Dear ABLA Members:

The Border Leicester breed is on the move and I'm glad we're all part of it! 2004 was a fine year for our Association with the strong growth that we experienced. At year-end, registrations and transfers will end up around 30% higher than a year ago with the final totals being announced soon.

Associated Sheep Registry is giving us excellent turnaround with our registry work and is a very cooperative and friendly group to work with. Yes, there is still some tweaking to do and your work may need to be resubmitted to fill in a missing genealogical hole, but within a couple short years we will have complete pedigree information on our entire active ewe and ram base. We are making every attempt to have the information our membership demands be put on the registration papers and ASR is doing all they can to accommodate our wishes.

We capped off 2004 with an excellent National Border Leicester Show in Louisville, Kentucky. The quality was deep and spectators were plentiful at the show. Our breed was paled against the Suffolks showing in the other ring and it was warming to have them watching our show as intently as many of them were watching theirs. The Border Leicester breed got a lot of positive exposure in the sheep industry with our show time slot and plenty of fine comments were made about our breed when the show was done. Many people said they were very impressed with Border Leicesters and many said they had never seen them exhibited before.

The spirit of cooperation at Louisville was high as ABLA member Nancy

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Barbara Thompson • Seldom Seen Farm
Chepachet, RI

Marcus and I were married in February 1952, and began our life together on Seldom Seen Farm. The original farm had been owned by Marcus’ great great grandmother and was later restored by Marcus’ parents. At the time we were married, there were a few Hereford cows, a handful of Cheviot ewes, and three Hampshire ewes and a ram purchased from Charlie Smith of Skowhegan, Maine, on the farm. All livestock was primarily for meat for the freezer. It was just the beginning.

We took a few Hampshires to Rocky Hill State Fair in Rhode Island in August of that year and that was our first showing experience. In September, we attended Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts with the same Hampshires and have exhibited there every year since, except for 1958 when our daughter Jill decided to be born on Hampshire show day!

We branched out to Dorsets, then Polled Dorsets and dropped the Cheviots. When our children were old enough for 4-H, they all had a small flock of Southdowns. We traveled the show circuit from Harrisburg, PA to Syracuse, NY to Rutland, VT to Rehoboth, Plymouth County, Brockton and Great Barrington, MA to Keene, NH to Bridgewater, Woodstock and Brooklyn, CT. We have met such wonderful people along the way! Sheep people are really the salt of the earth. It has all been a labor of love.

Matching our “hobby”, Marcus was also a wool buyer for The Worsted Company and we traveled throughout the country meeting more great sheep people in the Dakotas, Colorado, Ohio, and Texas.

When the children left home, we dropped back to just raising Hampshires, but with my interest in spinning and knitting, we purchased a few Border Leicesters in 1999 and have never looked back. The browsing ability, mild temperament, and easy care of the Border Leicesters are impressive. As a result, their numbers have mushroomed to 18 ewes, 5 yearlings, and 2 rams - one black, one white. We do still have 14 Hampshire ewes to lamb this year.

Both our daughters, who live close by, are still involved with sheep. I think it gets in the blood at an early age! Polly and Kevin Hopkins, and their daughter Sarah, have a good size flock consisting of Cheviots, Southdowns, Border Leicesters, Black Fine Wools, and two Hampshires, plus Lionhead rabbits. Their son, Christopher, has been developing his own flock of white Border Leicesters for the last 4 years. Jill Morton and

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Continued on page 18
The winter issue has landed! After a slow start, and several topic changes along the way, we are pleased to have an issue with a lambing focus. Since most of you are probably still waiting for lambs, we thought articles that pertain to lambing and pregnant ewes would be most helpful. If you are already done lambing and are sitting back and watching them grow, please let Archie Murray know. He swears that Border Leicesters won’t lamb before February 1st 😊

We’ve dug up a couple articles by Susan Schoeni that deal with health issues in pregnant ewes. She’s done a nice job of making the issues more understandable. Here’s hoping you won’t need the information, but it’s best to be equipped in case you do. Wool Slip, by Dr. Bobb, was the explanation for one ewe in our flock. I’m grateful to know what it is and how to deal with it. If your ewes are lambing later than expected or they’re having singles instead of twins, Dr. Goelz’s article on Early Embryonic Death may give you some insights. And just when I thought I was doing this job alone, the members of the ABLASheep Yahoo Group came to the rescue with a long list of lambing tips! Thanks to all of you for encouraging this weary editor!

We’ve heard from many of you (via your membership renewal forms) that you’d like certain topics to be addressed in the newsletter. This information is helpful to us. We’ll try to cover some of those requested topics in each issue. In this issue, we’re responding to a member’s request for information about giving shots with two articles related to injections and vaccinations. You ol’ timers may be able to give shots with your eyes closed, but you might not know about antigens and adjuvants. Hopefully, there’s something for everyone in this issue.

Speaking of membership renewal forms, if you have not sent in your dues for 2005, this will be your last newsletter. Surely, you don’t want to miss future newsletters or to be left out of the member directory! Send those dues in today!

We’ve got big plans for the spring issue and, as always, need your input. Several members have asked for information about preparing Border Leicesters for a show and about showing in general. Could we put our heads together and come up with some articles about showing? We’ll all benefit if Border Leicesters are getting more exposure in the show ring.

As Greg has stated in his President’s Message, our organization is truly moving forward. We hope, with your help, to keep that momentum going with a newsletter that is a credit to the Association.

We wish all of you the best lambing season ever!

~ Nancy Smith and Sue Johnson, Editors

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

The submission deadline for the next issue is March 15, 2005.
Please send lots of good stuff to Nancy Smith, Editor.
smithfamily@gmavt.net
The need to assist the ewe at lambing is normally caused by three things:
1. lamb size (large)
2. pelvis size of the ewe, and
3. improper position of the lamb or lambs.

Lambing difficulties are often more common in the farm flock because of over-condition and/or lack of exercise. A good sheep manager should grow out ewe lambs so they can be bred to lamb as yearlings. These should be watched closely, as they commonly will have more difficulty than mature ewes.

Lambing Symptoms

Lambing is near when the vulva swells, the udder will fill with milk, and the ewe becomes restless, often going off alone in the barn or pasture. A sunken-in or hollow (gaunt) appears between the ribs and hips. The ewe will then begin contractions or straining. The water bag that surrounds the unborn will show. This often can show and return to the inside of the ewe a number of times. When birth actually begins, the water bag that has cushioned the fetus will burst with a gush of fluid. Then normal birth should occur within 30-45 minutes. If it does not, an examination should be made. Do not be too eager to help the ewe. An over-anxious sheepman can often meddle. A natural birth is best.

