Dear ABLA Members:

As this will be my last message to you as President of the ABLA, I am going to take the time to make a few comments. In my three years on the board, I have been privileged to work with many people, all who have contributed greatly in many ways. In these past three years, I believe ABLA has come a long way. We have gone from one or two meetings a year to a monthly meeting. We had two National shows with the next one at NAILE in November of 2004. We have gone to Associated Sheep Registry which will be a tremendous asset to our breed.

I commend the members who have invested time, money, and foresight in bringing semen from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. These people have brought much needed new genetics to our breed. Some of these breedings will work, some will not, but if it were not for the courage of these few, we would not know.

Border Leicesters were the Supreme Flock at The Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, Canada in 2003. The

Member Profile . . .

Di Waibel • Mist O Morn Farm • Canby, Oregon

Mist O Morn Farm is located in the heart of the Willamette Valley, just 25 miles south of metropolitan Portland, Oregon. I was born in the Bad Lands of North Dakota where my father and grandfather were both cattlemen so; therefore, we all must be cattle people (or so they thought). As a child, I moved to the lower Willamette Valley where every fall thousands of sheep were trucked into the valley from California to winter on the ryegrass fields. They lambed in the spring and then away they went again, back to California to finish out the cycle. I didn’t know much about sheep – never had much interest in sheep. Thirty-five years ago, when I moved from the lower Willamette Valley to the present location of Mist O Morn Farm, why of course, we raised cattle. As with other cattle folks in the area, we learned to ride and rope and compete in the barrel racing events which dotted the area.

I also took up another hobby – handspinning. It became an obsession for me and still is. One day I was asked by a neighbor to help him catch his flock of sheep. I had the Border Collies and the stock trailer and he was tired of chasing sheep around a twenty-acre plot. He said the price was real cheap if I could catch them. Well, with a couple of good dogs it didn’t take long and I took my treasures home where I planned to take them to the auction in a couple of days. No sheep for this place! They had not been sheared in some time so I decided to have them sheared so they would look better in the sale ring. The shearer announced that they were all about ready to lamb. I told him it was impossible since there was no ram running with them….or so I had been told. Apparently, one little ram lamb had slipped through the fall before and, lo and behold, all the ewes were bred. By the time I finished lambing out those 20 some ewes, I was hooked on those darling lambs. I still am hooked on baby lambs.

These first sheep were a mixture of a commercial flock, but being a handspinner, I started looking for wool sheep. The Border Leicester caught my eye and they have been on my farm since that time. They were extremely hard to find some 30 years ago. My first rams came from Braemore Farms in New Zealand, while the ewes were purchased from Canada. Some of those ewes also had New Zealand bloodlines.

As I sold off more and more of the commercial flock and kept more and more Border Leicesters, my admiration for these animals continued to grow. I also raise colored sheep that originally came from British Columbia where farmers provided fleeces for the Salish Indians to make wool sweaters.
LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Well, it is April 5th here in northern Vermont. It is blustery and cold outside with snow and wind and temperatures in the 20’s. After a very long and challenging winter, we are waiting for spring to show itself. I look forward to hearing the peepers sound their cheery call from the beaver pond in the evening hours. Maybe next week?

Nancy and I have decided to continue as newsletter editors for an additional year. It takes about 60 hours to get the newsletter put together and into the mailbox. Special thanks to our families (especially Nancy’s children) who covered for us on the home front while we were immersed in this issue. If we are ever a little late, please know we are doing our best to juggle all our other responsibilities.

Our goal with this newsletter is to make it informative, interesting, and helpful to all of you. If you have comments, or would like to add to any of the articles already written, please speak up. Here’s an example of an opportunity - Marty Moran, a Corriedale breeder, kindly agreed to write an article about line breeding specifically for us. Do you have an experience or an opinion that supports or refutes his? Let’s get some discussion going.

In recognition of the fact that the ad rates have not been covering the cost of printing them, the Board of Directors has made a decision to increase the advertising rates. The new rates are competitive with other breed associations and will begin with the Summer issue. Our thanks to those of you who are showing your support for the newsletter by advertising. If you have never advertised in the newsletter and would like to, please contact Nancy and she will get you going.

I am concerned (and saddened) that the borders between the United States and Canada are still closed due to the Mad Cow scares of last May and December. Many farmers on both sides of the border are suffering. Some of our breeders, like the Grants and the Levers are unable to come to the states and participate in our shows. And some of us are unable to sell breeding stock to customers in Canada. I hope this issue is settled soon. Please contact your agricultural representatives and share your concerns.

Lastly, I want to say a big thank you to Archie for stepping up this past year to be President. Under his able leadership, we have become a more stable organization. The problems with transitioning to Associated Sheep Registry are pretty well ironed out, and we have many new members as a result of his infectious enthusiasm for Border Leicesters which he spreads wherever he goes. I also cannot thank Di Waibel enough for her constant work and concern for the organization. She donates many hours a month to help the rest of us out. There are others of you out there who are making my and Nancy’s job a little easier. A big thank you goes out to all of you! We hope you enjoy this issue.

Sue Johnson, Co-editor

The ABLA Newsletter is published quarterly. It is a compilation of submissions from members. We would appreciate your contributions.

The deadline for the next issue is: June 15, 2004
Please send submissions to Nancy Smith, Editor
Flock Improvement Through Linebreeding

By Marty Moran

Linebreeding is a form of breeding in which sheep are mated in such a way that their lambs will remain closely related to one highly desirable ancestor. The difference from common breeding is that the mated animals should be related to a common ancestor but possess different physical traits (those traits that are seen). The intent is to maintain a close relationship to one particular outstanding animal’s genetics and enhance its exceptional characteristics, not allowing them to be split up in each generation following.

When I first began my breeding program I made many mistakes, as most people do. As a young man, I was strongly encouraged by watching and listening to others in the sheep industry whom I considered the top dogs in many different breeds. By going to sheep shows and reading advertisements and articles by sheep men who were successful, I began to realize that they were doing something right. These men were breeding champions and top-selling seed stock, so I began implementing a linebreeding concept of my own to my small flock.

