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5-1-2023

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Recommended Citation

Salinas, Homero; Grosse, Eric; Wieberg, Troy; Maldonado-Jaquez, Jorge; and Torres, Glaforo, "Preweaning Performance in F1 Katahdin x East Friesian Crossbred Lambs" (2023). *Title III Professional Development Reports*. 62.

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Prewaning Performance in F1 Katahdin x East Friesian Crossbred Lambs

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Previous studies at Lincoln University indicated that the Katahdin sheep could perform well on pasture in a warm and humid climate and tolerate GIP. However, the preweaning performance of the crossbreed of Katahdin (Kt) and East Friesian (EF) in Missouri still needs to be characterized. So, this preliminary study aimed to evaluate the preweaning performance of lambs (1/2EF x 1/2Kt) from Katahdin ewes crossbred with East Friesian Ram. Forty-three lambs born in Spring 2022 from 27 of second lambing Katahdin ewes and one-year East Friesian ram were weighted and tagged at birth, after five days of colostrum, were weighed every two weeks until ten days before weaning at 90 days. Female lambs (24) and male lambs (19) were milked with their mothers and grazed in a pasture with cool-season grasses and legumes (62% Fescue, 25% Orchard, and 8% Ladino Clover, 5% Red Clover). There was no difference ($p>0.05$) in the birth weight of lambs (8.6 lb in males and 7.94 in females). The daily weight gain was different ($p<0.05$) between females and males, 0.337 vs. 0.280 lb/day, respectively. In addition, the final weight of male lambs was higher than that of females (41.96 vs. 34.69 lb/head). The crossing of Kt females with EF males showed promising results, so it is suggested to continue characterizing the crossing of these breeds.

Key words: Sheep Crossbreeds, Missouri, Prewaning.