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Sheep
cost of
production
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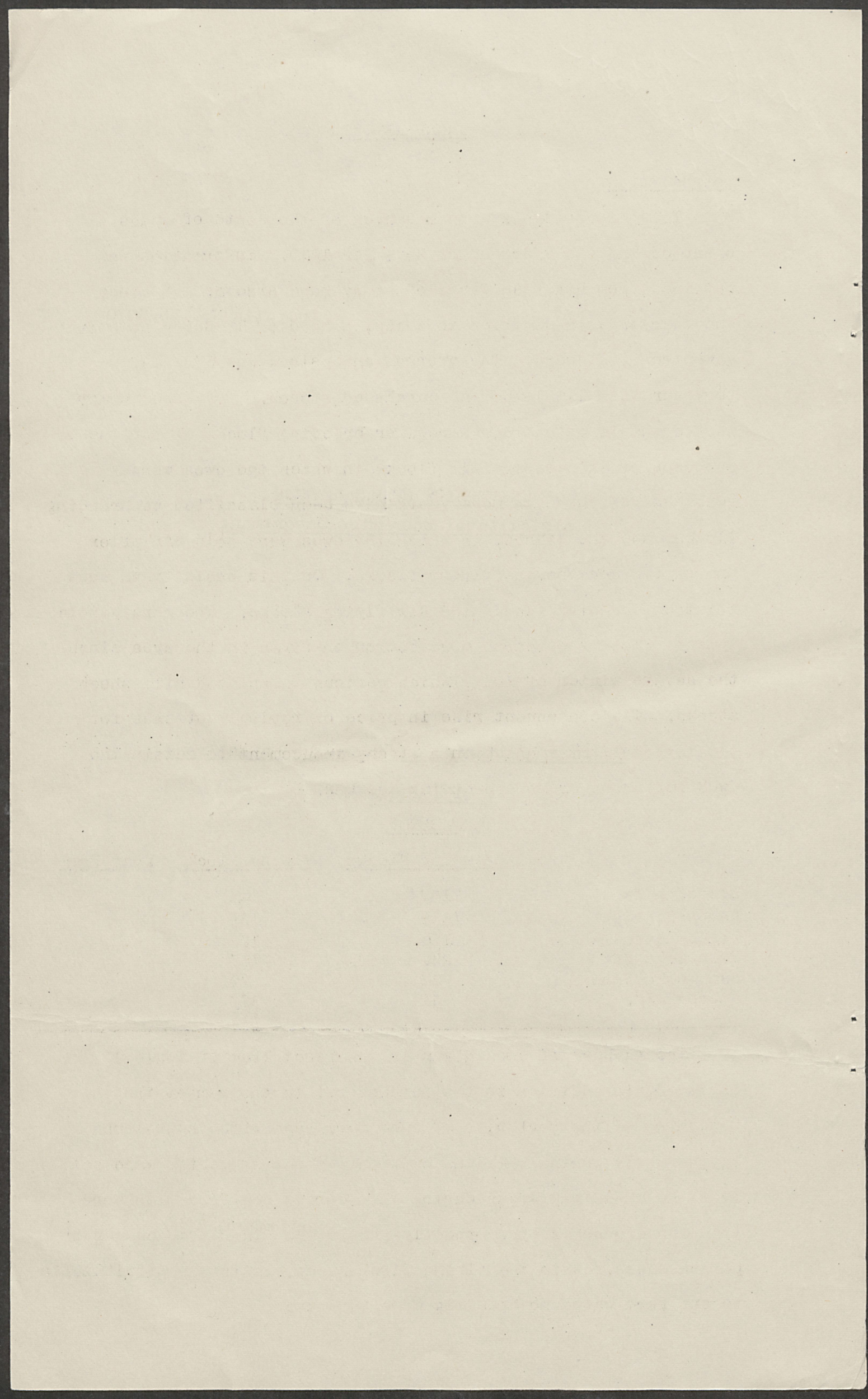
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UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
Agricultural Economics Department

Costs of Fattening Sheep and Lambs on Grass

1948/49

September, 1950



SHEEP REPORT

Introduction

This report deals with a survey of the costs of grass sheep during the year ending November 1949. Information was obtained from nineteen farms of an average size of 165 acres and carrying, in addition to sheep, a herd of 47 dairy cows and seventeen followers. The average sheepstock was 67 ewes, together with 116 lambs and purchased stores. Only one farmer in the sample maintained a regular breeding flock but for the purposes of this report all flocks in which the ewes were retained for three or more years have been classified as breeding flocks, and the others, in which the ewes were sold off after one or two seasons, as flying flocks. On this basis there were thirteen breeding flocks and six flying flocks. The more stable type of flock has become more common on farms in the area since the severe winter of 1947, which seriously depleted hill sheep stocks. The consequent rise in price of replacement ewes for the lowland farmer has been a strong inducement to retain the ewes for three or more breeding seasons.

TABLE 1

	<u>Breeding Flocks</u>	<u>Flying Flocks</u>	<u>Your Farm</u>
Breeding Ewes	1137	147	
Lambs Reared	1516	185	
Lambs Reared %	134	126	
Ewes sold fat	280	117	
Ewes sold fat%	24	79	
Stores P/d.	31	323	

The numbers of ewes given in the first line of Table 1 includes, in addition to the numbers put to the ram at the beginning of the period, some ewes purchased with their lambs in the early spring. Of the ewes only about a quarter were sold from the breeding flocks during the year as compared with more than three quarters from the flying flocks. The large number of purchased stores in the flying flock group, is mainly attributable to one farm where no breeding ewes were kept.

