

SRM Abstract

A. Casey¹, C.A. Clifford-Rathert², M. Schulte², L. Wilbers², C. Cave², J. Caldwell², R. Cordsiemon¹, J. Kaiser¹, M. Kennedy¹, and J. Turner²

1/ USDA-NRCS Missouri

2/ Lincoln University, Cooperative Extension and Research

Amur honeysuckle (AH; *Lonicera maackii* Herder) and common buckthorn (CB; *Rhamnus cathartica* L.) are tall shrubs that are common invaders in forested lands across central and eastern United States. These shrubs grow readily in many soil types, climatic environments, and are often so prolific that they form dense understory thickets, which restrict native plant growth and tree seedling establishment. Mechanical and Chemical control can be effective methods for controlling these species but are expensive, and generally require many follow-up treatments to be successful. If good economic returns can be demonstrated by grazing AH and CB with small ruminants, then this control method may be appealing to producers. During the 2011 grazing season (May – Aug.), mature Katahdin ewe hair sheep (n = 49) with lambs, grazed four paddocks of AH and CB to a height of 4.5 ft in Lincoln County, Missouri. Ewes had an average daily gain (ADG) of -0.37 lbs, total gain of -12.5 lbs, mean body condition score of 3, and mean FAMACHA[®] score of 2. Fecal nematode counts were conducted approximately every 21 days and counts increased on average by 485 over the course of the grazing season, whereas coccidia counts decreased (-648 average). On average, lambs had a birth weight of 13.4 lbs, end weight of 30.3 lbs, ADG of 0.4 lbs, and a total gain of 16.8 lbs. Therefore, grazing AH and CB to a height of 4.5 feet (1.4 m) may alter sheep performance but may not negatively impact lamb performance.