



Hannah King
Class of 2021
Walnut Cove, NC

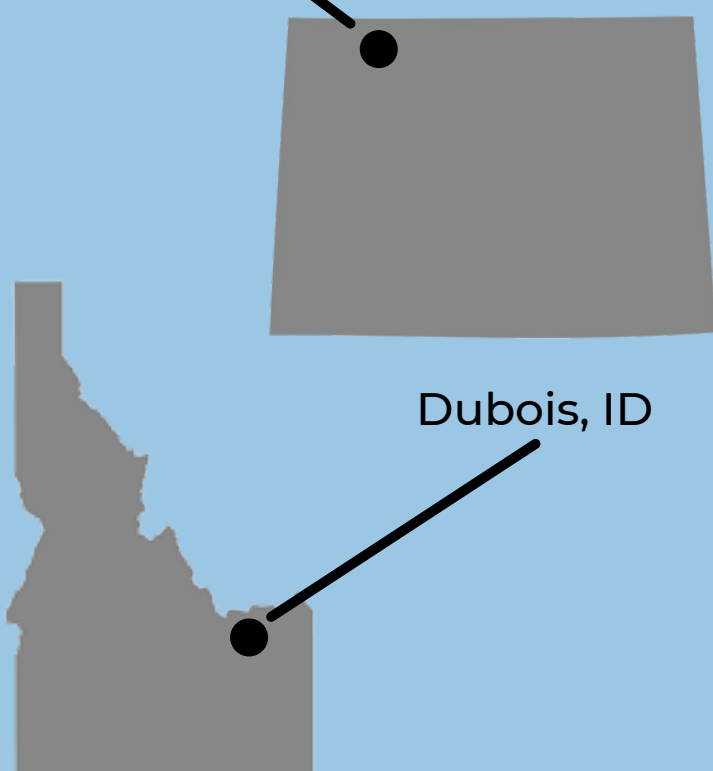
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originally planning to travel to New Zealand

to conduct ovine reproductive and gastrointestinal research at Massey University, my Burch project was abruptly halted due to the COVID pandemic. Forced to completely redesign my project, I spent five months in the US West working on large-scale sheep operations during lambing season. First, working at Smith Sheep and Stuff in Powell, WY, I was able to experience all aspects of lambing on a commercial operation. I was responsible for many daily chores, including letting sheep out/bringing them back in, feeding and watering ewes, frequently checking for new lambs/resolving complicated labors, and monitoring and caring for newborn lambs to ensure they were all fed and healthy. When working...

Powell, WY



Dubois, ID

Immersion in the US Western Sheep Industry

with animals, no two days are the same, and I had the opportunity to learn from new cases as they occurred, whether it be a uterine prolapse needing to be resolved, an inverted eyelid needing treatment, or even watching the process of ewes being pregnancy-checked by ultrasound.



As part of lambing over 1,000 ewes at the Smith's, I was able to see the techniques that must be implemented to manage sheep at that scale. This included working sheep through sorting chutes, tagging and data recording of purebred lambs, and paint branding for identification of all ewes and lambs. It was also unique to work on an operation that has to make



management decisions based on economic outcomes. Deciding which ewes to take to a sale and which (if any) to buy at a sale, how to balance the economic gain from additional labor vs. cost, are all aspects of raising the sheep that go beyond the daily care of feeding, watering, and doctoring.



After lambing sheep with the Smiths for six weeks, I relocated to the US Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho for their lambing season of over 2,000 ewes used for research purposes. Here my tasks were similar to those at the Smith's, as I was a part of the 'suckle and graft' team. This meant I was responsible for all newborn lamb care, from monitoring and assisting, if necessary, in the labor process to ensuring lambs and ewes were healthy and



well fed. As a research facility, I also had the opportunity to participate in an ongoing research project studying the effect of chlorate salts as a treatment for scours in sheep by participating in

sampling and data collection as well as running microbial essays. I shadowed the station veterinarian, Dr. Jenni Dike, very closely to learn more about veterinary medicine practices specifically in sheep. Monitoring the ewes and lambs before turnouts, I saw many different illnesses and their respective diagnoses. I also



learned how to perform necropsies and was able to enhance my anatomy and physiology knowledge through necropsy reports for the station.

My time in the US West was a fantastic alternative to a traditional semester at UNC and I was able to gain many skills through my experiences that I can implement in my own flock of sheep to provide better care for them and better economic returns on my investment. I am humbled to have had this life changing opportunity and very grateful to all who made it possible.