I started by selecting my best stud prospect, who was out of an outstanding ewe that had always consistently produced show sheep, yet was an excellent mother too. Strangely enough, she stood dead last at the state fair, but her twin was a Reserve National Champion. Her twin had received the more desirable physical traits, yet they both shared the same quality genetics. Even more pronounced was when we bred her as a lamb to a half brother and this first lamb became the top selling stud ram at the Midwest Sale for $1,500. This convinced us to save every born daughter out of her for our flock.

I selected one of her sons, who was the 1987 National Champion Ram in the Corriedale breed. I bred this ram to some outcross ewes with genetics from a few other breeders. From there, I bred him to his twin sister and several half-sisters that were all out of one ram. When the lambing season began, it was easy to see the uniformity in the half-sister to half-brother matings as compared to the outcross breedings. The linebred offspring were all very much similar in breed type, conformation, and fleece quality sending us on our way. We then implemented a strict selection process. I can’t stress enough the importance of culling sheep with undesirable defects.

If you were to look through the pedigrees of our ewe base, you would find that about seventy-five percent of the ewes in our flock today trace back to that one outstanding female. Due to the genetic consistency, it did not matter what ram we mated her to because that mating worked every time for 11 years. Believe it or not, that linebred ewe lived for 11 productive years. She never was sick and we never had to help any of her lambs from the first to the last. Her daughters down to her great-grand daughters continue to produce the same way. This is just one example of how line breeding can work if used properly!

Like most things, improving your genetics through linebreeding comes with advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

1. You can breed for traits that your particular breed lacks, thereby improving the negative traits in your breed overall. You don’t have to be captive to the latest trends. Just be sure your traits are desirable before linebreeding.

2. When traits are good - such as vigor, milking ability, mothering ability - they are doubled.

3. Other breeders will recognize that you are consistent in what your flock produces.

4. Instead of buying a new ram every couple years, you can occasionally select a single female from another breeder who has genetic traits you may need. You take a big risk using a new, unknown ram on your entire flock. If the breeding doesn’t work, it may set you back for two years or more. Instead, I buy the best stud ewe I can find and breed her to my best linebred ram to produce an offspring for future use.

Disadvantages

1. Linebreeding does not work as well if you don’t plan and have a strict guideline of selection. Inferior genetics bred to inferior genetics gets you from bad to worse. So be sure to use top sheep in this type of breeding system. If your ewes are weak in mothering, milking, and vigor; or your rams are not aggressive breeders, this program won’t work for you. It will cause your lambing or breeding problems to be twice as bad.

2. It takes commitment and extreme planning to make line breeding a successful program. Once you begin your linebreeding system, pre-plan your matings - don’t just turn the ram out!

3. People who have purchased sheep from you in the past year or two may not come back because they like to buy different genetics each time hoping it will improve vigor, etc.

4. Sometimes you may have to clean house and start over from the beginning. This may cost you some money, but in the long run it will be worth it.

Line breeding has worked for my breeding program and countless others. We have had many customers tell us how our breeding produces consistent physical and genetic characteristics. This is not by accident. We are committed to going forward to help our breed and the sheep industry as a whole.

Editor’s note: Marty Moran is a Corriedale breeder who has been associated with the breed for about forty years. He resides in Newton, Illinois with his wife, Kathy, and children, Amy and Ryan. He is currently a member on the Board of Directors for the American Corriedale Association. His flock, Moran Sheep Company, has supplied seed stock that has gone on to produce high quality sheep for top Corriedale breeders from coast to coast. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors and breeding quality sheep, he has judged many shows across the country including national shows for various breeds. In 1996, Moran Sheep Company was recognized with the highly coveted Outstanding Corriedale Breeder of the Year Award for contributions of genetic quality to the breed.

We thank Marty for taking the time to share his knowledge with us. For additional reading on linebreeding, check out Sheep Success by Nathan Griffith, published by Cobblemead Publications.
Looking to improve your herds' head set, bone, frame size, and fleece?

Now you can!

With a special THANK YOU to Sandra Russell of Black Stump Leicesters for choosing our family ranch to continue her honest, faithful, and responsible breeding program. The 20 ewes and 1 ram she sold us will truly advance our breeding program.

Contact us now for next year's lambs. As we take this twenty years of genetics and cross with the imported semen from the best rams to further improve our quality and keep the genetics fresh!

Our new blood lines are being provided by:

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Sorry, but we have sold out of this year's lambs. Call, write, or e-mail us to find out more about our operation. Reserve your new genetics for next year now.

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smason@tcsn.net

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Atascadero, CA 93423
(805) 460-0154
randyb@fix.net
Genetic and Nutritional Effects on Lamb Flavor

By S. K. Duckett* and P. S. Kuber†

*University of Georgia, Athens, 30602-2771 and
†Washington State University, Pullman, 99164-6310

ABSTRACT: Annual per capita consumption of lamb in the United States has declined throughout the last 40 years to 0.32 kg on a retail weight basis. In a recent survey, consumers identified as one of the most important factors when purchasing meat products and ranked lamb last among other meats (beef, chicken, fish, pork, turkey, and veal) for taste and overall preference. Research has shown that meat flavor resides in the water-soluble fraction but that species-specific flavors are located in the lipid fraction of meat. In lamb, branched chain fatty acids of 8 to 10 carbons are believed to strongly contribute to its characteristic flavor. Oxidation products from long-chain unsaturated fatty acids also contribute to flavor intensity in lamb. Research has shown differences in flavor intensity due to breed or sire breed; however, the results have been inconsistent and depend on the type of sensory panel used to evaluate the product. Lamb from fine-wool breeds were reported to have a more intense flavor than coarse-wool breeds; whereas lamb from hair sheep was described as being more desirable for flavor intensity than coarse-wool breeds. Lamb flavor is also impacted by nutrition of the lambs before harvest. Research has shown that finishing lambs on pasture increases lamb flavor and off-flavors. Grain feeding alone or supplemented while on pasture typically produces lamb with more acceptable flavors than on pasture alone. However, the extent that flavor intensity is altered depends on the type of forage and grain consumed. Feeding protected lipid supplements to alter fatty acid composition can reduce mutton flavor but can increase off-flavors due to oxidation. Genetics and nutrition impact lamb flavor. However, more research is needed to determine ways to manipulate these factors to alter lamb flavor and to increase its consumption in the human diet.


