

2025 - 2026 Fall Dakota Ram Performance Testing Program

The 2025-2026 Fall Dakota Ram Performance Test will be held at the Hettinger Research Extension Center in Hettinger, ND. This test is primarily designed to identify differences in heritable and economically important traits including wool quality and post-weaning growth performance for developing rams managed under the same environmental conditions and plane of nutrition. This test aims to provide consignors with detailed information on ram wool quality and growth performance to expand genetic selection criteria and advance flock improvement. Dr. Rachel Gibbs (NDSU Extension Livestock Specialist) and Dave Pearson (NDSU Hettinger Research Extension Center Shepherd) will serve as the test managers. Dr. Christopher Schauer (NDSU HREC Director & Animal Scientist) and Jaylen Whaley (SDSU Sheep Field Specialist) will also serve on the test committee.

Animal Requirements: Rams should be born between October 2025 and April 2026. Rams born between October 1st and December 31st will be classified as Fall-Born Rams and will be tested and reported separately from Spring-Born Rams that are born between January 1st and April 30th. This test is open to all sheep breeds, and rams can be purebred or crossbred. Breed registration is not required to consign, but may be required for breed certification programs.

Cost: The cost per ram is **\$350**, due to the Hettinger REC upon delivery to the test site. This will cover feed, management, feed intake/efficiency monitoring, carcass scanning, and general veterinary attention. If you would like DNA testing, indicate that DNA sampling is needed on the registration fee and include an additional **\$16/hd** in the registration fee. Feed costs are subject to change based on actual feed prices. Additional funds may be requested at the end of the test to cover feed costs. Wool from the Ram Test to help cover shearing costs. Consigners will be responsible for extensive veterinary care outside of general management and monitoring.

Health: Rams will be vaccinated against enterotoxemia and sore mouth, treated for internal parasites, and poured for external parasites shortly after arrival. ***In order to comply with North Dakota health regulations, ALL rams must be accompanied with a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) and individual federal identification*** (scrapie tag, 840 electronic RFID tag, or breed registration tattoo). All animals must also be accompanied with a ***completed test entry form and originate from a footrot and scrapie-free flock***. Rams will be tested for *Brucella ovis* (ELISA) at the end of the performance test.

ARSBA RAMBOUILLET RAM CONSIGNORS

1. All guidelines for establishing ARSBA Certified Rams and Registry of Merit sires will be followed.
2. Rams must be ***registered no later than 60 days after the test starts*** to be eligible as Certified Rams.
3. If a ram entered in the Certified Sire Program qualifies as a Certified ram, he ***must be classified with the American Rambouillet Association as a Certified ram***. The owner will be billed for the \$15.00 classification fee, as this program has been set up to carry itself without additional cost to the ram test.
4. Consignors should submit a ***STATEMENT OF INTENT*** to enter rams in the Certified Sire Program ***before the testing begins*** and list birth dates accompanying the flock or ear tag numbers. For the ARSBA certification program, eligibility rams must genotype QR or RR at codon 171; QQ rams are not eligible for certification.

COLUMBIA RAMS AND OTHER BREEDS CONSIGNED

All data will be collected based on the ARSBA Rambouillet Certified Ram program, and breeds will be ranked separately. Columbia Rams that meet CSBA criteria will be eligible for Certified Columbia Ram designation. Certification criteria are up to the individual breed associations. All health requirements are the same. DNA testing is not required, but can be done upon request. Associations are encouraged to contact Rachel Gibbs for breed-specific testing requests. **The ARSBA Rambouillet Index will NOT be used for other breeds.*

SCHEDULE 2025 - 2026 DAKOTA FALL RAM TEST (Dates Subject to Change)

By September 21, 2025	Rams to be delivered to the HREC
September 22-23, 2025 (tentative)	Rams shorn & Processed
September 24-25, 2025	Rams weighed (2-Day Weights), started on test
October 23, 2025	28 day weighing
November 20, 2025	56 day weighing
December 18, 2025	84 day weighing
	trim hooves and re-vaccinate
January 15, 2026	112 day weighing
February 11-12, 2026	140 day weighing (2-Day Weights) – End of Growth Test Bleed (B-ovis and DNA), staple length, wrinkle score, scrotal circumference
February 13, 2026	Rams shorn - core sampling, wool weights
February 16, 2026	Ultrasound
March 14, 2026	Field Day; rams picked up by owner 9 AM (MST)

Delivery: Contact Rachel Gibbs (701-567-4323 or 325-340-3703) prior to delivery at the HREC. Transportation is available from Hettinger Ram Sale and Newell Ram Sale by contacting Rachel Gibbs and confirming your # of head. The HREC will have a trailer on-site to load animals.

REGULATIONS FOR 2025-2026 FALL DAKOTA RAM TEST

- Ram lambs will be delivered to the test site by September 21, 2025.
- Rams will be shorn, weighed, and will start the official test on September 23, 2025.
- Individual fleeces will be shorn and sampled on February 13, 2025. Samples will be used to determine staple length (adj. for 365 days), clean yield, and fiber diameter. Samples will be sent to Texas A&M University for yield and fiber analysis (OFDA).
- Feed: The rams will be self-fed a mixed ration containing a commercial protein supplement, oats, corn, and alfalfa pellets.
- Feed intake and efficiency data will be generated by smart feeders during the growth test period for participating rams. *Rams will be adapted to this equipment prior to testing and producers will be notified if rams fail to pass the adaption period.
- Liability. All animals remain the property of the cooperator. The manager will make every effort to take proper care of the animal and to provide proper veterinary services, but it will not be responsible for any losses occurring during the test. In the event of a major health problem, the appropriate cooperator will be contacted on direction for disposal. If a ram is removed from test for health reason, or dies while on test, a partial refund of the entry fee will be made.
- Feeding and management of the rams on test will be under the supervision of Dave Pearson and Rachel Gibbs.

Ration	%
Oats	55%
Corn	15%
Market Lamb 38-10 CTC	15%
Alfalfa Pellets	15%
	100%

2025 - 2026 Fall Dakota Ram Performance Testing Program

\$350 is due upon delivery to the HREC. **Please add \$16/hd to your registration fee if you have not done your DNA testing.** Please fill in the information listed above and send it with your nomination fee to Rachel Gibbs by **September 21, 2025**. All rams must be delivered by September 21.

Please make checks payable to **Hettinger Research Extension Center**.

Note: **Please address entries to:** Hettinger Research Extension Center
 Attn. Rachel Gibbs
 PO Box 1377
 Hettinger, ND 58639
 Phone: 701-567-4323
 e-mail: rachel.gibbs.1@ndsu.edu

****Be sure to give the month-day-year of birth as we need this to figure weight per day of age.***

Vaccinated for: _____ Date: _____

Drenched: _____yes _____no Date: _____

Product Used: _____

I agree to the regulations pertaining to the conditions and management practices established for the 2017-2018 Dakota Fall Ram Test Program.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

e-mail Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City

State

Zip Code

2025-2026 Dakota Fall Ram Test Entry Form

The following rams are entered for testing under the program and are covered under the contract:

[illegible]