When Should I Help?

This is one of the most often asked questions of sheepmen. Do not assist the ewe by pulling the lamb out unless the ewe is in distress and a problem is evident. Before you can determine this, an understanding of the different positions is necessary and are discussed later.

Signs of distress are:
1. If a lamb is arriving in an abnormal position and natural birth cannot be had.
2. If a ewe has all lambing symptoms and has been in labor for about one hour and no part of the lamb appears.

Sanitation

When it is necessary to examine a ewe, the shepherd should wash well with soap and water and use a disinfectant. A lubricant on the hands is important. You can use mineral oil, cooking oil, Vaseline, liquid soap or other non-harsh materials. Be sure fingernails are trimmed and short.

Birth Positions

Before starting delivery, you must determine the difficulty by knowing different birth positions and being able to identify the position of the lamb accurately. When you make an examination, try to determine the body position, locate the head, if possible, and if you are feeling front or hind legs. Make sure the legs you feel are attached to only one lamb. If it is possible to obtain a dead lamb, work with it so you can identify the parts. Try with eyes closed so feel will tell the story.

Normal - The presentation is with the front legs first and the head resting on or between the legs. The frontal feet appear first. Sometimes the front leg can be locked against the pelvis. Pulling steady on one leg at a time will straighten this.

Leg turned or back - A leg or head can be turned back. If one foot appears, push the leg back inside. Enter, and turn or pull the second leg along side into normal position. If the head is presented with no legs, try to push the body back and slowly bring one or both legs up past the head into normal position and deliver. Both legs out are preferred, but sometimes it is possible to deliver with one leg and the head out.

Head back or turned - The front legs can be in the normal position and the head turned back and delivery stopped. A plastic or greased cord or lamb puller may be necessary in this instance. The cord or puller wire should be inserted ahead of the hand and slipped over the head behind the ears. Push back the lamb and pull or turn the head into position and complete the delivery. Sometimes a cord looped on the feet can also be helpful in pulling. Do not hang the lamb with the cord.

Back legs first (breech birth) - If you see this position, do not attempt to turn the lamb around, but continue with delivery in this direction as quickly as possible. Do not jerk as the rib cage could become locked and injury occur. In this position, the lamb can suffocate because the nostrils appears last. Try not to break the navel cord until the lamb is breathing.

On back (upside down) - Sometimes the lamb can be found on its back. If this occurs it must be rotated or turned before delivery is attempted. If the side or back of the lamb is presented, try to get the lamb in normal position before completing delivery.

Twins together - If two lambs try to come together, try to determine which will come the easier. Then push the other back so they can come one at a time. Be sure to check the second because when this happens it will probably be out of position and need assistance. Give the ewe a chance to deliver normally, but only wait a few minutes.

Dilation and Movement

Some ewes and lambs fail to dilate. Dilation may be stimulated by pushing two fingers into the cervix and spreading them as they are pulled out. This may need to be done for some time, but can help natural dilation.

Sometimes to correct abnormal presentation, it is helpful to change the position of the ewe. Roll her from side to side or elevate the hindquarters.

Following an assisted delivery, the uterus should be medicated. Consult your veterinarian for recommended antibiotic. If you encounter any problems that you are not sure of, call your veterinarian for assistance. If you mess things up too badly, the vet might not do any good either. Some lambs are so big or tangled they may need to be cut out or a caesarean performed on the ewe.

Proper care immediately after delivery is important to the lamb. The three main causes of lamb death are chills, starvation, and infections.

Lambing is the most important time of the year. Ewes and lambs saved may mean the difference between profit and failure.

~ John Leffel was once the Area Livestock Extension Agent for Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah Counties in Oregon. He is now retired. He wrote this article in 1978 as a handout for area shepherds. We made a good faith effort to contact John, but were unable to reach him. We don’t think John will mind us “handing out” his wisdom to a new generation of shepherds. Thanks to Di Waibel for sharing this article!
Lambing Tips from ABLA Members

Sue Johnson
Meadowland Farm
Hinesburg, VT

Clipping, dipping, and stripping - It is important for the umbilical cord to be disinfected soon after a lamb is born to prevent infection and other problems that can occur from the dirty surroundings most lambs are born in.

After the mom is coaxed into a clean, well-bedded pen with her newborn(s), take a pair of scissors (or even pinching with your fingernails) and CLIP off the cord at least 3 inches from the lamb’s body. DIP the cord, which is still attached to the lamb in a 7% solution of iodine. Some use an “iodine cup” purchased at an animal supply house. I use the bottle of iodine (used only for that purpose). Pick up the lamb under its front legs and put its cord into the bottle or cup, holding the bottle tight against the navel. Hold the lamb against your chest and allow the iodine to coat the cord for at least 5 seconds. Then STRIP the first bit of milk from the mom’s udder. This is extremely important as some lambs have a hard time sucking the waxy plug out of the teat. Often this can mean the difference between a starving lamb and mastitis in a ewe, if not done. And also you will know right away if the mom’s udder is working properly on both sides. If not, you can take other measures right away to see that the new lambs get off to a good start.

A good start! - It’s always good to check on new lambs every few hours their first day to be sure they are getting all the milk they need. You can easily tell if their bellies are full just by feeling them. They should feel round and full. If the lambs are standing “hunched” or laying around too much, chances are they are hungry. Help them on the teat and make sure they get a “good suck”. If, after sucking quite a while and them still feeling “hollow,” maybe the mom does not have enough milk right now (sometimes it takes a while for the milk to drop) or she may not have enough at all and you have to consider feeding one of them. Check them for a few days.

Be prepared! - At least a week before lambing is scheduled to begin, have all your supplies ready. A two or three gallon bucket usually holds all the things you need. Mine has iodine, scissors, bottle of 7% iodine for navels, small jar of 70% alcohol (for putting in ear tags), rubber (tail) bands, the elastrator that puts the bands on the tail, ear tags, ear punch, wax, crayon, a ball point pen, and notebook with a lambing chart to record all births when they happen, a bottle of oral vitamin solution and 6cc syringe to administer it (kept in small plastic bag to keep clean). Having some CLEAN cotton towels in the barn is handy as well as some old sheets or blankets to put around the pen if the barn is drafty.