Editor’s note - To read the complete technical article from the Journal of Animal Science, go to: http://www.asas.org/jas/jas0932.pdf.

SUNDAY LAMB DINNER

Submitted by Sue Johnson

This simple way to cook a leg of lamb comes from my best friend from New Zealand and it’s now our family’s favorite way to enjoy roast lamb.

1 leg of lamb, either boneless or bone-in
Lots of garlic, sliced into fine slivers
Thin slices of lemon, including the rind
Potatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, onions - enough for your family to eat

With a sharp pointed knife, put slits under the “skin” of the leg. I make many of these slits and stuff the garlic and lemon inside the leg. If boneless, I also put the lemon and garlic inside the roll as I am able.

Put the leg in a roasting pan with about ½ inch of water in the bottom. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the meat, cover pan, and roast at 350 degrees. After 2 hours, add cut up vegetables alongside the meat and cook until meat is fork tender, about 45 minutes to 1 hour more, depending on the size of the leg. If using bone-in leg, it may take a little longer.

Remove meat and vegetables, skim fat off remaining juice and make gravy. Serve with mint sauce (see recipe below) and enjoy!

Mint Sauce:

Heat together: ½ cup mild vinegar, ¼ cup sugar
Pour over ½ cup chopped (fresh) mint leaves (or 4 tsp. dry mint)
Let it stand for an hour or more. Add more sugar if you like a sweeter sauce.

My friend often cooks a beef roast at the other end of the large pan so there is a variety at the family feast...and if it over-cooks, it is only more tenderly delicious.

Wool Blanket Co-op Update

Eleven ABLA members have participated in the Wool Blanket Co-op shipping 300 pounds of white washed Border Leicester wool to MacAusland's Woollen Mill on Prince Edward Island. In addition, the co-op is sending 300 pounds of washed colored wool. The colored wool is a mixture of Border Leicester, Romney, and Coopworth. The wool will be spun and then woven into high quality blankets that each farm will offer for sale. The blankets are due back in mid-summer.

If you should be interested in joining the co-op in 2005 or want more information, please contact Sherry Stahl Wellborn at sherry@dancingsheepfarm.com or 541-484-1440. The co-op is open to anyone with good quality Border Leicester wool.

Join the ABLASheep Group!

You are cordially invited to join other ABLA members in an internet discussion group. You can find us at www.groups.yahoo.com. Search for “ABLASheep” and become a member! Junior member, Katie Smith, is our moderator.

See you on the net!
Shortly after being asked to write this article, I checked the ear of a friend’s lamb to verify that we were hauling the correct one to the butcher and was amused to see an illegible tattoo. Though it was nearly impossible to read, I knew that the tattoo had been done correctly - with new equipment - and therein lay the problem. My friend’s new tattoo outfit is the same brand and model that I’ve used for more than 25 years, but close inspection revealed that the dies in the new kit weren’t up to snuff. The original dies have 40% more pins than the new version, and the pins are more carefully placed in the older dies. It was clear that I’d have to locate some quality replacement dies or find a better brand of equipment before writing an article on tattooing.

In talking with the manufacturer of my tattooer, I learned that the base for the original dies is lead, which they have stopped using due to toxicity concerns (the new characters are set in plastic). After expressing my concerns about legibility, I mailed them a set of impressions from both the old and new models for comparison. Their response was friendly and polite, but it doesn’t sound as though improvements will be made any time soon.

A Google search then led me to Ketchum Manufacturing, Inc. in Ottawa (www.ketchum.ca) and their 201 series with 5/16" dies looked really good. I especially liked their unique lever lock system for changing characters - no tiny screws to lose - and while the lever is open the dies stay in place rather than falling into the bedding or worse. Also, the pins in the 201 models have chisel points, creating a line of closely spaced dashes rather than a series of dots. Ketchum’s Doug Lousley said he could easily tell when checking fair entries which sheep had been tattooed with their equipment and which had not. He was extremely helpful and patiently answered numerous questions.

To confirm that I was on the right track, I did a quick e-mail survey of 5 friends who I knew had extensive tattoo experience - their input was invaluable. Bill Duffield and Bets Reedy both use and recommend the Ketchum 201R. Bill has used Ketchum tattooers for over 35 years.

Our president, Archie Murray, used Ketchum’s outfit when he lived in Ontario (his son still uses it), but now has the same brand I do, with the older lead dies, as do Janet McNally and Bob Padula.

Janet acknowledged the poor quality of the newer dies saying, “My equipment is about 25 years old, too. A while back I bought a second set of digits which were plastic and very disappointing.”

While not the least expensive equipment available, the Ketchum brand is certainly worth considering if you’re in the market for a new tattoo outfit. You won’t find the 201 series in many (if any) sheep supply catalogs, but any good supplier should be able to place a special order.

HOW DO YOU TATTOO?

Instructions come with the equipment. The basics are:

1) Clean the inside of the ear with alcohol and let it dry;

2) Apply ink to the ear (those with experience sometimes omit this initial application);

3) Pierce the ear with the tattoo pliers, avoiding the ribs and areas with hair, and don’t be timid. Bets says there should be a definite “crunch” when the tattoo points enter the cartilage in the ear;

4) Apply more ink;

5) Thoroughly rub the ink into the punctures using finger and thumb on opposite sides of the ear, or an old toothbrush, or the roller on a roller bottle of tattoo ink;

6) Do not try to remove excess ink from the ears, it weathers away as the ear heals.

