

Sheep and Goats



USDA
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Total Sheep and Lamb Inventory Down 8 Percent

All sheep and lamb inventory in the United States on January 1, 1999, totaled 7.24 million head, down 8 percent from 1998 and 10 percent below two years ago. Inventory has declined since 1942 when it reached a peak of 56.2 million head.

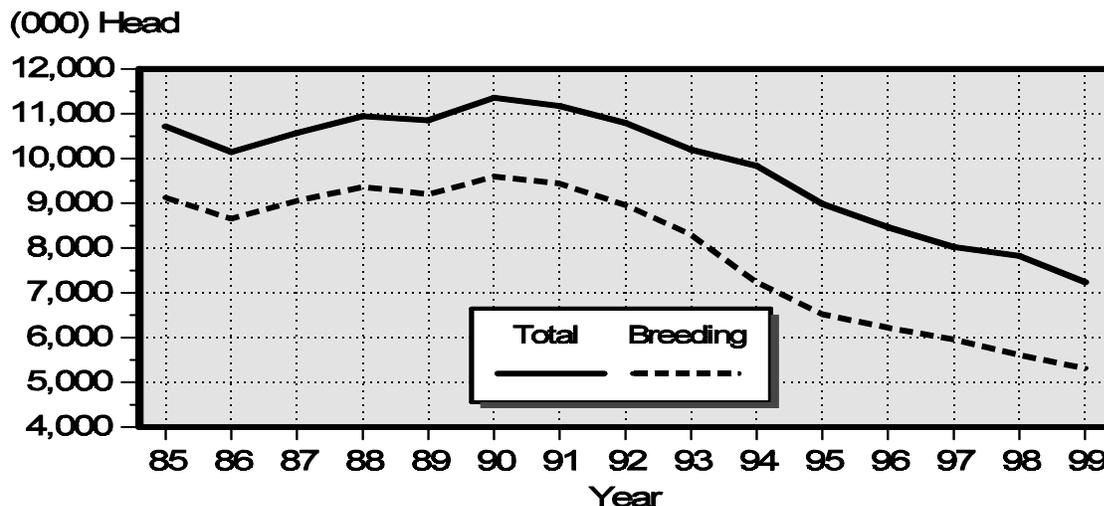
Breeding sheep inventory declined to 5.31 million head on January 1, 1999, down 5 percent from January 1, 1998's 5.61 million head. Ewes one year old and older, at 4.34 million head, were 5 percent below last year.

Market sheep and lambs on January 1, 1999, totaled 1.92 million head, down 13 percent from January 1, 1998. Market lambs comprised 96 percent of the total. Twenty-six percent were lambs under 65 pounds, 17 percent were 65 - 84 pounds, 27 percent 85 - 105 pounds, 26 percent were over 105 pounds, and 4 percent were market sheep.

The 1998 lamb crop of 5.01 million head was down 6 percent from 1997. This compares with the previous record low of 5.36 million head set a year ago. The 1998 lambing rate was 110 per 100 ewes one year old and older on January 1, 1998, compared with 109 in 1997.

The number of operations with sheep during 1998 totaled 68,810, down 5 percent from 1997 and 10 percent from 1996.

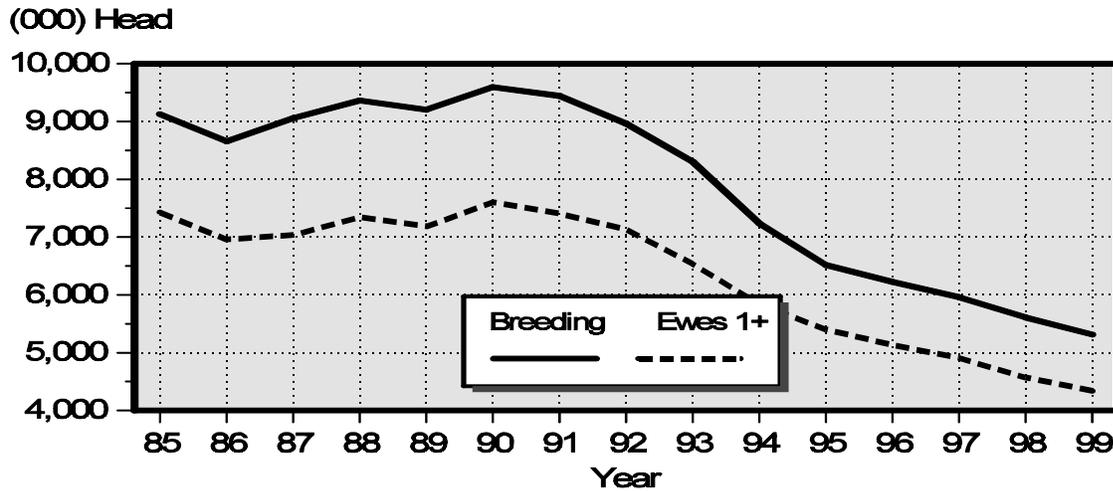
Sheep and Lambs, 1985-1999 United States