Darline Mason
Starr Hill Ranch
Paso Robles, CA

When we have lambs we are concerned about, we place a dog shipping crate in for them. We can put extra bedding in the
crate and the crate is off the barn floor allowing for extra insulation. Then when the lamb and ewe go out to the fields, we usually have several dog crates scattered around the field so if a lamb gets a little chilled it will go into the crate and the ewe sleeps next to it. It makes for a cheap extra barn for the lambs.

Correy and Brin McAtee
Farmer Girls’ Friends
Prineville, OR

Shear ewes before lambing. Cleaner lambing, cleaner barn, cleaner fleecees.

Always assist a lambing when you find one. Never lost a lamb from helping too soon (other folks may disagree with this one, but this policy has worked for us).

If you have a ewe that you are assisting, who is not ‘lamb talking’, while you are working within her, smear some birth fluids on her muzzle. Often as she licks it off, the taste/smell will start her talking and looking for her lamb. This is also useful when grafting lambs.

We dose each lamb with some form of nutritional drench and iodine the navel as soon as it is found.

Every lamb gets tubed with 5 ounces of colostrum (mom’s or a donor’s) or colostrum replacer either at 2 hours from birth or when found. Triplets, weak lambs, or lambs from weak mothers get at least 5 ounces more in 6 and 10 hours later.

Good ewes with strong lambs go out in mixing pen the next day. First timers and triplets, or other problems stay in as long as needed.

Feeding ewes alfalfa or hay pellets or cubes in lambing jugs will reduce hay waste. Feed ewes 2 lbs. grain (corn) per lamb when moved to mixing pen. Free choice hay.

A good lamb creep is a wise investment.

Darlene Megli
Megli Farm
Lamar, MO

I use a barrel with an opening cut at the bottom, for a lamb warmer for small, chilled lambs - the big 55 gallon barrels, plastic ones. I take the top fill plug out, put a light bulb, about 60 watt in it, fasten it in a corner, fill the floor with straw, and the bulb will make it very cozy. If you were in a very cold climate, you might need a larger light bulb. If I happen to have some throw away fleece on hand, will use that instead of straw.

Put your iodine in a screw top bottle, then just take the cap off it, put over the cord, and turn upside down for a few seconds. No waste, no spills.

I not only give my ewes some molasses water, but put some apple cider vinegar in it as well. This gives them some instant carbohydrates, and the cider vinegar, well I don't know, but I feel my sheep have better fleece, stand the heat better, and have less worms when I use it on a regular basis.

I invested in a tank heater, it does not really heat the water, but it is warmer than just out of the hydrant, and of course it does not freeze, and the ewes will drink more of this water. Water in = milk out.

I feed at about 3-4 in the afternoon. Most of the ewes will lamb between 8-3 daytime on this schedule. Have fed that way for about 5 years now, and rarely have a ewe lamb during the night, and if they do, they are on their own, as I do not spend the night in the barn. Last check is about 10 p.m. if I am at home and about 4:30 p.m. if it is a work night.

Basically, I do nothing special for my sheep at lambing time. Their job description is to have that baby, and take care of it. If they cannot do that, except in very unusual circumstances, they are history. I feel that if you keep for mothering and milking ability, and ease of lambing you will have that as a dominant trait in your flock. I work full-time as well and do not have time for extra pampering of the livestock. Occasionally, you will have a lamb presenting breech and will have to assist, or a foot back, but hopefully this doesn't happen too often.

My ewes are in jugs after they lamb and stay there for 3-4 days - depends on how they are bonding, and how many new I have coming on! Then they go into group pens, and this year I will be able to separate the twins and singles. The twin mommas need more feed than the single, and hopefully there will be no triplets.

Archie Murray
Lamar Leicesters
Lamar, NE

How we lamb at Lamar Leicesters: We turn the rams in August 15th, hoping for January lambs, but these are Border Leicesters, so they lamb from February 1 to March 15. This year we have a ram in till January 1st hoping to get some ewe lambs bred.

We flush with Vitalix 27% Sheep and Goat tubs for two weeks before turning the rams in. We leave the tubs in for 2 months. On the 15th of December, we put the tubs in till we are done lambing to prevent twin lamb disease. We feed high quality hay from December 1st till the lambs are weaned - these are big round bales, self fed.

We shear all the ewes (except the ones we are showing in Denver) on January 1st. The ones going to Denver we shear there right after the show. We have an open front shed we can close up if we get moisture in the first week after shearing, but do not let the ewes in there unless it is wet.

We let the ewes lamb outside as we find they do it quicker if they pick the spot. We will then jug them for 2 or 3 days when we spot them. We check ewes last thing at night and first thing in the morning. Other than that they are on their own.

We tattoo one ear, tag, and band the tail the first day. When the lamb is 6 months old we tattoo the other ear.

The ewes with lambs are allowed to get in the shed. Ewes with triplets are on their own - we do not bottle feed. We expect our ewes to lamb on their own, keep their lambs alive till we find them, and feed and water many they have on their own. The ones that do not have a

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When a pregnant ewe takes ill, a likely cause is pregnancy toxemia. Pregnancy toxemia goes by several other names including pregnancy disease, twin lamb disease, lambing paralysis, and ketosis.

Pregnancy toxemia is a metabolic disorder caused by low glucose concentrations in the blood and excessive breakdown of body fat to compensate. "Ketones" are the toxic by-product produced during this rapid breakdown of fat, and it is possible to test for their presence in the ewe's urine.

Inadequate nutrition during the last one-third of pregnancy is the primary cause of low blood sugar/pregnancy toxemia, as ewes cannot consume enough feed (energy) to meet the demands of their growing fetus(es). This is because approximately 70 percent of fetal growth occurs during the last 4 to 6 weeks of pregnancy.

Over-conditioned (condition score 4/5 or more) ewes are susceptible to pregnancy toxemia because of fat in their abdominal region - there simply isn't enough room in the gut for the ewe to eat enough - and excessive fat resources for breakdown. Under-conditioned (condition score 2 or less) ewes are susceptible because they cannot eat enough to meet their own nutritional needs, let alone the added burden of developing fetuses.

Ewes carrying multiple births are also at high risk for pregnancy toxemia. Ewes carrying twins require 1.9 times the dry matter intake as ewes with singles. Ewes with triplet fetuses require 230% more energy than ewes with singles. In fact, anything that affects the ewe's ability to eat enough during late gestation can result in pregnancy toxemia: multiple fetuses, fat ewes, thin ewes, small ewes, timid ewes, Granny ewes, dental disease, parasitism, and lack of exercise.

