

Name:

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Title of project:

Sheep's behaviour and activity in Summer

Summary:

Sheep (*Ovis aries*) is the main livestock animal in Iceland and in Faroe Islands. Modern sheeps are the direct descendants of those ones that Vikings had brought back in 9th-10th century. Icelandic race is a quite calm one and they enjoy eating wild grass. They sometimes become aggressive to each other while some of them show stress. It would interest me to research their behavior and feedback responses along with their physiological – hormonal (plasma growth hormone, catecholamines, melatonin, prolactin concentration) changes as it concerns seasons of the year. Winter is much colder with very low temperatures and with a short period of daylight (only 4-5 hours). Is their behavior different in summer compared to winter? Is their reproduction affected? Is their milk production larger in summer? Is their appetite and/or sleep altered between Winther and Summer? What about their biomass (per individual and/or per group)?

My hypothesis is that sheeps are more calm, more productive, eat more and are growing heavier in August (summer) compared to December (winter).

I could achieve my research through meetings in farms, taking interviews by farmers, ecologists and/or organizing conversations with zoologists. I will pose questions like the above listed focusing on the differences between summer and winter days. I'm going to take relevant videos and pictures of the farm establishments and the animals themselves. In parallel, we could take some hormonal measurements, with blood samples, during each day in different periods on day and compare them to possible measurements that have been done by local scientists or farmers during winter.