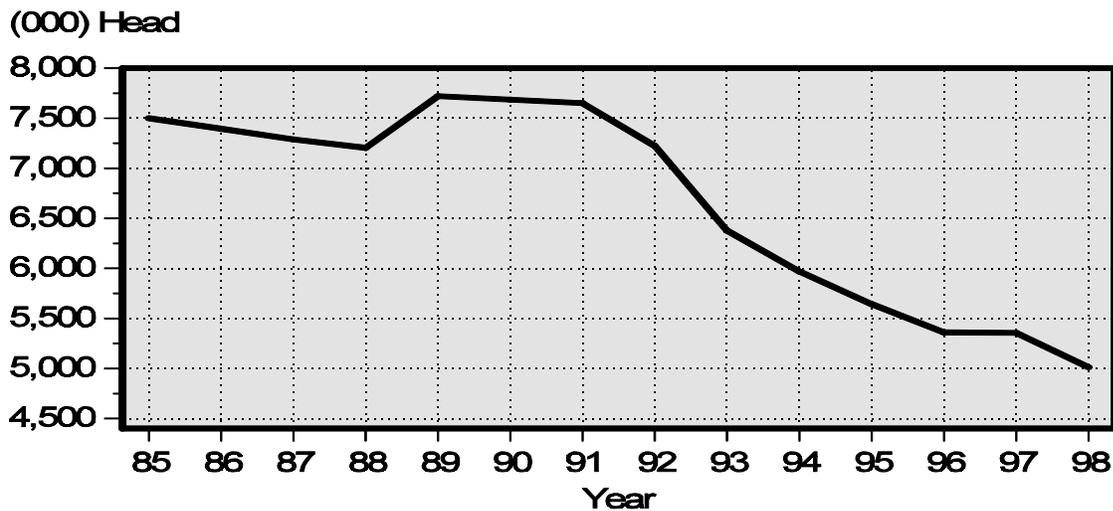
**Sheep and Lambs: Number, by Class, United States
January 1, 1997-99**

Class	1997	1998	1999	99 as % of 98
	<i>1,000 head</i>	<i>1,000 head</i>	<i>1,000 head</i>	<i>Percent</i>
All Sheep and Lambs	8,024	7,825	7,238	92
Market	2,105	2,214	1,923	87
Breeding Sheep and Lambs	5,919	5,611	5,314	95
Replacement Lambs -				
Under One Year Old	787	839	774	92
Ewes - One Year Old and Older	4,912	4,570	4,338	95
Rams - One Year Old and Older	220	203	202	99

**Total Breeding and Ewes 1+, 1985 -1999
United States**



**Lamb Crop, 1985-98
United States**



Lamb Crop: Per 100 Ewes 1+, Number and Percent of Previous Year, by State and United States, 1997-98