The symptoms of pregnancy toxemia are vague and can be similar to other diseases, especially hypocalcemia or milk fever. Milk fever can be differentiated from pregnancy toxemia by the affected ewe's response to calcium therapy. Ewes in early stages of pregnancy toxemia will go off feed and appear lethargic. Their heads droop and they lag behind the rest of the flock and walk aimlessly. Teeth grinding and twitching is common. Eventually, affected ewes become depressed, weak and have poor muscle control. In latter stages, they lie down and are unable to rise. If left untreated, coma and death result.

Successful treatment of pregnancy toxemia requires early detection and steps to quickly meet the energy (glucose) needs of the affected ewe. The most common treatment is to drench ewes with 2 to 3 ounces of propylene glycol 2 to 3 times daily. Yogurt mixed with water will also provide energy and bacteria to stimulate the rumen. Intravenous glucose is another possibility, but harder for producers to do on the farm. Force feeding and/or injections of multiple B vitamins can help stimulate the ewe's appetite. Antibiotics can be administered to prevent pneumonia. In advanced cases, a caesarian section may need to be performed to remove the fetuses and save the ewe's life. If the lambs are near term, oftentimes, they too, can be saved. The nutrition of the entire flock should be suspect anytime a ewe shows indications of pregnancy toxemia.

Of course, like other diseases, it makes more sense to prevent pregnancy toxemia than to treat it. To achieve this, it is absolutely essential that ewes be provided adequate energy in their ration during the last 4 to 6 weeks of gestation. Good quality hay should be provided, along with grain supplementation, beginning at .5 lbs and increasing to 1 ½ to 2 lbs. per head per day until the time of parturition. Grain and molasses are excellent sources of energy. Hay alone usually doesn't provide enough energy for ewes carrying twins and triplets. Exercise is also deemed important in the prevention of pregnancy toxemia.

Abrupt feed changes must also be avoided, and ewes should not be stressed during late pregnancy. There must be adequate feeder space so that all ewes can fit around the feeders and get their fair share of hay and grain. Producers should strive to have ewes in moderate body flesh (condition score of 3+) prior to lambing. Ewes should be prevented from becoming obese during early pregnancy, and thin ewes should be separated and receive extra feed until they achieve the desired condition score.

~ © 2002 Maryland Small Ruminant Page. Susan Schoenian is a Sheep & Goat Specialist with the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. We appreciate her allowing us to reprint her articles.

2005 Wool Blanket Co-op
By Sherry Stahl Wellborn

The 2005 Wool Blanket Co-op will be sending clean wool to Wheelock Textiles in Uxbridge, MA. Farms raising Leicesters, Romneys, and Coopworths are invited to participate. Each farm sends its own clean wool, decides on its own blanket order, and does its own blanket marketing. Sofa throws, twins, fulls, queens, and kings are available.

We need at least 400 pounds of white wool and 400 pounds of colored wool to do one run each of white and colored blankets. If we have enough wool, we will be able to order plaid throws similar to the photo above. We will need another 400 pounds of both colors to create the run of plaid throws. Otherwise, the throws will be solid white or colored. We will probably be shipping our wool at the same time we did last year - between March 1 and April 1, 2005. Our wool will be spun and woven as a batch together. Any amount of wool is acceptable as long as it's enough for one blanket or two throws. The co-op coordinator will require a wool sample to help ensure the quality of the wool sent.

For details, contact Sherry Stahl Wellborn, Dancing Sheep Farm, sherry@dancingsheepfarm.com or 541-484-1440.
I recently had a friend call me about a sick ewe she had. She had been unable to reach her vet and was more than worried about this ewe. After listening to my friend tell me the symptoms and the timing involved, I told her it sounded like pregnancy toxemia or ketosis to me. I told her if it were my ewe, I would have a vet there as soon as possible. Years ago I had a ewe come down with pregnancy disease and it was a lesson well-learned.

Well, my friend eventually took the ewe by trailer to the closest vet who diagnosed pregnancy toxemia and told her how to treat the ewe. She lost the ewe and the lambs she carried. This is a hard one to win, but there are some definite things you can do to keep your breeding ewes from getting into trouble in the first place.

From all I have read, pregnancy toxemia is the most common occurring metabolic disease of sheep. Improperly fed ewes in late pregnancy are affected. It is often observed in overly fat ewes, as well as ewes in poor condition. Usually affected ewes are carrying twin or triplet lambs. What it amounts to is inadequate energy intake by the pregnant ewe, and usually occurs during late gestation or at lambing. Stress factors such as shearing, transporting, severe weather exposure, and predator attacks can precipitate outbreaks of the disease. The affected ewes appear depressed, exhibit a lack of appetite, have a staggering gait, will separate from the flock, and exhibit nervousness….not always all of the above….but they just don’t look like they feel good and have a hard time getting up.

It is generally accepted that the basic cause of pregnancy toxemia is a disturbance of carbohydrate or sugar metabolism which is associated with or results in hypoglycemia (low sugar level). Unless treated early it is a highly fatal disease.

Since my first experience with this nasty problem, I have taken great care to make sure my bred ewes are in the right condition coming into breeding time. I make sure they are fed in a manner where they are at least a 3 to 3 ½ on a condition scale of 1-4 (with 1 being the low end of the condition scale and 4 being fat) six weeks prior to lambing. At that time, I add about a quarter pound of grain per day to their diet and add liquid molasses as a free sugar choice. It is rather messy to deal with, but it gives them the carbs they need on a daily basis as the lambs grow rapidly at this time. As they get closer to lambing, they do not have as much capacity for feed intake and I, therefore, slowly raise the amount of pellets or grain they are fed until they are getting about a pound per day just before they lamb. I make sure the molasses is handy where all can reach it.

For a guide on what to feed and how to feed, I have used the Sheep Pocket Guide from the North Dakota Animal Health Department Sheep Pocket Guide. Years ago, I was lucky enough to find one of these great little handbooks. It is pretty much my bible and has been for a number of years. If you cannot find an actual pocket guide you can go online and find it there. I suggest you print off the material and keep it in a folder. It is extremely handy. You can find it at the following address: www.ag.nodak.edu/livestock.htm. From there go to sheep publications and from there go to sheep pocket guide. This is a great guide for just about anything that has to do with raising sheep.
Milk Fever Strikes
by Susan Schoenian
University of Maryland Cooperative Extension

Recently, I had my first case of milk fever (hypocalcemia), my first instance in over twenty years of sheep raising. The ewes were two to three weeks from lambing. I had gone out of town for a few days and asked a neighbor to feed for me. My ewes are small to medium sized -- purebred Katahdins bred to a 3/4 Dorper ram. They were receiving 2 lbs. of whole barley per day, plus 2 lbs. of a mixed grass/clover hay, split into two feedings. They also had free choice access to a trace mineral mix, which they had been consuming like gang busters.