TATTOO INK, PASTE OR ROLLER BOTTLE?

The pigment in both is the same, but if you use the roller bottle be sure to shake it often as the pigment can settle out. Most use the paste and the preferred color is green, which both Bill and Bets confirm does show up on dark-eared animals. Bets says that, “…a fair number are legible - in the sun - from 10 or 12 feet away.” If a tattoo on a dark ear is difficult to read, hold a flashlight tight against the back side of the ear with the beam shining toward you through the ear.

HOW DO YOU CLEAN THE INK OFF YOUR HANDS?

Ketchum distributes an organic, biodegradable hand cleaner called “Worx”. We’ve also used “ReDuRan”.

WHAT’S THE BEST AGE TO TATTOO?

Preferences vary, though tattooing soon after birth eliminates the need for interim ID. Bill does all of his tattooing when lambs are 2-5 days old, before they leave the mothering pens. Archie does one ear at 1 day of age and the other at about 6 months. The Clun Forest breed association recommends 4-6 months of age, when the ears are larger and more easily accommodate the tattoo equipment. I’ve been doing ours at about 2 months, while I can still lift them into the feeder without wrecking my back (see below). Bob waits until 11-14 months as his Tar-ghee breed association does not recommend registering sheep under one year of age. He wrote, “We send in wool samples and make our final decisions on which to keep as registered sheep after the wool data comes back. If they don’t meet the wool criteria, they don’t get registered.” His entire NSIP-enrolled flock is identified with ear tags prior to receiving their tattoos.

HOW DO YOU CONTROL THE ANIMAL WHILE TATTOOING?

Archie says, “My restraint system is called Mina and she works well.”

While help is nice, it is possible to tattoo alone. The method I’ve been using is shown in the photo. I place the lamb on its back inside a small feeder, one end of which has been raised to a comfortable incline, and work on the ears through the 4” square panel openings.
Bill Duffield uses a Hayes Cradle to hold young lambs for both docking and tattooing (see www.codan-suffolks.com/lambing).

For tattooing his yearlings, Bob Paldula says, “I run them down the race, grab the head and hold onto the ear, then slide the tattooer on the ear and squeeze. Then I switch tattoo pliers [he uses 2] and do the same with the other ear.”

DOESN’T IT HURT?
The piercing action is very quick, not unlike having your own ears pierced, and my experience has been that most animals remain very calm while the ink is being rubbed in - many seem to enjoy it. I once had a lamb fall asleep while being tattooed. He was securely nestled in the feeder/cradle with his head resting comfortably on a folded towel “pillow” (see photo). The sudden clamp of the tattoo pliers does startle the animal, so be sure to hold the ear firmly to avoid scratching or tearing.

DO TATTOOS REALLY WORK?
Whether or not tattoos remain legible for the life of the animal depends on how well the job is done, which brings us back to the quality of the equipment.

Clun Forest breed secretary, Bets Reedy, said it best: “When we first started requiring tattoos, we wound up in a war between US breeders and Canadian breeders. The US folks, me included, said tattooing didn’t work - the tattoos were illegible (and I tried a lot of different outfits). The Canadians looked at us as though we were crazy. We finally figured out that they all used the Ketchum outfit and none of us did. Now, we recommend only the Ketchum outfit - the 201R - it’s the one with the two-faced head (allows us to do flock letters in one ear and year letter and individual ID in the other).”

WHAT SHOULD I PUT IN THE EARS?
Since ABLA does not have an official requirement, we use the system mentioned above by Bets, which is standard in Canada and the UK. The right ear receives our flock letters (“SCF” for Spring Creek Farm, registered long ago with Canada for our exclusive use). Above our flock letters, we also put our assigned 4-digit SFCP number, since tattoos qualify as official ID for both the voluntary and mandatory scrapie programs.

In the left ear, we tattoo the animal’s individual number followed by the year letter (“P” for 2004). The letters “I”, “O”, “Q”, and “V” are never used.

Regarding SFCP numbers, Bob offers this insight, “...I saw how the state was numbering the premises with the state postal abbreviation (MN) and then a sequential number. I figured I needed to be one of the first 99 people in the state so I would only need a 4-digit tattoo!”

For those who need more than 4 digits, Ketchum’s 201B model provides up to 6 character spaces.

TO SUMMARIZE:
Purchase quality equipment, thoroughly prep the ear with alcohol, use firm pressure on the pliers, don’t skimp on the ink, and be sure that the ink is rubbed well into the tattoo piercings.

As Archie always says, “...the secret to good tattooing is a clean ear and to get your fingers green.”

Editor’s note: Many thanks to Judy for putting together this very informative article!

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Non-members pay double the above rates.

Send ads to:
Nancy Smith
smithfamily@gmavt.net
February 1st - Super Bowl Sunday......Another COLD and windy day.... While feeding the rams, who live in a cozy 3-sided shed, but eat outdoors, I noticed my best ram was acting unhappy. At first, I thought he was breathing funny, taking short strong breaths...did he crack a rib fighting with one of the other rams? He didn't want to eat, and soon wandered back into his shelter. Later I checked on him, only to find him lying out on his side with his head and legs stretched out. He was straining and definitely not able to urinate... Hum...maybe urinary calculi? With all the never-ending cold and lack of fresh water (except twice a day when I change it), does he have stones from not drinking enough?

As the day wore on, and speaking with my vet and other experienced shepherd friends on the phone, I realized I had to go exam him and consider snipping off part of his penis......Ugh! With the help of two friends, one to hold the 300 pound ram on his tail and the other to help me exam him, we pushed his sheath back and had a look. We saw that the whole “wiggly/wormy” part of his penis was brownish red, dry, and definitely dying tissue from, we figured, frostbite. This is why he was blocked! It was frostbit/quite red beyond that part as well (after examining him more, we noticed part of his sheath and the tips of his ears were frostbitten also). I have often see him thrusting his “insides” out while standing around… it must have frozen one of these past cold days when the -30 degree wind gusts were blowing.