State	Breeding Ewes 1 Year & Older Jan 1		Lambs per 100 Ewes 1+ Jan 1		Lamb Crop ¹		
	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	98 as % of 97
	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>Percent</i>
AL	4.9	5.1	88	76	4.3	3.9	91
AK	0.8	0.8	88	88	0.7	0.7	100
AZ	65.0	63.0	74	75	48.0	47.0	98
CA	360.0	345.0	89	90	320.0	310.0	97
CO	210.0	200.0	107	110	225.0	220.0	98
CT	3.5	3.4	129	118	4.5	4.0	89
ID	204.0	194.0	120	124	245.0	240.0	98
IL	57.0	56.0	142	130	81.0	73.0	90
IN	37.0	32.0	149	156	55.0	50.0	91
IA	153.0	138.0	150	152	230.0	210.0	91
KS	84.0	66.0	101	106	85.0	70.0	82
KY	15.0	13.0	120	123	18.0	16.0	89
LA	6.2	3.8	81	118	5.0	4.5	90
ME	6.7	7.0	127	114	8.5	8.0	94
MD	13.5	12.5	104	128	14.0	16.0	114
MA	6.5	5.7	108	114	7.0	6.5	93
MI	50.0	38.0	124	121	62.0	46.0	74
MN	105.0	85.0	138	182	145.0	155.0	107
MO	50.0	54.0	150	167	75.0	90.0	120
MT	330.0	315.0	115	113	380.0	355.0	93
NE	65.0	71.0	146	135	95.0	96.0	101
NV	58.0	56.0	97	102	56.0	57.0	102
NH	4.0	4.5	125	122	5.0	5.5	110
NJ	8.0	8.5	113	94	9.0	8.0	89
NM	200.0	190.0	85	87	170.0	165.0	97
NY	38.0	38.0	132	124	50.0	47.0	94
NC	11.0	11.0	94	96	10.3	10.6	103
ND	91.0	78.0	121	135	110.0	105.0	95
OH	88.0	85.0	149	145	131.0	123.0	94
OK	47.0	44.0	106	91	50.0	40.0	80
OR	180.0	150.0	108	109	195.0	163.0	84
PA	64.0	57.0	116	126	74.0	72.0	97
SD	315.0	300.0	119	115	375.0	345.0	92
TN	8.0	8.5	106	118	8.5	10.0	118
TX	980.0	880.0	93	91	910.0	800.0	88
UT	335.0	320.0	110	109	370.0	350.0	95
VT	11.0	9.5	105	147	11.5	14.0	122
VA	48.0	46.0	125	113	60.0	52.0	87
WA	37.0	35.0	154	160	57.0	56.0	98
WV	36.0	30.0	103	127	37.0	38.0	103
WI	49.0	51.0	151	137	74.0	70.0	95
WY	450.0	430.0	102	102	460.0	440.0	96
Oth Sts ²	26.5	29.2	94	71	25.0	20.6	82
US	4,911.6	4,569.5	109	110	5,356.3	5,013.3	94

¹ Lamb crop is defined as lambs born in the Native States and lambs docked or branded in the Western States.

² Other States include AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

**All Sheep and Lambs: Number, by Class,
State, and United States, January 1, 1998-99**

State	All Sheep and Lambs			Total Breeding		Total Market	
	1998	1999	99 as % of 98	1998	1999	1998	1999
	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>
AL ¹	8.5	6.5	76	7.0	5.5		1.0
AK	1.6	1.6	100	1.5	1.5	0.1	0.1
AZ	140.0	140.0	100	73.0	68.0	67.0	72.0
CA	800.0	810.0	101	390.0	390.0	410.0	420.0
CO	575.0	440.0	77	240.0	220.0	335.0	220.0
CT	5.0	4.5	90	4.3	3.8	0.7	0.7
ID	285.0	265.0	93	234.0	231.0	51.0	34.0
IL	79.0	74.0	94	68.0	64.0	11.0	10.0
IN	55.0	57.0	104	44.0	47.0	11.0	10.0
IA	265.0	260.0	98	172.0	170.0	93.0	90.0
KS	120.0	100.0	83	80.0	70.0	40.0	30.0
KY	22.0	21.0	95	17.0	16.5	5.0	4.5
LA	6.0	6.5	108	5.0	5.5	1.0	1.0
ME	11.0	11.0	100	9.5	9.6	1.5	1.4
MD	22.0	23.0	105	18.5	17.0	3.5	6.0
MA	8.5	8.5	100	7.5	7.5	1.0	1.0
MI	72.0	62.0	86	48.0	44.0	24.0	18.0
MN	165.0	175.0	106	105.0	110.0	60.0	65.0
MO	80.0	85.0	106	66.0	71.0	14.0	14.0
MT	415.0	380.0	92	385.0	345.0	30.0	35.0
NE	100.0	105.0	105	84.0	88.0	16.0	17.0
NV	88.0	85.0	97	77.0	75.0	11.0	10.0
NH	7.0	7.0	100	6.0	6.0	1.0	1.0
NJ	13.0	12.0	92	10.5	11.0	2.5	1.0
NM	290.0	275.0	95	235.0	225.0	55.0	50.0
NY	61.0	55.0	90	49.0	46.0	12.0	9.0
NC	14.0	14.5	104	13.0	13.0	1.0	1.5
ND	131.0	134.0	102	96.0	98.0	35.0	36.0
OH	135.0	125.0	93	104.0	103.0	31.0	22.0
OK	70.0	55.0	79	52.0	41.0	18.0	14.0
OR	285.0	215.0	75	185.0	150.0	100.0	65.0
PA	86.0	83.0	97	73.0	71.0	13.0	12.0
SD	420.0	420.0	100	350.0	325.0	70.0	95.0
TN	14.0	13.0	93	12.0	12.0	2.0	1.0
TX	1,530.0	1,350.0	88	1,120.0	1,050.0	410.0	300.0
UT	420.0	400.0	95	380.0	360.0	40.0	40.0
VT	14.5	18.0	124	12.0	15.7	2.5	2.3
VA	74.0	57.0	77	58.0	46.0	16.0	11.0
WA	53.0	50.0	94	45.0	44.0	8.0	6.0
WV	40.0	40.0	100	35.0	35.0	5.0	5.0
WI	79.0	83.0	105	69.0	66.0	10.0	17.0
WY	710.0	660.0	93	530.0	500.0	180.0	160.0
Oth Sts ²	55.0	50.4	92	40.4	36.5	16.1	13.9
US	7,825.1	7,237.5	92	5,611.2	5,314.1	2,213.9	1,923.4