When I returned from my trip and fed my sheep that evening, they didn’t go after the feed like they normally had. One ewe was off feed completely. I checked with my neighbor and she said everything had been fine while I was gone. I went to bed, hoping that everything would be back to normal the next morning. But, the next morning, I found another ewe down, splayed out, with her head cocked back. Her temperature was normal and she was slightly bloated. There wasn’t much life left in her. She had a stilted gait.

When ewes go off feed or down during late pregnancy, my first thought is pregnancy toxemia (ketosis), and I went ahead and gave the mobile ewe a dose of propylene glycol. The downed ewe was in no shape to receive oral therapy, plus I had serious doubts about it being ketosis because the ewes were receiving a ration that was more than adequate in energy. Thus, my next thought was milk fever, another likely problem during late pregnancy. I knew that the ewes were receiving very little calcium through the barley and with the hay not containing a lot of clover and being of poor quality (stemmy), not much calcium was being provided there either. I zeroed in on milk fever. Obviously, these two ewes had not been consuming adequate amounts of the free choice mineral, particularly with respect to their increasing needs for calcium during late gestation.

I administered calcium gluconate under the skin and while this might have been adequate for the one ewe, it would not get into the bloodstream quick enough for the downed ewe. It was a race against the clock to save her. It had been awhile (since graduate school) since I had bled ewes via the jugular vein, so I elected to dextrose via jugular IV to both ewes.

After receiving calcium intravenously, the down ewe lifted her head and began to show interest in her surroundings. She changed positions for the next several hours and began to nibble on grain and hay that evening. Over the next four to five days her appetite remained very poor, particularly with respect to the grain, so I continued to administer calcium subcutaneously. I dosed her with propylene glycol twice a day and gave her an injection of vitamin B-complex to stimulate her appetite. She is now fully recovered from her near-death experience. The other ewe received an additional oral dose of calcium and was back to normal within a day. I dosed a few other ewes that were looking dopey with oral calcium.

This mini-outbreak of milk fever gave me cause to re-evaluate my ration and make adjustments to keep it from happening again. In addition to whole barley, the ration now contains a commercial 38% protein-mineral-vitamin pelleted supplement. I mix enough supplement into the barley so that the ewes receive their daily NRC requirements of calcium through the hay and grain ration and do not have to rely on the free choice mineral to meet their calcium needs. A blood sample from the downed ewe had revealed a calcium level of 2.69 (normal range is 9.1 to 10.8).

Milk fever is different in sheep as compared to dairy cattle in that ewes oftentimes develop symptoms pre-lambing, as was the case here. Milk fever may also occur around lambing, as the ewe’s hormones may inhibit her ability to sufficiently mobilize calcium reserves. The symptoms of milk fever and ketosis are similar, though milk fever seems to develop more suddenly. The differential diagnosis is the ewe’s response to calcium therapy. The key to both conditions is early recognition, proper treatment and eliminating the predisposing factors.

Footnote: Both ewes gave birth to and raised a healthy set of twin lambs.

Early Embryonic Death In Sheep
By J.L. Goelz, DVM
Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

Early embryonic death is the loss of pregnancy (abortion) during the first trimester. This has not been well investigated in sheep, or any other production animal. In swine, we know that sows will lose a percent of their litter between breeding and farrowing. In dairy cattle, early ultrasound diagnosis of pregnancy has revealed that a higher percent of cows experience early embryonic death, from 28-60 days in gestation, than we have previously thought. Early embryonic death can also occur in sheep; however, causes and circumstances as in other species remains a mystery.

After fertilization the embryo begins to implant in the uterus. Implantation is complete at day 40 post-breeding. The process of implantation is complex and poorly understood. In general, for implantation to be successful, the cow must recognize the embryo and with the embryo form fetal membranes that will become the placenta. In sheep, current belief is that once implantation is complete, the fetus is unlikely to experience death until the third trimester. If death occurs in the embryo before day 12 post-breeding, the ewe will return to heat 17-18 days post-breeding. If death occurs to the embryo after day 12, the number of days between heats is longer.

From a production standpoint, early embryonic death in sheep often goes unnoticed. A shepherd may note a ewe that consistently produces twins or triplets one year may have a single. If a marking harness is used on the ram, the shepherd may note that some ewes are re-marking 20-40 days after breeding. These ewes have probably experienced embryonic death. If a marking harness is not used, the shepherd may only notice that there are a few ewes lambing later than they should.

So what is considered normal? The figure that has been suggested in the literature is 20-30% of embryos die before day 40 of pregnancy. Of course, if the ewe is carrying twins and one embryo dies she will not return to heat but rather carry the single fetus to term. The “normal” number of irregular returns to heat (ewes returning to heat 20-40 days post-breeding) is probably around 5%.

What does an increased level of early embryonic death mean to the flock? The honest answer is that research has not given us great answers. Stress and infectious disease have been suggested as causes of early embryonic death. Since we do not have good information, our veterinary recommendations have been to err on the side of caution. Minimizing stress during breeding season is an inexpensive management solution. Delaying vaccination, deworming, hoof trimming, or other tasks until the ewes are safely 40 days pregnant is feasible and may be helpful in minimizing early embryonic death.

**ABLA Junior Shepherds**

**Jacob Economou**

*Wins Best Fleece*

Jacob Economou, age 7, grandson of Linda and Bill Koeppel of Cape House Farm, showed his ewe lamb “Mary” at the Michigan State Farm in the Natural Colored Long Wool Show. Jacob and “Mary” placed second in the intermediate class and won the Best Fleece competition. Dave Cook judged the show.

The Koeppels, with the help of daughter Becky and older grandson Michael, received Champion Ewe and were Premier Michigan Breeder for their colored Border Leicesters.

**Happy Holidays!**

Junior member Grace Smith had fun setting up this shot with her Border Collie Mille and one of her pet rams, Arlo.

**Taryn Bierhuizen**

*Wins Supreme Champion Ewe*

Taryn Bierhuizen of Spirit Hill Farm recently was awarded Grand Champion White Border Leicester Ewe with her homebred ewe, Spirit Hill Sugarberry, at the State Fair of Virginia. The overall size, strength, and beauty of this yearling ewe made the judge, Mr. Dick Kuzemchak of University Park, PA, place her over all other wool breeds for his Supreme Champion Wool Ewe!

