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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/30/13

SPONSOR Fajardo LAST UPDATED _____ HB 236

SHORT TITLE NM Dahl Hair Breed Sheep as Heritage Breed SB _____

ANALYST Weber

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY13	FY14	FY15	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 236 offers a new section of Chapter 77, Article 8 NMSA 1978 is to read: NEW MEXICO DAHL HAIR SHEEP--STATE HERITAGE BREED.--The New Mexico Dahl Hair breed of sheep shall be an official state heritage breed of livestock."

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal implications are identified.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The following information is from the web site "sheep101.info". The purpose of Sheep 101 is to teach 4-H and FFA members, students, teachers, beginning shepherds, and the general public about sheep, their products, how they are raised, and their contributions to society. The author of Sheep 101 is Susan Schoenian, Sheep & Goat Specialist at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research & Education Center.

New Mexico Dahl Sheep are an almost extinct Spanish Colonial heritage hair sheep breed under development at Terra Patre Wildlife Preserve & Teaching Farm in Colorado and New Mexico. The goal in developing these unique sheep is to produce a truly multi-marketable, low-maintenance product. These hardy, no-shear sheep are beautiful and majestic with the rams supporting magnificent horns. They are also very excellent sources of lean, less muttony tasting meat.

The NM Dahl is taking this one step further and wanting to increase the meat marketability along with increasing the growth of the horns not only on rams but also on the ewes for even better future horn genetics. With this in mind, New Mexico Dahl Sheep are hybrids of the best horned and meat hair sheep.

Beginning with the descendents of hair sheep brought to the USA in 1598 by the Onate Spanish Colonists, and not being limited to breeding within the Corsican Sheep family (Texas Dall, Black Hawaiian, and Painted Desert Mouflon crosses), breeding is based solely on a focus of easy care, big horns and heavy meat carcasses, as well as maintaining the shedding ability in these wonderful hybrids.

[Text provided by Terra Patre Wildlife Preserve and Rescue]

Breed categories: hair, exotic, heritage New Mexico is also home to the historic Navajo-Churro sheep. The Navajo-Churro Sheep Association states that the Navajo-Churro are descended from the Churra, an ancient Iberian breed. Although secondary to the Merino, the Churra (later corrupted to "Churro" by American frontiersmen) was prized by the Spanish for its remarkable hardiness, adaptability and fecundity. The Churra was the very first breed of domesticated sheep in the New World. Its importation to New Spain by the Spanish dates back to the 16th century where it was used to feed and clothe the armies of the conquistadors and Spanish settlers.

The Association adds that the Dine' were initially responsible for saving the "old type" sheep from extinction. Navajos successfully maintained original flocks in isolated areas where no other sheep breeds were introduced. Sheep meat, milk for yogurt and wool for textiles sustained the Dine' for centuries. Even today, "Sheep is life," is a strong belief in traditional Navajos.

In the 1970's several individuals began acquiring Churro phenotypes with the purpose of preserving the breed and revitalizing Navajo and Hispanic flocks. Criteria for the breed had been established from data collected for three decades by the Southwestern Range and Sheep Breeding Laboratory at Fort Wingate, New Mexico. Several flocks have developed, and the Navajo Sheep Project has introduced cooperative breeding programs in some Navajo and Hispanic flocks.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Should the Navajo-Churro receive consideration as a heritage breed also?

MW/bm