¹ Total market sheep and lambs for 1998 combined with "other states" to avoid disclosing individual operations.

² Other States include AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

**Breeding Sheep and Lambs: Number, by Class, State,
and United States, January 1, 1998-99**

State	Breeding Sheep-One Year Old & Older				Replacement Lambs		Total Breeding Sheep and Lambs	
	Ewes		Rams		1998	1999	1998	1999
	1998	1999	1998	1999				
	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>
AL	5.1	4.1	0.4	0.3	1.5	1.1	7.0	5.5
AK	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.5	1.5
AZ	63.0	58.0	2.0	3.0	8.0	7.0	73.0	68.0
CA	345.0	330.0	10.0	15.0	35.0	45.0	390.0	390.0
CO	200.0	185.0	7.0	6.0	33.0	29.0	240.0	220.0
CT	3.4	2.7	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.8	4.3	3.8
ID	194.0	185.0	5.0	5.0	35.0	41.0	234.0	231.0
IL	56.0	52.0	4.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	68.0	64.0
IN	32.0	35.0	3.0	3.0	9.0	9.0	44.0	47.0
IA	138.0	133.0	7.0	7.0	27.0	30.0	172.0	170.0
KS	66.0	57.0	5.0	4.0	9.0	9.0	80.0	70.0
KY	13.0	13.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.5	17.0	16.5
LA	3.8	4.1	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	5.0	5.5
ME	7.0	7.5	0.8	0.7	1.7	1.4	9.5	9.6
MD	12.5	12.5	2.5	1.0	3.5	3.5	18.5	17.0
MA	5.7	5.9	0.5	0.5	1.3	1.1	7.5	7.5
MI	38.0	34.0	3.0	3.0	7.0	7.0	48.0	44.0
MN	85.0	90.0	5.0	5.0	15.0	15.0	105.0	110.0
MO	54.0	58.0	4.0	4.0	8.0	9.0	66.0	71.0
MT	315.0	270.0	10.0	9.0	60.0	66.0	385.0	345.0
NE	71.0	73.0	3.0	4.0	10.0	11.0	84.0	88.0
NV	56.0	53.0	2.0	2.0	19.0	20.0	77.0	75.0
NH	4.5	4.5	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	6.0	6.0
NJ	8.5	8.0	0.7	1.0	1.3	2.0	10.5	11.0
NM	190.0	180.0	10.0	10.0	35.0	35.0	235.0	225.0
NY	38.0	36.0	3.0	2.0	8.0	8.0	49.0	46.0
NC	11.0	11.0	0.6	0.6	1.4	1.4	13.0	13.0
ND	78.0	79.0	3.0	3.0	15.0	16.0	96.0	98.0
OH	85.0	85.0	5.0	5.0	14.0	13.0	104.0	103.0
OK	44.0	34.0	3.0	2.0	5.0	5.0	52.0	41.0
OR	150.0	120.0	7.0	6.0	28.0	24.0	185.0	150.0
PA	57.0	55.0	5.0	5.0	11.0	11.0	73.0	71.0
SD	300.0	270.0	8.0	9.0	42.0	46.0	350.0	325.0
TN	8.5	9.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.0	12.0	12.0
TX	880.0	880.0	40.0	40.0	200.0	130.0	1,120.0	1,050.0
UT	320.0	305.0	10.0	10.0	50.0	45.0	380.0	360.0
VT	9.5	12.4	0.5	0.7	2.0	2.6	12.0	15.7
VA	46.0	37.0	3.0	2.0	9.0	7.0	58.0	46.0
WA	35.0	35.0	2.0	2.0	8.0	7.0	45.0	44.0
WV	30.0	30.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	4.0	35.0	35.0
WI	51.0	52.0	3.0	3.0	15.0	11.0	69.0	66.0
WY	430.0	405.0	14.0	13.0	86.0	82.0	530.0	500.0
Oth Sts ¹	29.2	26.7	6.1	6.0	5.1	3.8	40.4	36.5
US	4,569.5	4,338.2	202.8	201.6	838.9	774.3	5,611.2	5,314.1

