



## Using breeding to develop resistance against worms in sheep farming

Breeding for the trait “*resistance to worms*” is a theme that more and more farmers are engaging with. By selecting and using more resistant rams for breeding, a more resilient generation can be developed.

### Selection of rams

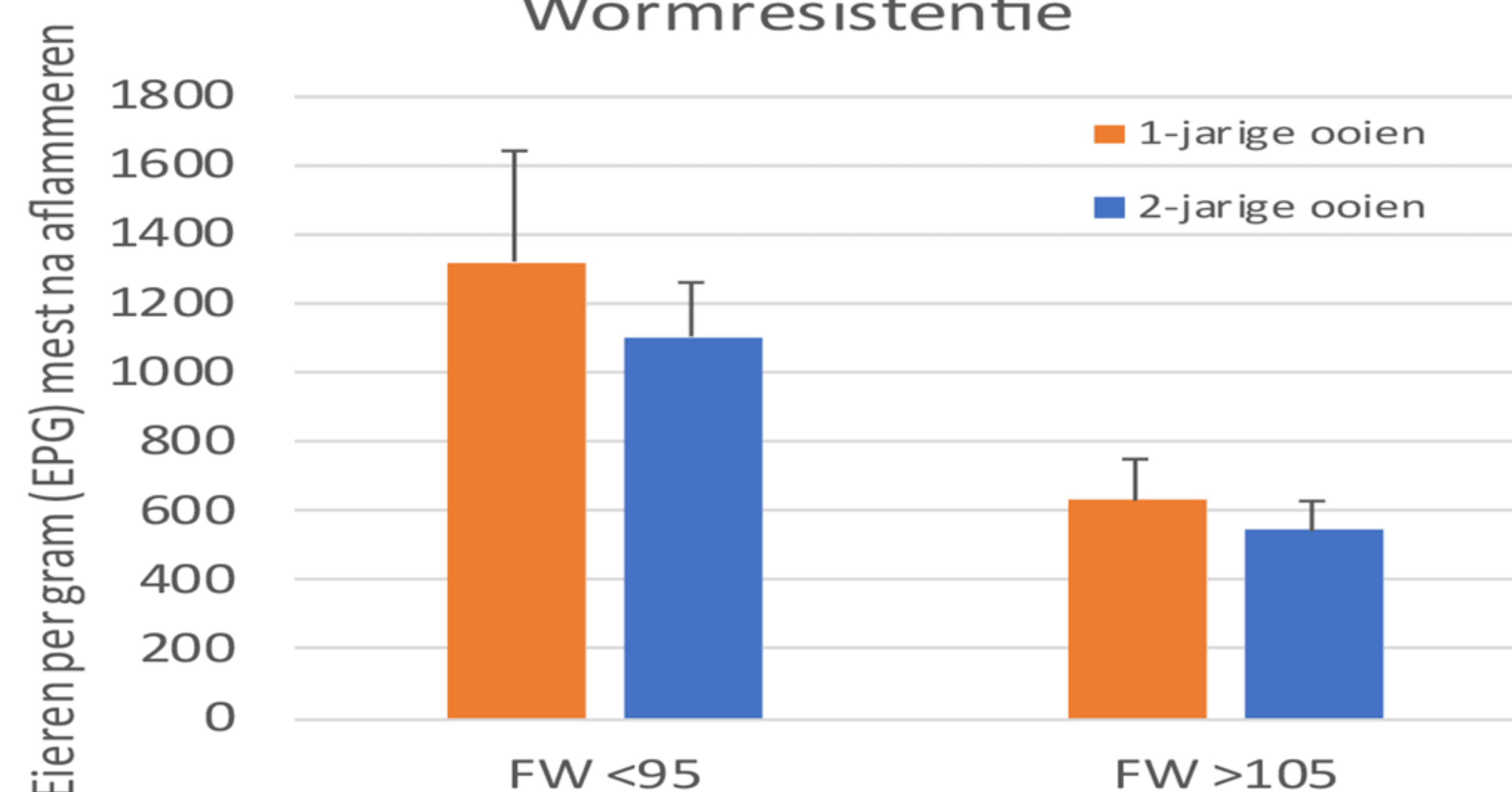
To select the right rams, breeders can take a cheek mucus sample using a swab and have it tested for antibodies (IgA). The number of antibodies is then expressed as an index. The higher the antibody count, the more effectively the development and reproduction of worms are suppressed. This method is primarily effective against *Haemonchus* (barber’s pole worm) but also works for *Trichostrongylus* and *Teladorsagia*.

### Breeding

Ewes shed the most eggs during the period after lambing. Ewes that shed fewer eggs demonstrate higher resistance to worm infections. The male offspring of these resistant ewes can then be used for further breeding. Through the index, farmers can also identify ewes that bring the highest infection levels to the pasture and choose to remove them from the flock. This allows continued breeding with resistant rams and low-shedding ewes. This combination results in a new generation that is resistant to worm infections and more resilient when infections do occur. Breeding values for worm resistance are currently available for Texel and Swifter sheep.

The NSFO (Dutch Sheep and Goat Breeders’ Organization) is conducting research on breeding values for worm resistance. Of course, these breeding practices should always be combined with good grazing management to keep worm infections under control.

Gemiddelde eitelling na aflammeren  
in relatie tot Fokwaarde  
Wormresistentie



Through the breeding value “**resistance to worms**,” rams can be selected to build a resilient and more resistant generation.

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