After swallowing mountains of fear and anxiety, and knowing if we didn’t do something soon he would die from not urinating; we made the cut; taking the whole "wiggly/wormy" part off up to the glands on his penis. This was the hardest thing I have ever done in my 25 years of having sheep. He bled profusely for about 10 minutes and then the blood flow slowly stopped. He began to urinate during this bleeding time. I was quite anxious about his condition. (Hours later, I was still shaking and a bit sick to my stomach too). I confined him in a well bedded (straw) pen and a few hours later could see that he had urinated a lot under where he was standing. He was also eating hay. Phew!!!!

February 2nd......Well, the ram we “operated” on is feeling like his old self today. Looking out the window, I watched him butting and fooling around with the other two rams. When I get a chance I will write to Pipestone Veterinary Clinic to get advice about his usefulness in the future as a ram.

March 5th......Today I wrote to Pipestone Veterinary Clinic via the internet. They have helped me in the past and I am sure they will not let me down this time. I told them all that we had done to the big ram. Dr. Goelz wrote back to me. Below is his reply:

Dear Sue,

As far as the ram goes, you did the right thing by cutting off the tip of the penis. We know that cutting off the verminform appendage (the little whirly bird on the end of the penis) is not detrimental to fertility. If the glands of the penis was also removed this may have a

Continued on page 11
Ewe Lamb Information At FSA Offices

County Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices received Notice LD-545 pertaining to the Ewe-Lamb Replacement and Retention Program.

According to the notice, “producers will be paid $18 per head for ewe lambs purchased or retained during August 1, 2003, through July 31, 2004. Producers must also retain the qualifying ewe lambs in the herd for at least 1 complete off-spring lambing cycle.”

“The qualifications and eligibility requirements of the program ought to be the same as they were in 2003,” stated Peter Orwick, American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) executive director. “We are pleased that USDA/FSA took into consideration the recommendations made by the industry to start the program Aug. 1, 2003, so we do not have a gap in eligibility between program years.”

Poly Contamination From Tarps Is On The Increase

Polypropylene is the No. 1 contaminate in U.S. wool. This is one of the primary areas of focus identified by the Shearing Task Force, recently assembled by the American Sheep Industry Association’s Wool Council. The task force was formed to develop programs with an integral sector of the wool industry -- shearing crews. The poly problem was identified as significant, and programs to win this battle were identified as a priority. Producers and shearers need to work together to solve the contamination problem in the corral and year-round.

“There are a number of poly sources that can contaminate wool, such as hay baling twine and feed bags. However, the wool processing trade has told us that contamination from cheap blue and orange poly tarps is on the increase,” said Jim Bristol, Shearing Task Force chairman.

Poly tarps are routinely used on sheep operations for a number of reasons, from covering haystacks to providing wind protection in inclement weather.

“The tarps are popular because they are inexpensive and lightweight, but they also fall apart quickly and contaminate wool,” continued Bristol.

Shearing crews and producers who use poly tarps increase the risk of contaminating their wool, which can reduce the value of the clip and expose the buyer to claims.

“We want to educate shearers and their crews about the potential of wool contamination when they use these tarps in corrals and recommend other alternatives to them,” added Bristol. “It is also necessary to inform producers about other sources of poly contamination that can occur throughout the growing season, such as the risk of contaminating wool with poly by using tarps to cover haystacks.”

The Wool Council is working with Woolpacks, Inc., a major U.S. supplier of nylon wool packs, to investigate the cost and supply of lightweight, durable nylon tarps. Although contamination may still occur with nylon tarps, it would be less obtrusive since nylon can be dyed with wool.

USDA Estimates Scrapie Prevalence at .2%

The USDA has released the results of its year long surveillance study on the incidence of scrapie. Samples were collected from 12,508 cull ewes from 22 slaughter plants across the United States. Of the 12,508 sheep, 34 were found infected with scrapie. Based on statistical sampling, this estimates a national prevalence of .2% or 1 in 500 sheep are infected with scrapie. The highest prevalence was found in the Eastern U.S. at .54% or one in 185 sheep infected.

This was the first large scale study to determine the scrapie prevalence in the U.S. The program was completed on March 31, 2003. The next day the Regulatory Slaughter Surveillance Program was initiated. Thus far 12 sheep have been determined to be infected and traced back to the farm of origin. The regulatory program expects to test 45,000 slaughter cull ewes in the next year.

Annual Youth Awards

The New England Sheep and Wool Growers Association is now accepting applications for their annual youth awards. Seven $50.00 cash awards are given annually to recognize the accomplishments of outstanding young men and women involved in the Northeast sheep industry.

• Applicants must be at least 12 years old and not older than 18 as of 1/1/04.
• Applicants must reside in one of the New England states or who themselves or families are members of NES&WGA.
• The awards will be presented at the NES&WGA New England Sale on Friday, July 16, 2004.

Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2004. Applications can be obtained by contacting:
Kim LaBlanc
588 Longmeadow Street
Longmeadow, MA 01106
klablanc@stcc.edu
(413) 755-4365

In memory of Sophie
March 1988 - December 2003

The Silent Thief

Could ovine progressive pneumonia be affecting your bottom line? Recent survey reports 36% of U.S. flocks OPP positive.
Our membership represents more than 40 breeds and several producer groups.
We invite you to join us!
For more information and member directory:
www.OPPSociety.org
hollyneat@juno.com
Phone: 952-955-2596
External Parasites (Lice, Keds and Mites)

By J.L. Goelz, D.V.M.
Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

Winter is the season when external parasites rear their ugly head. This is when sheep are held in closer confinement and parasites are easily spread among penmates. External parasites that affect sheep are classified in three general groups: lice, keds and mites.

There are many species of lice that can infect sheep. Lice species are divided into two general classifications. The group that feeds off of dead skin cells is commonly called chewing lice. The other group feeds by sucking body fluid and is called sucking lice. The importance of the difference is in control. Ivermectin is only effective if the species of lice sucks body fluid.