¹ Other States include AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

**Market Sheep and Lambs: Number, by Weight Group, State,
and United States, January 1, 1998**

State	Market Lambs					Market Sheep	Total Market Sheep and Lambs
	Under 65 Pounds	65 to 84 Lbs.	85 to 105 Lbs.	Over 105 Lbs.	Total		
	<i>1,000 Head</i>						
AL ¹							
AK	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
AZ	16.0	11.0	36.0	3.0	66.0	1.0	67.0
CA	190.0	80.0	70.0	50.0	390.0	20.0	410.0
CO	2.0	2.0	115.0	214.0	333.0	2.0	335.0
CT	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.7
ID	3.0	2.0	13.0	31.0	49.0	2.0	51.0
IL	2.5	1.5	3.0	3.0	10.0	1.0	11.0
IN	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	10.0	1.0	11.0
IA	9.0	12.0	33.0	38.0	92.0	1.0	93.0
KS	17.0	7.0	10.0	3.0	37.0	3.0	40.0
KY	2.2	0.7	0.6	0.5	4.0	1.0	5.0
LA	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0
ME	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.1	0.4	1.5
MD	2.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	3.2	0.3	3.5
MA	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.1	1.0
MI	3.0	5.0	9.5	6.0	23.5	0.5	24.0
MN	15.0	10.0	17.0	17.0	59.0	1.0	60.0
MO	5.0	2.0	3.5	2.0	12.5	1.5	14.0
MT	2.0	5.0	16.0	6.0	29.0	1.0	30.0
NE	3.0	5.0	5.0	2.0	15.0	1.0	16.0
NV	0.0	0.0	5.0	6.0	11.0	0.0	11.0
NH	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.4	1.0
NJ	1.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	2.1	0.4	2.5
NM	12.0	26.0	9.0	3.0	50.0	5.0	55.0
NY	5.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	11.0	1.0	12.0
NC	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0
ND	1.0	14.0	10.0	9.0	34.0	1.0	35.0
OH	10.0	7.0	10.0	2.0	29.0	2.0	31.0
OK	7.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	17.0	1.0	18.0
OR	15.0	13.0	41.0	28.0	97.0	3.0	100.0
PA	5.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	11.0	2.0	13.0
SD	4.0	9.0	25.0	30.0	68.0	2.0	70.0
TN	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.2	1.5	0.5	2.0
TX	170.0	90.0	75.0	55.0	390.0	20.0	410.0
UT	1.0	2.0	14.0	15.0	32.0	8.0	40.0
VT	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.2	2.1	0.4	2.5
VA	5.0	3.0	5.5	2.0	15.5	0.5	16.0
WA	2.0	0.0	4.0	2.0	8.0	0.0	8.0
WV	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
WI	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	9.5	0.5	10.0
WY	2.0	19.0	84.0	73.0	178.0	2.0	180.0
Oth Sts ²	6.9	3.1	2.3	0.8	13.1	3.0	16.1
US	530.7	346.0	635.1	611.3	2,123.1	90.8	2,213.9

¹ Data combined with "other states" to avoid disclosing individual operations.