COSTS AND RETURNS 13 BREEDING FLOCKS

TABLE 11

Your Farm

Number of Ewes 1137
 Number of lambs reared 1516

<u>Average Cost per Ewe</u>	£	s	d	£	s	d
<u>Foods</u> Concentrates		2	11			
Hay & Roots		12	0			
Grazing	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>			
TOTAL FOODS	2	4	11			
Labour		7	4			
Flock depreciation.	1	3	7			
Sundries			8			
	<u>3</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>			
Less Wool:		11	3			
Net Cost per Ewe	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>			

RETURNS

Lambs sold & valued out per Ewe	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>			
Profit per Ewe	4	2	3			
Average Cost per Lamb reared	2	8	11			
Average price per lamb reared	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>			
Profit per lamb reared	3	1	8			

Cost of keep per sheep week	11.62d
Cost of grazing per sheep week	6.28d

As in the previous year, the costs of the breeding ewes and their lambs have been taken together, costs and returns being shown per ewe put to the ram.

The average profit per lamb reared is 3/- greater than in the previous year. The cost has increased by just over 3/- per head but the average price received is greater by 6/3d per head. The average time taken to fatten a lamb was fourteen weeks.

" y "

TABLE 111

COSTS AND RETURNS. FLYING FLOCKS

		No.	£	s	d	No.	£	s	d
Opening Valuation.	Ewes & Rams	95	492	18	10				
	Lambs	54	286	12	0				
Purchased	Ewes & Rams	52	301	8	0				
	Other Sheep	323	1316	13	0				
Lambs reared		185	-	-	-				
TOTAL A.		709	2397	11	10				
Sales:	Ewes	117	634	16	8				
	Lambs	497	2616	1	5				
	Wool		88	1	9				
Closing Valuation:	Ewes & Rams	24	132	15	0				
	Lambs	61	256	0	0				
	Deaths	10	-	-	-				
TOTAL B.		709	3727	14	10				
PRODUCTION (B-A)		1330	3	0					
Costs: Keep		458	0	1					
Carriage		47	17	0					
TOTAL COST		505	17	1					
PROFIT (Production-Costs)		824	5	11					
Profit per Sheep sold or valued out.		1	3	7					
Number of Sheep weeks					11,998				
Cost of keep per Sheep week					10.0d				
Cost of grazing per sheep week					4.5d				

On one farm in the group all the sheep were purchased as stores and were sold off fat after an average feeding period of 8 weeks. The profit per head, 7/8d, was low compared with the group average of £1.3.7d. but with a turnover of sheep nearly three times as great as the average farm in the group the profit from the sheep enterprise as a whole was on a comparable level.

NOTES ON COSTS

The cost of grazing was obtained by apportioning between sheep and other stock, the actual farm costs of all grazing to which the sheep had access, on the basis of seven ewes to one cow. A proportion of the total cost was taken where a field was grazed after a hay or silage crop had been taken. No allowance was made for any improvement in fertility due to the sheep.

Hay roots and hand grown concentrates fed to the sheep were charged at average costs of production. Labour was charged at a uniform rate of $2/3\frac{1}{2}$ per hour.

The number of sheep weeks was calculated by using the following equivalents.

1 ewe or 1 lamb over 6 month old for 1 week	=	1	sheep week
2 lambs 3-6 months old for 1 week	=	1	" "
3 lambs less than 3 months old for 1 week.	=	1	" "

APPENDIX

VARIATIONS IN COSTS AND RETURNS

BREEDING FLOCKS

Farm No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Acres Crops & Grass	100	200	204	205	168	200	625	126 $\frac{1}{4}$	154	107 $\frac{1}{2}$	308	157	146
Breeding Ewes No.	28	240	42	38	40	59	298	27	52	37	110	93	31
Sheep Weeks No.	1537	14,924	2886	2773	2785	3354	20331	2432	3860	2433	9379	7299	2008
Cost of keep per sheep week.	8d	8d	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	17d	9d	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	23 $\frac{1}{2}$ d	9d	15d	12d
Cost per lamb reared	66/11	53/-	60/-	72/10	35/1	25/8	74/6	45/8	28/11	84/11	49/10	65/1	88/2
Margin per lamb reared	39/9	53/8	40/7	43/11	80/6	93/8	39/5	68/10	76/-	39/1	52/5	56/11	31/-
Number of lambs	22	395	65	55	65	81	415	38	75	53	146	154	65
Price of outgoing lambs	106/8	106/8	100/7	116/9	115/7	119/4	113/11	114/6	104/11	124/-	102/3	122/-	119/2

APPENDIX
VARIATIONS IN COSTS AND RETURNS
FLYING FLOCKS

Farm No.	14	15	16	17	18	19
Acres Crops & Grass	13	100	166	116	153½	87½
Sheep Weeks No.	739	1820	2395	1804	2875	2365
Cost of keep per sheep week	2½	10½	6½	11d	13d	10d
Cost of grazing per sheep week	-	2½	5	7	1½	6
Cost per sheep, sold or valued out	78/1	59/8	58/10	73/9	96/5	63/4
Margin per Head	21/11	63/7	56/7	7/4	7/8	32/6
No. of sheep	46	59	98	54	346	96
Price of outgoing Sheep	£5 0 0	£6 3 3	£5 15 5	£4 1 1	£5 4 1	£4 15 10