Treatment of chewing lice requires topical application of insecticides. Lice spend the majority of their life on the sheep. They can survive in the environment for only short periods of time. The ability to survive off the animal contributes to their rapid spread among penmates. Lice eggs (nits) are resistant to insecticides, therefore using a prolonged activity pour-on like Delice or Ultraboss gives a higher treatment success. If you are treating with a short-acting insecticide, treatment should be repeated in one to two weeks. Sheep with wool loss should be inspected to see if there is evidence of nits. They are small (size of a pin head) and “glued” to the wool fibers. If you are unsure, your veterinarian can confirm the presence of nits by examining the affected wool under a low power microscope or magnifying glass. Adult lice are difficult to see with the naked eye but can be visualized with a magnifying glass as well.

Keds consist of only one species of insect. Many shepherds refer to keds as ticks, although technically they are not ticks as they have only six legs. They are actually a wingless fly. Keds spend all of their life on sheep. The males and females both suck blood from the sheep and cause itching, scratching, wool tags on fences, hide damage, and poor fleece quality. Keds are only spread by direct contact. They are often seen at shearing as they are large enough to be seen with the naked eye. Treatment for keds is easy.

Pouring with Delice pour-on after shearing is highly effective. Since the keds suck blood, injectable Ivermectin is also effective, but more costly. Keds are unique in that the female ked does not lay eggs, instead the eggs and larvae mature inside the female ked and she lays pupae that then develop into adults. The pupae stage is resistant to pour-on and Ivermectin. Because most of the life cycle is sensitive to treatment, one treatment will significantly drop the population. Two treatments 2 weeks apart are necessary for total eradication of keds.

Mites are different than lice or keds in that they burrow below the skin surface or in the wool follicles whereas lice and keds inhabit the surface of the skin and wool. As mites burrow they cause extensive tissue irritation causing the sheep to itch frequently. This results in a scab or crusty lesions. Affected areas are often wool-less areas on the head or feet. If the lesion is in a wooled area, the wool will fall out and the skin will be reddened or covered with a scab. Mite infections can be confirmed by having your veterinarian do a skin scraping of affected areas. The skin scraping is examined under a microscope and if mites are seen they can be identified to the species which may help with control. Because mites survive off of body fluids, injectable Ivermectin is very effective. Repeated administration 2 weeks apart may be necessary for problem cases. Topical amitraz, available in a dip call Tactic, is also very effective.

Treatment for ectoparasite control (lice, keds or mites) is always more effective and easier on shorn sheep. Many producers find that immediately after shearing is labor-efficient and in the upper Midwest this coincides with the time of the year that ectoparasites are a problem. If treatment of heavy wooled sheep is necessary, be sure to part the wool so that the pour-on contacts the skin.

Reprinted by permission of Pipestone Veterinary Clinic.
American Border Leicester Association Spring 2004


detrimental effect as most of the sensation of the penis is located there. It is possible that this ram will not be able to ‘feel’ when he has penetrated the vulva and when he should thrust. Also, it is possible that adhesions may have formed from the penis to the sheath. If this is the case he will not be able to thrust at all. If you want to you can try to observe breeding when you first turn him out and you may be able to find out. I would have a backup ram available. His chances are probably about 50-50.

Sincerely,
J. L. Goelz, D.V.M.

Guess I’ll just have to wait and see. I’ll keep his nicest ram lamb as a back-up. This is one sheep experience that I hope I don’t have to repeat.

Excerpts from a Sheep Journal

La Petite Bergére
Tammy Duensing
Prairie du Rocher, IL
(618) 284-7766

~ For Sale ~

Black Ram
“Colt 045”

1st place at Butler 2002
Sired 6 for 6 black lambs
Easy to manage, halter broke
Half interest available

Yearling ewes and lambs also available

Continued from page 1

President’s Message

judge at NAILE commented that the breed had come a long way in a short time. The judge (from CA) at the Western Stock Show in Denver said he could not believe the quality of the Border Leicesters brought out.

Some of our members are developing a commercial market. Our Secretary, Di Waibel, sold a ram to a commercial flock in Canada.

As this is written, the by-laws are being fine tuned so we can become incorporated as a non-profit organization. This needs to be done in order to protect our members and directors. All this is happening. We have much to be proud of.

My major problem with my three years on the Board was the lack of input from you, the members. We have a GREAT breed of sheep and the opportunity is there to make them known - to increase their value. It is the responsibility of every breeder to promote our breed in all ways. I think too many of us have these sheep for the wool and forget they are the true dual purpose breed. If you know somebody raising market lambs, try to get them to use a Border Leicester ram and work with them. It might not pay this year, but I guarantee, down the road it will. Best of luck to everyone and please support your board. They expend a lot of time and money on your behalf.

Archie Murray

Continued from page 8

Meadowland Farm
...Raising quality Border Leicesters for over 15 years with correct conformation and exceptional white and colored fleeces....
(featured in Spring 2003 Issue of Spin-Off Magazine)

Registered Breeding Stock:
Mature ewes, yearlings and lambs for sale

Sue Johnson ♦ Hinesburg, VT 05461
802-482-2507
SUJOHNSN@TOGETHER.NET

Tammy Duensing
Prairie du Rocher, IL
(618) 284-7766

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The lambing at Mist O Morn Farm is complete for the year 2004. Our New Zealand Braemore lambs look good. Our first crop of New Zealand cross lambs from a Studleigh ram bred back to the Braemore ram are above our expectations.

The overall quality of the wool on the Braemore cross lambs is excellent. For 35 years I have been trying to have a consistent fleece on an animal that could withstand the Oregon rain without having the cross fibers that allow the fleece to felt in extreme rain. The sheep have gone through one of the worst winters we have had in many a year. We sheared these Braemore crosses with 9 month fleeces. The fleeces are between 7 and 8 inches long and very consistent. There is no matting, the crimp is very even from top to bottom, and they have sheared approximately 15 to 16 pounds per animal. As a handspinner, I can hardly wait to get started processing one of these for spinning.