² Other States include AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

**Market Sheep and Lambs: Number, by Weight Group, State,
and United States, January 1, 1999**

State	Market Lambs					Market Sheep	Total Market Sheep and Lambs
	Under 65 Pounds	65 to 84 Lbs.	85 to 105 Lbs.	Over 105 Lbs.	Total		
	<i>1,000 Head</i>						
AL	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0
AK	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
AZ	14.0	15.0	13.0	29.0	71.0	1.0	72.0
CA	205.0	85.0	75.0	35.0	400.0	20.0	420.0
CO	7.0	5.0	52.0	155.0	219.0	1.0	220.0
CT	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.7
ID	5.0	1.0	8.0	15.0	29.0	5.0	34.0
IL	3.0	1.5	3.0	1.5	9.0	1.0	10.0
IN	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	9.0	1.0	10.0
IA	8.0	13.0	30.0	38.0	89.0	1.0	90.0
KS	15.0	6.0	5.0	1.0	27.0	3.0	30.0
KY	1.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	4.0	0.5	4.5
LA	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0
ME	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	1.0	0.4	1.4
MD	3.0	1.0	0.5	0.0	4.5	1.5	6.0
MA	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.1	1.0
MI	2.5	2.0	5.5	7.5	17.5	0.5	18.0
MN	17.0	13.0	17.0	17.0	64.0	1.0	65.0
MO	2.0	5.0	4.5	2.0	13.5	0.5	14.0
MT	2.0	6.0	20.0	6.0	34.0	1.0	35.0
NE	3.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	16.0	1.0	17.0
NV	0.0	0.0	4.0	5.0	9.0	1.0	10.0
NH	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.4	1.0
NJ	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0
NM	15.0	12.0	9.0	10.0	46.0	4.0	50.0
NY	5.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	8.0	1.0	9.0
NC	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.1	1.3	0.2	1.5
ND	1.5	8.0	19.0	6.5	35.0	1.0	36.0
OH	7.0	7.0	5.0	2.0	21.0	1.0	22.0
OK	5.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	13.0	1.0	14.0
OR	14.0	5.0	37.0	4.0	60.0	5.0	65.0
PA	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	10.0	2.0	12.0
SD	4.0	22.0	27.0	40.0	93.0	2.0	95.0
TN	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.8	0.2	1.0
TX	120.0	70.0	60.0	40.0	290.0	10.0	300.0
UT	1.0	3.0	10.0	19.0	33.0	7.0	40.0
VT	0.8	0.3	0.6	0.3	2.0	0.3	2.3
VA	3.5	3.5	2.0	1.5	10.5	0.5	11.0
WA	1.0	0.0	3.0	2.0	6.0	0.0	6.0
WV	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
WI	3.5	3.5	6.0	3.0	16.0	1.0	17.0
WY	2.0	19.0	84.0	53.0	158.0	2.0	160.0
Oth Sts ¹	5.4	2.9	1.4	0.8	10.5	3.4	13.9
US	490.0	326.5	516.7	507.3	1,840.5	82.9	1,923.4

¹ Other States include AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

Sheep and Lambs: January 1, 1995-98

State	Operations with Sheep			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
AL	310	310	300	300
AK	40	40	40	40
AZ	400	350	350	300
CA	4,400	4,000	3,700	3,300
CO	1,300	1,600	1,600	1,700
CT	250	250	240	270
ID	1,300	1,100	1,100	1,100
IL	3,200	3,000	2,800	2,600
IN	2,700	2,400	2,400	2,200
IA	6,300	5,500	5,300	4,900
KS	1,900	1,900	1,800	1,600
KY	900	850	800	800
LA	1,000	700	500	400
ME	550	500	500	450
MD	800	800	700	700
MA	550	500	500	450
MI	2,000	1,900	1,600	1,600
MN	3,400	3,200	2,900	2,600
MO	2,600	2,300	2,100	2,000
MT	2,200	2,200	2,100	2,000
NE	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,700
NV	350	350	350	300
NH	400	450	400	400
NJ	800	800	750	750
NM	1,000	1,000	900	900
NY	1,700	1,800	1,700	1,600
NC	600	600	600	600
ND	1,200	1,100	1,200	1,150
OH	4,600	4,100	3,700	3,600
OK	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,600
OR	2,600	3,100	3,000	3,100
PA	3,000	2,900	2,800	2,600
SD	3,000	2,700	2,500	2,500
TN	800	800	800	800
TX	7,300	7,300	7,100	7,000
UT	2,000	1,900	1,700	1,500
VT	750	600	600	500
VA	1,900	1,900	1,800	1,700
WA	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,200
WV	1,600	1,400	1,300	1,100
WI	2,400	2,600	2,400	2,100
WY	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Oth Sts ¹	1,800	1,800	1,750	1,700
US	79,900	76,600	72,680	68,810

¹ Other States include AR, DE, FL, GA, HI, MS, RI, and SC.

