ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION.

Why AI, you might ask? Simply put, AI give us access to the best sheep genetics in Iceland. The folks in Iceland have been using AI in their breeding programs since the 1940's. Each year, only the best rams are chosen for the AI breeding program from Iceland's 500,000+ sheep. Now, we are able to use the best of this genetic pool in our own breeding programs.

Icelandic Breeders in North America are getting semen from Southram Station in the Southern part of Iceland. The stations in Iceland have precise methods in place for evaluating the AI rams and the lambs they will produce.   When visiting the Southram website, you will see two terms frequently used: BLUP and Daughter Prolificacy Rate. BLUP shows us how the AI ram genetics should translate to traits in the offspring. The Daughter Prolificacy Rate gives an indication of the fertility rates of the ram's daughters.

But what does this really mean to the flock? Significant and rapid improvements in the flock. AI breeding, along with dedicated culling, is the fastest way to gain improvements in conformation, fleece and muscling of your sheep.   Basically, AI provides us with a means to superior genetics that would not otherwise be available to us with only farm breeding.   Take a look at the carcass grading chart below.   It was sent to me by the folks at the AI station in Iceland.   The AI sires will all fall into the E or U categories for muscling.