I was working full time in Portland so my flock had to be very self-sufficient. They were checked in the morning and evening, but the rest of the time they were pretty much on their own. They were culled heavily for just about everything. I don’t particularly like triplets, so I culled heavily for that trait as well. Our lambing percentage now is about 180% and that fits in well with the barn facilities and pasture space we have. Twins are jugged up for a couple of days, but the singles are just moved over from one pasture to another.

About 23 years ago, I took a fall with a horse and broke my back which put me in a wheelchair. Many changes were again made to accommodate the wheelchair, but these sheep are grand. If raised on the farm with the dogs in full use, they are the easiest creatures in the world to deal with. We never have any trouble with the rams and there are always several around. The ewes are gentle and nice to work with. We do have a lot of concrete around the barns and a good handling system so most of the work can be done with just me and the dog, if necessary. It is always nice to have help and in the last few years we have had that. The pastures are all sliced in sections so they all come straight back to the concrete. That keeps me out of the mud in the winter and allows us to change pastures very easily.

I’m sure I don’t handle my sheep like most other sheep farmers and without a good dog I’m just totally handicapped. However, I raise my own dogs and train them here on the farm and we seem to get along pretty well. Currently, I have five dogs who all live in the house with me.

Several years ago, we looked into using artificial insemination with semen from New Zealand because we were unable to find the bloodlines that we were looking for. I was able to locate the same stud farm in New Zealand where my first rams originally came from and we have come full circle. We usually only register about 25% of the lambs born with the ABLA….only the best of the best get a number. The rest are sold as grade or market lambs. I have reduced my flock down to about 95 sheep.

I have now retired from working full-time and can spend more time with the sheep. I can take care of their fleeces better and will have a much better market for the wool at a good price. There are lots of handspinners in my area and they do like good fleeces. I’m looking forward to some time to simply improve my flock, maybe put some rams in some of the local feed programs for young rams. I would also love to make it to NAILE one year. Maybe next year…

Editor’s note – Di has been an ABLA member for some 30 years. She served on the board for a number of years as secretary/treasurer. Currently, she is the Board-appointed secretary. Her dedication and many years of service make her an invaluable resource to the Association. Thank you, Di!

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Member Profile...

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Scrapie Requirements for Show Season

From Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

As we are quickly approaching summer shows, we should review the scrapie requirements for interstate movement. All shows, including your local county fair, are considered interstate movement. All breeding sheep require the flock of origin scrapie tag regardless of their age. This tag should be put in the ear by the owner of the lamb at the time of birth. They do not necessarily need to be tagged at birth, but do need to be tagged before they leave the farm. These requirements have raised a number of common questions:

Do wether lambs need to have scrapie tags?
All castrated male lambs are exempt from the scrapie requirement. They do not have to be tagged with an official tag. All intact ram lambs must be tagged regardless of age.

I purchased a ewe from a breeder last year and plan to show her this year. Can I tag her with tags that were issued to me?
Yes, even though she was not born on your farm, you can use your tag. You should note in your records that she was a purchased ewe and from whom you purchased her.

I purchased a ewe from a breeder and it was tagged. Now it has lost its tag. What do I do?
You should tag the ewe with your tag and note in your records the previous owner and, if possible, the number of the tag that was lost.

I am only planning on going to our county fair. Do my sheep need tags?
Any show, even county fairs, is considered interstate movement and all breeding sheep require tags.

I am only showing a market ewe lamb. Does she need a tag?
Yes, because she is a ewe lamb she needs a tag even though you do not intend on breeding her.

I am going to purchase my lambs from a neighbor. Do they need tags?
If you intend on showing the lambs, I would encourage you to have your neighbor tag them before or at the time of purchase. Within state sale of sheep is not covered by the Federal Regulations, but it is in your best interest to have all sheep that you are purchasing tagged by the seller.

Can my sheep acquire scrapie from other sheep at the show?
Sheep from a flock that is quarantined for scrapie are not allowed to go to shows. Contact at a show is considered limited exposure and is a low risk for scrapie transmission. Lambing time is the highest risk time period for scrapie transmission. Contact with placental fluid and afterbirth may cause transmission to offspring and lambs from other ewes.

Last year we were not required to have health papers to attend shows. Will this change?
Show health requirements/regulations are made by the State Veterinarian in the state of the show. You should check with the show a few weeks before as the requirements may be different this year.

~ Correction ~

An article in the Winter 2004 issue entitled “Marketing Sheep via the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival” gave a great suggestion of putting sheep for sale in your pen with your show sheep. Unfortunately, the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival has changed their policy. From the MDSWF web site: “Due to space constraints only animals for exhibit will be penned.”

~ Correction ~
CANDIDATES FOR ABLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2004 ELECTION

Tammy Duensing

My name is Tammy Duensing and I live in Southern Illinois. I have been raising Border Leicesters for eight years. Although I maintain a small flock of eight ewes, their health and care are a big priority to me. I breed for color while striving to improve wool density, bone density and conformation.

I’m very proud of my sheep and want to take part in their promotion in this country.

Polly Hopkins

My name is Polly Hopkins and I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. I am employed full-time as a legal secretary in a law firm with four lawyers. I live with my husband, Kevin, and two children, Sarah (22) and Christopher (15), in Chepachet, Rhode Island. As a family, we run Maybe Tomorrow Farm where we raise Border Leicesters, Cheviots, Natural Coloreds and a few Hampshires and Southdowns.

I have been involved in the sheep business my whole life. My grandparents started Seldom Seen Farm in the 1950’s with Cheviots and Hampshires. My parents then took over the flock, eventually selling the Cheviots to raise Dorsets. They then sold the Dorsets and a few years ago started a flock of Border Leicesters.