Breeding Sheep: Survey Percent by Size Group, United States, 1998-99 ¹

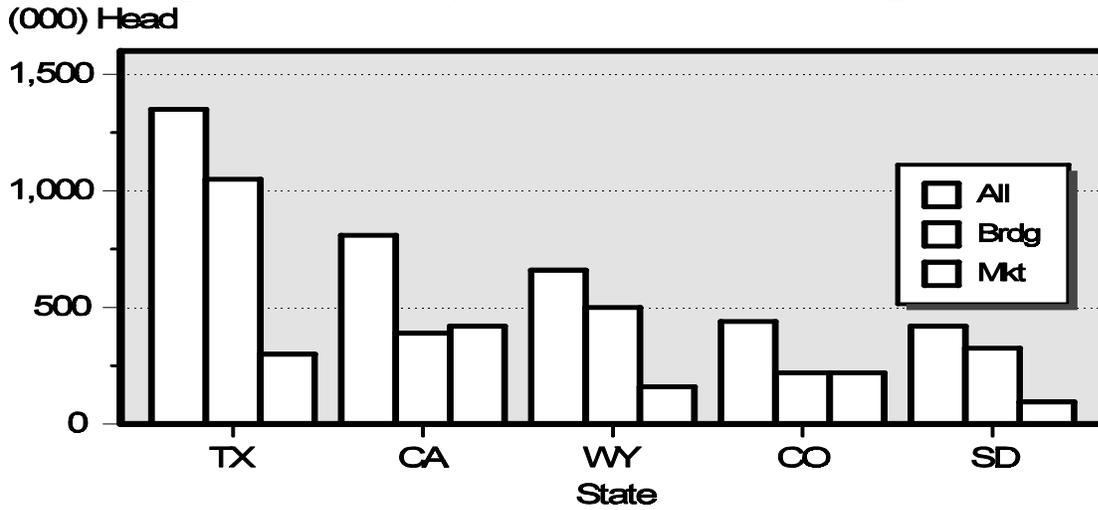
Item	1-99 Head		100-499 Head		500-4999 Head		5000+ Head	
	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
	<i>Percent</i>							
Operations	90.8	90.6	6.8	7.3	2.3	2.0	0.1	0.1
Inventory	25.5	25.9	19.2	20.4	42.6	39.0	12.7	14.7

¹ Percents reflect distributions of end of year survey.

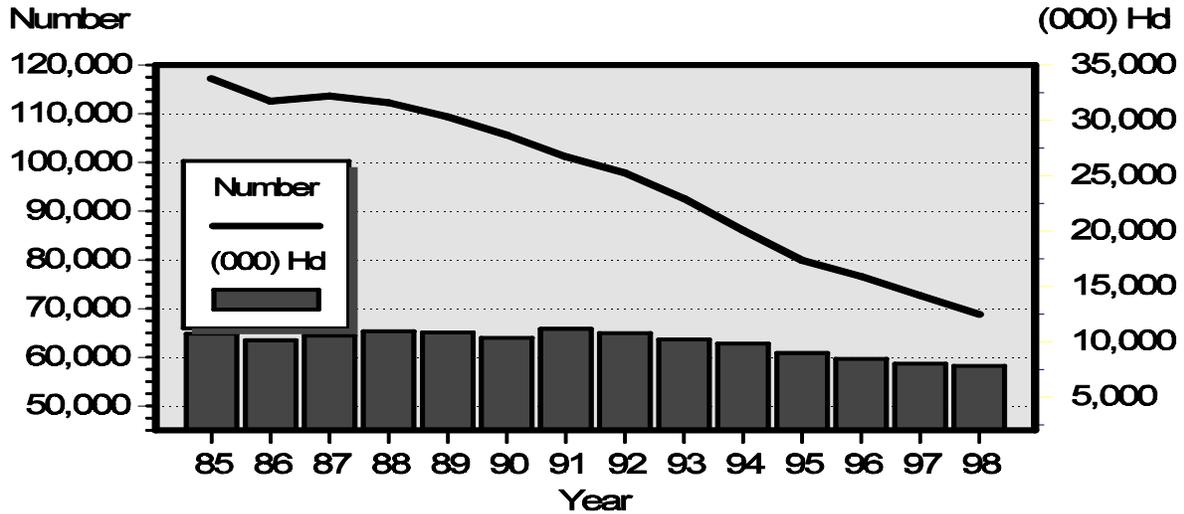
Goats: Inventory, Selected States, and Total, January 1, 1998-99

