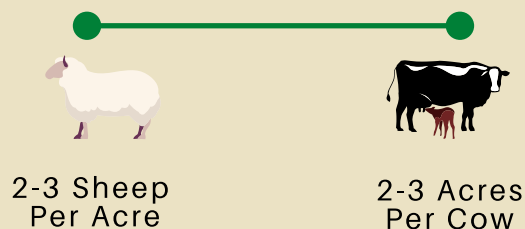


WHAT DO I DO WITH MY LAND?

A DECISION MAKING GUIDE FOR NEW FARMERS

DEVELOPED BY RACHEL OWENS AND AARON MOORE, N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

How much land do you have?



Your acreage of grazable pasture land may limit you to a certain type of livestock.

Are there any fencing or facilities already in place?

Goats and sheep need fencing with tighter spacing than cattle. Working facilities differ between species and may be better suited for one type of operation

What are your goals for your land?

- \$ Profit

- Enjoyment/Hobby

Deciding on goals for your land can help you plan. You might need to write a business plan. Even outlining expectations for a hobby farm can be beneficial for a new farmer

For more information and guidance, contact your local Extension Agent

What is your desired level of involvement?



Stocker operations keep younger animals on their farm only to put weight on them before reselling. Breeding operations keep animals on their farm all year round and have additional cost and labor expenses.

Marketing options can vary in time and energy commitment as well. Retail meat sales can be more labor intensive than live animal sales for example.



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Cattle

Cows have a longer production cycle and will be on your farm a lot longer before seeing any returns. For cow calf operations, it takes about 1 1/2 years from breeding to selling the calves. They are larger animals that need lots of space as well as more hay and feed supplies.

Marketing

There are several marketing options for selling cattle. Some options are more profitable than others and some require more effort and time.

- Livestock Sales
- Graded and/or BQA Sales (Price Premium)
- Private Treaty/On Farm Sales
- Selling Meat Cuts- Retail or Wholesale

Other Considerations

- The breed you select will depend on what your goals and marketing strategies are
- Pasture management will be a major time and cost consideration
- Beef is a well established market with a more consistent demand

Challenges

- Cattle have a much higher initial investment between purchasing animals, equipment, and land
- Cattle have a longer production cycle, which means it takes longer to see your returns. It also makes it difficult to adjust production goals and involves higher levels of market risk.

Equipment

There are lots of options and considerations to make when purchasing cattle equipment. Here are some basic items needed to get started.

- Cattle working system- a head gate at minimum
- Trailer for animals
- Fencing
- Feeding supplies- hay ring, feed trough or bunk, waterer, etc...
- Tractor with implements to move round hay bales, spray fields, etc...

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Small Ruminants

Sheep and goats have a shorter production cycle. For breeding operations, it takes about 9 months from breeding to selling the young. They are smaller animals that need less space as well as less hay and feed supplies.

Marketing

There are several marketing options for selling sheep and goats. Since they are more of a niche market it might take more time and effort to create a market for your products.

- General Livestock Sales
- Graded Sales (Price Premium)
- Private Treaty/On Farm Sales
- Selling Meat Cuts- Retail or Wholesale

Other Considerations

- Sheep and goats are smaller and easier to handle for smaller children
- The breed you will select will depend on your goals and marketing strategies. Breeds are commonly divided into meat or dairy types for goats and hair or wool for sheep.
- Pasture management will be a major time and cost consideration.
- USDA requires scrapie tags on animals before selling or moving them

Challenges

- Small ruminants are strongly affected by internal parasites. A comprehensive parasite management plan will be a necessity.
- Goats can be escape artists and will need a suitable fence to keep them contained
- Small ruminants will need appropriate protection from predators

Equipment

There are lots of options and considerations to make when purchasing equipment. Here are some basic items needed to get started.

- Pen system to confine animals to work them
- Trailer for animals
- Fencing
- Feeding supplies
- Shelter from inclement weather

Optional:

- Tractor with implements to move round hay bales, spray fields, etc...
- Head gate/chute system