Poster Presentation
What is the Effect of Ration Composition on Pre-weaning Lamb Performance?
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Modern sheep breeders face a daunting challenge— to offer for sale 60-90 day old lambs with optimum growth, and eye appeal. Outside of selection, nutritional management can play a significant role in meeting this production objective. Ration composition and its effect on pre-weaning lamb weight per day of age, muscle tone and subcutaneous fat thickness was studied. Methods: birth weights were measured and starting at one week of age the lambs were exposed to ad-libidum creep feed. From birth to 60 days of age, 3 test diets included: (1) 48% protein solvent extracted soybean meal with no added fat (0.5% fat); (2) 48% protein solvent extracted soybean meal with added fat to achieve a total ration fat content of 3.5%; (3) commercially manufactured 18% protein pellet containing 3.5% fat. At weaning time a subjective subcutaneous fat thickness and muscle tone score will be taken. By the end of the study, the research will possibly quantify the effectiveness of these 3 locally available creep feedstuffs in meeting a producer’s goals of optimum pre-weaning growth and marketplace eye-appeal.