Growing up, my siblings and I raised Southdowns and participated in 4-H and FFA activities, as well as working with the other breeds my parents raised and showed. After college, I took over the Aries 4-H Club and am still a leader, with a club that presently has 22 members.

Over the years, I have been involved in many local and area sheep associations. I have been Director, Secretary, and President (an office I presently hold for the second time) of the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative. This group holds two events a year for its members with guest speakers giving sheep related talks/demonstrations and greatly supports youth activities in Rhode Island and at the 4-H Sheep Show at Eastern States Exposition. I have also been a Director, Treasurer, Vice President and President of the New England Sheep & Wool Growers, and presently am Ex Officio.

In conjunction with my involvement with NES&WG, I was a member of the initial committee that formed the North East Youth Sheep Show. I was Secretary/Treasurer of this Committee for many years until the job was split, and I am now the Secretary of the Youth Show Committee.

The Youth Show, which is in its 20th year, started with four breeds and has grown to 14 breeds with approximately 200-250 kids showing around 600-700 head of sheep. Last year, I am happy to say, I was instrumental in running the Border Leicester Breed Show as part of the Youth Show—thanks to the financial support of many Border Leicester breeders.

I have also recently been voted to my second term as a County Committee Member for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). As a family, we exhibit our sheep each summer around New England and have taken the kids to Louisville twice for the Junior Show. Both of our children have attended the National FFA Convention with their respective Livestock Judging Teams. I enjoy working with kids and believe that the “sheep business” is a great family opportunity. Here in New England, the sheep programs are geared to teach kids to raise, fit and show their own animals, and I encourage and support all youths to learn these skills. I have found the Border Leicester breed to be an easy breed for kids to raise and handle. I would be honored to be able to promote the Border Leicester breed on behalf of the ABLA.

Janet Tulloch

I live in Ramona, California and have been raising Border Leicesters since 1996. I purchased a very nice “starter” flock from Di Waibel in Oregon, and have been raising Border Leicesters since then. My flock numbers 15, in Chepachet, Rhode Island. As a family, we run Maybe Tomorrow Farm where we raise Border Leicesters, Cheviots, Natural Coloreds and a few Hampshires and Southdowns.

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Kelly Mansfield

Help Needed to Start a Wool Breed Show at WV State Fair

Help is needed to start a Wool Breed Show at the West Virginia State Fair, which is held each August in Lewisburg, WV. The 2004 shows have been finalized, so the goal would be to have it begin in 2005. If you might be interested in exhibiting sheep at this fair, please contact Kelly Mansfield. She needs signed letters from people interested in exhibiting sheep next year. The letter should include the breed you plan to show, as well as the number of sheep you would bring. Please share this information with other breeders of wool sheep, as this show will include all wool breeds.

Mail letters to:
Kelly Mansfield
852 Archer Road
Kearneysville, WV 25430

For more information contact Kelly:
304-725-8577
kjm79@earthlink.net

Nancy Smith

What in the world do you do with all that wool??

Inquiring minds want to know! Please share with other ABLA members the ways you use or market your wool. We’d like to collect the information for a future article. Please send the details to:

Nancy Smith
smithfamily@gmavt.net
OUR 2004 MODELS ARE OUR NICEST YET!
THEY LOOK GOOD FROM ANY ANGLE...

Above and right are our 2004 yearling rams. Their sires are Driscoll 55F, shown below at 8 years of age, or “Vern”, Silver Mountain 160, 2002 North American International Champion Ram.

Our leading ladies, below are as equally exciting.

See our Leicesters At
• Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival
• World Sheep & Wool Congress (if the border opens)
• Midwestern State Fairs
• The Big E Eastern Regional Show
• The National Show in Louisville

Give us a call for all your breeding or showing needs. Come pick yours out at the farm. We have over 70 lambs to choose from!

Driscoll 55F
Shown in his working clothes, he has sired more Louisville Champions or Reserve Champions than any other ram in the breed. We have another great set of 55F lambs on the ground now.

DEAKIN FAMILY FARMS
21632 N. Cameron Rd.
Cuba, IL 61427
309/785-5115
## 2004 Upcoming Events

### April
- **24**
  - Connecticut Sheep, Wool & Fiber Festival
  - Tolland Ag Center
  - Vernon, CT
  - www.ctsheep.org

### May
- **1-2**
  - Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival
  - Howard County Fairgrounds
  - Friendship, MD
  - www.sheepandwool.org

- **8-9**
  - New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Festival
  - Hopkinton State Fairgrounds
  - Contoocook, NH
  - www.yankeeshepherd.com

- **22-23**
  - Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair
  - Cummington Fairgrounds
  - Cummington, MA
  - www.masheepwool.org

### June
- **3-5**
  - Heart of America Sheep Show & Fiber Fest
  - Nevada, MO
  - www.moncwga.com

- **5-6**
  - Southwest Montana Flock & Fiber Festival
  - Beaverhead Co. Fairgrounds
  - Dillon, MT
  - Info: rainbow@montana.com

- **12-13**
  - Estes Park Wool Market
  - Stanley Park Fairgrounds
  - Estes, CO
  - www.estesnet.com

- **12-13**
  - Maine Fiber Frolic
  - Windsor Fairgrounds
  - Windsor, ME
  - www.fiberfrolic.com

- **15**
  - Submission Deadline for the Summer Issue of The ABLA Quarterly News

### July
- **15-18**
  - N.E. Sheep Show & Sale
  - Eastern States Exposition
  - West Springfield, MA
  - Info: 413-624-5562

- **17-24**
  - World Sheep & Wool Congress
  - Quebec City, Canada
  - www.worldsheep.com

### August
- **21-22**
  - Michigan Fiber Festival
  - Allegan County Fairgrounds
  - Allegan, MI
  - www.michiganfiberfestival.org

- **25-29**
  - Nevada State Fair
  - Reno Livestock Events Center
  - Reno, NV
  - www.nevadastatefair.org

### Submission Deadline for the Summer Issue of The ABLA Quarterly News