

# American Lamb Meat: Consumer & Producer Perception

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## Introduction

According to a recent survey, only half of the U.S. population has tried eating lamb (Kehoe et al. 2023). Lamb consumption has declined significantly to less than 1% of total red meat consumption. Ironically, many sheep producers have never tried the mouthwatering lamb they raise. Two major reasons for the decline of sheep production in the US are the decline for demand of wool and lamb meat. Majority of people who eat lamb and mutton in the U.S. are immigrants from countries where lamb is commonly consumed. Thus, the U.S. imports most of its lamb to meet the current demand. There is need to bridge the gap through extension teaching between producers that are looking for ways to boost their sheep production and adventurous local consumers.

## Objectives

- 1) Provide best management practices to producers and lamb meat nutritional education to consumers.
- 2) Provide lamb cooking recipes to local consumers available through American Lamb Board.



Figure 1. Forty-three participants learned through presentations that stimulated numerous questions and group discussions.

## Methods

MU Extension Livestock specialists, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) Livestock specialist and Chef Lou Rice developed an evening workshop that incorporated presentations and hands-on learning. This workshop included presentations discussing the following topics:

- Sheep Farming Profitability
- Sheep Market Outlook
- Why You Should Eat Lamb
- Cook Lamb Like A Chef

MU Extension Value-Added Meat team provided hands-on experiential learning on American Lamb meat cut demo. Participants participated in the meat cut demo and ground the lamb meat used for the dinner (lamb meat cooking demonstration). At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were surveyed to assess impact.



Figure 2. American lamb meat cut demonstration. Participants had hands-on educational experience taught by MU Meat Value Team

## Impact

- 43 participants attended the workshop.
- 100% of respondents said the workshop met or exceeded their expectations.
- 86% of respondents planned to make changes to their sheep operation after the workshop. Some of the changes included:
  - Strategy for live animal commercialization
  - Winter pasture management of sheep
  - Add sheep production to livestock
- 90% of survey respondents planned to add American lamb to their dinner table. Some of the comments are:
  - I came for lamb meat cooking & nutritional information. I found what I was looking for.
  - I liked the lamb dinner – very hands-on.
  - I made new contacts and new lamb recipes.
  - As a consumer, I will look at buying and cooking American lamb meat.
  - Very approachable instructors.



Figure 3. Participants tasted the American lamb meat that was prepared by Chef Lou Rice, Division Executive Chef at Performance Foodservice.