State	Angora		All Goats	
	1998	1999	1998	1999
	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>
AZ	40	38	NA	NA
NM	45	38	NA	NA
OK	5	5	NA	NA
TX	750	550	1,400	1,350
Total	840	631	1,400	1,350

Total Inventory, January 1, 1999 Top Five Sheep & Lamb Producing States



Number of Operations & Total Inventory, 1985-98 United States



Reliability of January 1 Sheep and Goat Estimates

Survey Procedures: A random sample of U.S. producers was surveyed to provide data for these estimates. Survey procedures ensured that all sheep producers, regardless of size, had a chance to be included in the survey. Large producers were sampled more heavily than small operations. About 14,500 operators were contacted during the first half of January by mail, telephone and face-to-face personal interview. Regardless of when operators responded, they were asked to report inventories as of January 1.

Estimation Procedures: These sheep estimates were prepared by the Agricultural Statistics Board. National and State survey data were reviewed for reasonableness and with estimates from past years. A projected balance sheet for calendar year 1998 was also used. The balance sheet begins with the previous inventory estimate, adds estimates of births and imports, and subtracts estimates of slaughter, exports and deaths. This indicated ending inventory level is compared with the Agricultural Statistics Board estimate for reasonableness.

Revision Policy: Revisions to previous estimates are made to improve the current estimate. Previous year estimates are subject to revision when current estimates are made. Estimates will also be reviewed after data from the Department of Agriculture's five-year census of Agriculture are available. No revisions will be made after that date.

Reliability: Since all operations raising sheep and goats are not included in the sample, survey estimates are subject to sampling variability. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling errors, such as omissions, duplications, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing the data. The effects of these errors cannot be measured directly. They are minimized through rigid quality controls in the data collection process and through a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

To assist users in evaluating reliability of the estimates in this report, the "**Root Mean Square Error**" is shown for selected sheep items in the table below. The "Root Mean Square Error" is a statistical measure based on past performance and is computed using the differences between the first and latest estimates. The "Root Mean Square Error" for sheep and lamb inventory estimates over the past 10 years is 1.1 percent. This means that chances are 2 out of 3 that the final estimate will not be above or below the current estimate of 7.2 million head by more than 1.1 percent, or about 80,000 head. Chances are 9 out of 10 that the difference will not exceed 2.0 percent, or about 145,000 head (the 90 percent confidence level).

Also shown in the table is a 10-year record showing the range between the first inventory estimate and the latest estimate. Using estimates for All Sheep and Lambs as an example, changes between the first inventory estimate and the latest estimate during the past 10 years have averaged 73,000 head, ranging from 100 to 209,000 head. The initial inventory estimate of All Sheep and Lambs has been below the latest estimate 7 times and above the latest estimate 3 times in the last 10 years.

Reliability of U.S. January 1 Sheep and Lamb Estimates ¹

Item	Root Mean Square Error	90% Confidence Level		Difference Between First and Final Estimates ¹			Number of Quarters	
		Percent	(000) Head	Average	Smallest	Largest	First Above Final	First Below Final
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>1,000 Head</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
All Sheep & Lambs	1.1	2.0	144.8	73.0	8.0	209.0	3	7
Breeding Sheep	0.8	1.4	74.4	41.0	2.0	78.0	4	6
Lamb Crop	1.1	1.9	95.3	33.0	-18.0	112.0	4	6

¹ Based on data for the past 10 years.

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The next "Sheep and Goats" report will be released at 3 p.m. ET on January 28, 2000.

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