Taryn also showed her Black Border Leicester ewe, Spirit Hill Anna, to the Grand Champion Natural Colored Ewe.

Taryn and her sister, Bailey, are co-owners of Spirit Hill Farms located in Culpeper, Virginia. Both are active junior members of the American Border Leicester Association and they are currently serving as officers in the Culpeper 4-H Sheep Club.

**Junior Border Leicester Show at NAILE Showcases Two Promising Young Shepherds**

ABLA Junior Members Tiffany Deakin and Ashley Jones made an impressive showing at NAILE. See the show results on the next page.

Among her many winnings, Tiffany Deakin’s Junior Ram Lamb took Champion Ram.

Tiffany Deakin, along with her brother Colin, enjoyed competing in the Lead Line class.

**ABLA Internet Community**

Junior member Katie Smith invites you to join other ABLA members in an internet discussion group which she moderates. You can find the group at www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ablasheep. Join in the conversation today!

Ashley Jones won the Best Fleece class in the Junior Show. She was also awarded the Junior Sportsman Award by NABLA! Congratulations, Ashley!!
National Junior Border Leicester Show
NAILE, Louisville, KY
November 15, 2004

Junior Ram Lamb
1. Deakin 04-1031 - 11914 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
2. Jones 405 - 11588B - Ashley C. Jones, New Tazewell, TN
4. Cumberland CVF Lad - 11596B - Casey Straut, Jacksboro, TN

Grand Champion Ram
Deakin 04-1031 - 11914 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL

Reserve Grand Champion Ram
Jones 405 - 11588B - Ashley C. Jones, New Tazewell, TN

Yearling Ewe
1. "Snowflake" Deakin 03-23 - 11199 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
2. Jones CVF 310 - 11031B - Ashley C. Jones, New Tazewell, TN
3. Deakin 03-55 - 11207 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
5. Jones CVF 312 - 11033B - Casey Straut, Jacksboro, TN

Junior Ewe Lamb
1. Deakin 04-1024 - 11410 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
2. Cinderella Farm CVF - 11601B - Ashley C. Jones, New Tazewell, TN
3. Cinderella Farm CVF - 11602B - Erin Straut, Jacksboro, TN
4. Deakin 04-1058 - 11821 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
5. Jones 414 - 11592B - Erin Straut, Jacksboro, TN

Grand Champion Ewe
Deakin 04-1024 - 11410 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL

Reserve Grand Champion Ewe
"Snowflake" Deakin 03-23 - 11199 - Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL

Best Fleece
1. Ashley C. Jones - New Tazewell, TN

Junior Showmanship
1. Casey Straut, Jacksboro, TN
2. Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL

Senior Showmanship
1. Ashley C. Jones, New Tazewell, TN
2. Erin Straut, Jacksboro, TN

ABLA Secretary’s Position Needs to be Filled

After many years as secretary, Di Waibel would like to give someone else the opportunity to serve the Association in this capacity. Some of the secretarial duties include:

- Clerical work for the President
- Handling of dues and keeping membership list up-to-date
- Working with webmaster to keep website up-to-date
- Handling of all inquiries that come into the Association
- Setting up the teleconference and taking minutes at the monthly Board Meeting

Please contact Di Waibel for more information: momfarm@canby.com
National Border Leicester Show  
NAILE, Louisville, KY • November 18, 2004  
Judge: Matt Best, Litchfield, OH

Yearling Ram
1. Deakin "Phoenix" 03-30 - 11184 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. AJ's Flock 25 - N101347 - Staskal, Andrea - Two Rivers, WI  
3. Deakin 03-37 - 11201 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
4. L.L. McKinney 16-03 - 10971 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE  
5. L.L. Murray 2-03 - 10859 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
6. L.L. Murray 6-03 - 10863 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE

Early Ram Lamb
1. "Date Just" Deakin 04-1023 - 11409 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. Anson 192 - 101592N - Anson, Diana - Simpsonville, KY  
3. "Rolex" Deakin 04-1000 - 11408 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
5. Deakin 04-1031 - Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
6. L.L. Murray 8-04 - 11491 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
7. L.L. Murray 6-04 - 11490 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE

Late Ram Lamb
1. J&L Y212 - 101669N - J&L Farm - Jerry & Lora Valenta - Two Rivers, WI  
2. Deakin 1056 - 11829 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
4. Deakin 1046 - 11828 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
5. L.L. Murray 23-04 - 11495 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  

Pair Ram Lambs
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. J&L Farm - Jerry & Lora Valenta - Two Rivers, WI  
3. Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
4. McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE

Grand Champion Ram  
"Date Just" Deakin 04-1023 - 11409 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL

Reserve Grand Champion Ram  
J&L Y212 - 101669N - J&L Farm - Jerry & Lora Valenta - Two Rivers, WI

Early Yearling Ewes
1. "Jumbo" Deakin 03-02 - 10966 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. J&L Y204 - N101504 - J&L Farm - Jerry & Lora Valenta - Two Rivers, WI  
3. Deakin 03-04 - 11185 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
4. "Snowflake" Deakin 03-23 - 11199 - Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
5. L.L. Murray 07-03 - 10864 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
6. L.L. McKinney 10-03 - 10869 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE

Late Yearling Ewes
1. OMF 2392 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
2. OMF 2381 - 11877 - Weik, Lili - Warrenton, VA  
3. Bair 946 - 11636B - Evening Star Farm - Woodbury, CT  
4. L.L. McKinney 17-03 - 10972 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE  
5. Weik 2417 - 11870 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
6. Deakin 03-55 - 11207 - Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
7. L.L. Murray 15-03 - 10970 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
8. AJ's Flock 31 - N101349 - Staskal, Andrea - Two Rivers, WI

Pair Yearling Ewes
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
3. Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
4. Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
5. McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE

Early Ewe Lambs
1. "Jumbo" Deakin 03-02 - 10966 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
2. J&L Y204 - N101504 - J&L Farm - Jerry & Lora Valenta - Two Rivers, WI  
3. Deakin 03-04 - 11185 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
4. "Snowflake" Deakin 03-23 - 11199 - Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
5. L.L. Murray 07-03 - 10864 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
6. L.L. McKinney 10-03 - 10869 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE

Late Ewe Lambs
1. OMF 2392 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
2. OMF 2381 - 11877 - Weik, Lili - Warrenton, VA  
3. Bair 946 - 11636B - Evening Star Farm - Woodbury, CT  
4. L.L. McKinney 17-03 - 10972 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE  
5. Weik 2417 - 11870 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
6. Deakin 03-55 - 11207 - Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
7. L.L. Murray 15-03 - 10970 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE  
8. AJ's Flock 31 - N101349 - Staskal, Andrea - Two Rivers, WI

Pair Ewe Lambs
1. Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA  
2. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL  
3. Anson, Diana - Simpsonville, KY  
4. Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL  
5. McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE  
6. Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE


Grand Champion Ewe
"Jumbo" Deakin 03-02 - 10966 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL

Reserve Grand Champion Ewe
Deakin 04-1069 - 11827 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL

Best Fleece
1. OMF 2381 - Weik, Lili - Warrenton, VA

Slick Sheared Lamb
1. 2479 - 11889 - Weik, Lili - Warrenton, VA
2. Deakin 04-1073 - 11827 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
3. 2456 - 11875 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA
4. 2454 - 11879 - Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA
5. McKinney 21-04 - 11503 - McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE
6. 2497 - 11873 - Weik, Lili - Warrenton, VA
7. L.L. Murray 9-04 - 11492 - Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE

Get-Of-Sire
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA
3. Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE

Flock
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Overlook Manor - Warrenton, VA
3. Deakin, Tiffany - Cuba, IL
4. Murray, Archie - Lamar, NE
5. McKinney, Mina - Lamar, NE

Premier Exhibitor
Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL

\"Raffle Prize\" Nets $1200

Over $1200 was raised throughout 2004 for the chance to own a Border Leicester ewe lamb donated by Deakin Family Farms of Illinois. The proceeds will go towards the advancement of premiums for the 2005 NAILE Open & Junior Border Leicester Shows. Tickets were sold all year long with past ABLA president, Archie Murray, Nebraska, selling the most.

The drawing was held during the Exhibitor's Meeting following the Border Leicester Show at the NAILE in Louisville, Kentucky. Wil Ham of Tivoli, New York was the winner and Wil chose the $300 cash option. "Raffle Prize" was then put up for auction at the meeting and sold to Ashley Jones, Tennessee for $400. Archie Murray did an excellent job serving as auctioneer.

Silver Mountain Farm, Krys and Vern Schrom, Amenia, New York and Deakin Family Farms, Cuba, Illinois have each offered to donate lambs in 2005 towards the premium funds. The Silver Mountain lamb will be natural colored and the Deakin lamb will be white. Raffle tickets will again be sold throughout the year as last.

In the past two years, premiums for Border Leicesters have gone from $1200 to $3000 at Louisville because of the cooperative work of the exhibitors and contributions from both ABLA and NABLA.
THE "GRAND" TOUR!
Sharing Highlights From The 2004
NATIONAL BORDER LEICESTER SHOW, NAILE.

"JUMBO", DEAKIN 03-02
Undefeated in class as a lamb and yearling,
2004 National Grand Champion Ewe. Grand Champion at The Big E. & Grand Champion
at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.

Winner of the PREMIER EXHIBITOR AWARD

"DATE JUST", DEAKIN 04-1023
National Grand Champion Ram

2004 UNDEFEATED FLOCK
Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, Wisconsin State Fair, Big E, National Border Leicester Show

DEAKIN 04-1069
National Reserve Grand Champion Ewe
Her mother was our 3rd Place Early Yearling Ewe!

LIVESTOCK EXPOSITION

"RAFFLE PRIZE"
Thanks to everyone who bought tickets on "Raffle Prize"! Congratulations to Wil Ram, NY. Jeff, who won the cash award & to Ashley & Richard Jones, TN, who then bought her at auction. Over $1200 in proceeds towards Junior activities at NAILE were raised!

Reserve Grand Champion Ram Fleece Over All Breeds, NAILE.

Thanks to everyone who bought our Leicesters & Hampsters in 2004!

Special thanks Richard & MaryAnn Johnson for your great job fitting & showing our sheep!

Deakin Family Farms
21632 N. Cameron Rd.
Cuba, IL 61427
309/785-5115
Email: ads.banner@sybertech.net

Thanks to Overlook Manor Farm who bought "Rolex" after the NAILE show. We wish them the best with "Jumbo's" maternal brother!

Congratulations Chase & Chelsea Howell on their Grand Champion Ram, NAILE Junior Hampshire Show sired by Deakin 01-776.

Heinold Feeds
800-633-7892

Congratulations to Tiffany & Colin on their success with Lead Line entries this year! Tiffany won 3 of 4 Champions at the NAILE Junior Show.

American Border Leicester Association
Winter 2005
Basic Immunology
Dr. J.L. Goelz, DVM, Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

We often are faced with many options to help control disease. Adequate nutrition, sanitation, isolation, and treatment of sick animals are often means that help control or minimize disease. Furthermore, some diseases lend themselves to control by vaccination. In the next few paragraphs we will take a look at the components in the little plastic bottle and how they work to prevent disease.

Antigens and Adjuvants: First of all, let us review the components of a vaccine. A vaccine is made up of two basic components: one or more antigens and an adjuvant. Antigens are proteins that white blood cells recognize and make antibodies against. This helps the immune system recognize these as foreign and thus allows the immune system to eliminate them from the body. All cells, bacteria, and virus contain these antigen proteins on the surface of the cell, bacteria, or virus. To make a vaccine, the manufacturer purifies these proteins and combines them with an adjuvant. The adjuvant stimulates the immune system to develop antibodies to the antigens. The characteristics of these antigens are stored in memory cells which rapidly produce antibodies if that type of antigen is recognized. There are many types of different adjuvants. Some work better than others. Many vaccine manufacturers have patented adjuvants and label them with catchy names. For example, in the vaccine Vision CD/T with Spur, Vision is the label name of the vaccine, CD/T are the antigens, and Spur is the manufacturer's special adjuvant that is claimed to make the Vision vaccine superior to other CD/T vaccines.

How Vaccines Work: When the vaccine is injected into a sheep, the chemicals in the vaccine cause tissue irritation. This results in blood flow to the injection site and with the blood come white blood cells. The white blood cells become exposed to the antigen and begin a series of processes that cause antibodies to be produced to the antigen. The period of time from when the vaccine is injected until production of antibodies takes 2-3 weeks. At three weeks, the level of antibodies is at the peak and begins to decrease. At this time, most vaccines require a booster vaccination. If the booster vaccination is given, the immune system is again stimulated and because of immune system memory, the result is an antibody level 2-5 times higher than after the first of primary vaccinations. If the booster vaccination is not given, the antibody level declines rapidly. In the world of fighting infection, the more antibodies, the more effective the immune system will be at eliminating infection and the more protection the animal has.

