

The Monthly Feedstuff - Lambing and kidding season is here

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

February 2024



Just kidding...and also lambing!

Describing the endless cold and gray of mid-winter, the poet **Kaveh Akbar** said, "It's been January for months in both directions."

Today, with the unseasonable warmth and bare ground, it feels like it's been early April for months in both directions. But, despite evidence to the contrary, it remains mid-February, which means that lambing and kidding season is approaching quickly.

Whether you're new to sheep and goats, or you've been to this small ruminant rodeo before, it's worth brushing up on what to expect and how to adapt when things go sideways. **Margaret Chamas**, PFI's livestock viability manager, raises small ruminants herself and recommends the following resources:

- [These guides to lambing and kidding and late gestation animal management](#)
- [This illustrated guide to helping with lambing difficulties](#)

After that, check out the [University of Minnesota Extension's checklist](#) for putting together a lambing and kidding kit and the [University of Wisconsin Extension's webinar](#) on basic lambing and kidding skills.

PROGRAM UPDATES

New grant opportunities for infrastructure and equipment



Food and farm businesses taking part in regional food distribution and wholesale markets are encouraged to apply for the new Iowa Resilient Food System Infrastructure program grants:

- **Infrastructure grants:** \$100,000 to \$1 million (pre-proposal and consultation call **due by Feb. 23**)
- **Equipment-only grants:** \$10,000 to \$100,000 for new, used or refurbished equipment (pre-proposals **due March 8**)

Iowa RFSI is part of the USDA's American Rescue Plan, receiving over \$5 million to support infrastructure for the middle of the food supply chain.

[View application details.](#)

Winter 2023 magazine: "Pig Portraits"



Does pig breed really matter? Some farmers discount breed altogether, arguing that pig performance depends on whether individual animals can thrive in a given system. Is there an answer?

In true PFI style, the farmers featured [in this magazine article](#) don't claim to know what's right. Rather, they share their experiences and what's worked for them. Their approaches are diverse. But they have one thing in common: They're all on team pig.

BEYOND THE GATE

Video: "Making a Grazing Plan and Mobile Technology for Business Management"



[In this video from the National Center for Appropriate Technology](#), Grazing Specialist **Lee Rinehart** talks about the importance of writing and following a grazing plan. He shares the process of creating a grazing plan and discusses the ways that having a grazing plan can benefit the land and benefit farmers financially.

Also, **Cynthia McCalister** of Quality SAP shares resources that shed light on how farmers can use technology to improve their business and marketing.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar: "Developing a Meat CSA"



Tuesday, March 5 | Noon-1 p.m.

At Mastodon Valley Farm, **Peter Allen** has developed a unique meat CSA subscription model, which he's been using for the last 10 years to successfully direct-market his farm's regenerative meats.

In this webinar, Peter will share his systems, tips and techniques for connecting with customers, including an e-commerce website.

Webinar: "Building a Farm for Shepherding"



Tuesday, March 12 | Noon-1 p.m.

Wendy Johnson has designed her farm for rotationally grazing her Isle-de-France sheep.

From grazing covers to planting silvopasture, **in this webinar** Wendy will explain why she loves the adaptability and resiliency of her wool sheep. She'll also share how she's used third-party certifications to build a market for her meat and wool.

View all our winter webinars and RSVP

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

March 4: Conference – Midwest Covers and Grains Conference

8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Mankato, MN

April 2: Webinar – Establishing and Grazing Native Perennials

Hosted by: Kevin Fulton

Noon-1 p.m. | **Online**

Friends of PFI events

Feb. 24-25: Workshop – Hands on Kidding Class

Hosted by: Stormdancer Farm
10 a.m.-5 p.m. | Smithville, MO

Feb. 29: Webinar – Getting Started with Turkeys

Hosted by: Food Animal Concerns Trust
Noon | [Online](#)

March. 4: Webinar – How Soil Health and Plant Diversity Influences Animal and Human Health

Hosted by: Food Animal Concerns Trust
Noon | [Online](#)

March 5: Webinar – Planning Pasture Species Selection for Sheep and Goats

Hosted by: Penn State Extension
6-7 p.m. | [Online](#)

March 11: Webinar – The use of IPM in beekeeping to control parasitic varroa mites

Hosted by: Northeastern IPM Center
10 a.m. | [Online](#)

March 13-14: Conference – The 11th Annual Midwest Soil Health Summit

Hosted by: Sustainable Farming Association
Mankato, MN
Say hi at the PFI booth!

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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