The Annual Booster: Many vaccines require an annual booster. This is to increase the antibody level in the body. Each subsequent vaccination serves as a booster in that it boosts the amount of antibodies present. In the case of Clostridia CD/T, it works well to booster the ewe 3-4 weeks before lambing. This will boost the antibody level in the blood and thus in the colostrum. In this case, the lamb will benefit by absorbing high levels of antibodies from the colostrum. Of course, this is only effective if the lamb suckles colostrum, thus the importance of adequate colostrum intake in the first 24 hours or life.

Vaccinating Young Lambs: Vaccinating young lambs is a bit of a guessing game. Lambs under 4 weeks of age have a poorly developed immune system and generally don't respond well to vaccines. There are times when we have no other option but to vaccinate young lambs, such as in the case of a tetanus or Clostridia enterotoxemia (overeating) problem. Often they will receive some protection, but not as much protection as a lamb that is vaccinated when it is over four weeks of age. Therefore, if the initial Clostridia Type C & D vaccination is given to lambs under four weeks of age, two boosters of the vaccine are necessary.

Side Effects: The most severe side effect that we see with sheep vaccines is swelling at the injection site and lethargy for a day or two following vaccination. The swelling is variable between different types of vaccines and is dependent on the adjuvant in the vaccine. The worst examples of this are footvax and case-bac. Because of this common side effect, we encourage producers to give all injections subcutaneously. Often sheep may be off feed, slow, depressed, and lethargic for a day or two following vaccination. Sheep are generally back to normal in 48 hours. As with any animal health product, be sure to follow label directions.

~ Reprinted with permission from the International Sheep Letter, Vol. 20, No. 4, June/July 2000

Wool Slip
By J.D. Bobb, DVM, Pipestone Veterinary Clinic

Wool slip is a term that has been coined to describe a problem that is associated with shearing housed ewes in the winter months. Wool slip usually occurs several weeks after shearing and can affect a single animal or a large percentage of the flock. The wool falls out usually leaving a pink bald lesion over the back of the ewe. It is common to see from ¼ to ½ of the ewe’s back without any wool. This unsightly lesion causes much concern to producers who often call wondering if their feed or mineral rations are lacking.

Wool slip is caused by cold stress which increases the sheep’s cortisol levels. Shorn ewes require housing to protect them from the cold winter weather. It is a known fact that shorn ewes will require 15 to 20% more feed than unshorn ewes. This is, however, offset by the shorn ewes producing lambs that are born heavier and a higher survival rate in the newborn lambs born to mothers that have been shorn. In some flocks the wool slip can be traced to related individuals which might indicate that genetics play a role such as the thickness of the hide or internal body fat reserves. Club lamb ewes tend to be more sensitive than wool breeds of sheep. If you notice large bald areas after shearing, you need to determine first if the sheep are showing any signs of external parasites such as lice or keds. Generally, if sheep have external parasites, they are itching and rubbing on feed bunks and fences or chewing at their sides. If your ewes have wool slip, give them additional feed to increase energy due to heat loss and adequate shelter from the cold weather.

~ Reprinted with permission from the Pipestone Veterinary Supply website: www.pipevet.com
Whenever we reach for a syringe and needle, we are using it to deliver medication or vaccine to a lamb. The manner in which we handle the medication, syringe, needles, and the injection technique impacts the success of the vaccination or antibiotic treatment. Obviously, we want each injection to be successful. Here are some tips that will increase your success:

**Needle Selection:** There are two basic types of needles. Stainless steel needles are made out of stainless steel tubing. They are more durable and more resistant to bending than disposable. Disposable needles are not as strong and have either a plastic or aluminum hub. Disposable needles are less costly but are more likely to bend. Typically, I will use a disposable needle if I will only be administering one or two injections with the needle. If I am vaccinating a lot of sheep, I will use stainless steel needles.

**Changing Needles:** Needles should be changed every 10-20 head even if you are using stainless needles. Any time that the tip of the needle gets buried, the needle bends, or contacts bedding or manure it should also be changed. Never use a bent needle. The bend will always be weak and the needle may break. The only needles that ever break are ones that have been bent and restraightened. If a needle breaks in a sheep, examine the area to see if you can see the shaft and pull it out with pliers. If you cannot see the needle, record the location and ID of the sheep. Your veterinarian can surgically remove the needle or if it is a lamb, the injection area can be trimmed if slaughtered locally. A sheep with a broken needle should never be sent through commercial slaughter channels.

**Needle Size:** Needle size is measured in gauge and length in inches. A 20 x 5/8 needle is 20 gauge diameter and 5/8 inch long. The higher the gauge number the smaller the diameter or thinner the needle. Thickness of the medication and size of the lamb influence the size of needle that you will choose. Typically, I like 20 x 1/2 or 20 x 5/8 for injections in young lambs and either 20 or 18 gauge for injections in ewes. In ewes with long wool, you may want a longer needle such as one inch.

**Bevel:** The bevel of the needle is the slope of the angle on the tip of the needle. The most common bevel types are A bevels and B bevels. The difference is small, but noticeable. B bevels are less sharp, but are less likely to burr at the tip. They also give better placement of vaccines or antibiotics than A bevels. The difference is pretty minor, but producers often notice that the B bevel needles are not as sharp.

**Syringes:** There are two basic types of syringes: disposable or reusable. Disposable syringes are inexpensive, plastic, and are designed by the medical community for one single injection. They can be cleaned and reused but are not very durable. Reusable syringes come in all brands and types. Some are excellent, some are just okay. A good reusable syringe should fit comfortably in your hand, be easy to clean, and should be easy to use. Typically, I use disposable syringes if I will give one or two injections and a reusable syringe if I will be giving more. The size of the syringe should accurately dose the intended amount of vaccine or antibiotic. For example, if you are giving a sheep a 2mL injection I would choose a 3mL or 6mL syringe, not a 12mL or 20mL.

For mass vaccination, such as C/D, most producers like the 2-5mL bottle draw syringes. Reusable syringes should be cleaned with warm soapy water, well rinsed, and allowed to air dry before reassembling. Soap residue can interact with medication so extra rinsing is a good idea. Parts should be checked for wear and replaced, if necessary.

**Injection Sites:** Nearly all sheep medications should be administered subcutaneously (SQ., under the skin). The best injection sites are behind the front leg or in the neck. These are areas that are easiest to reach in an alley or small pen and near poorer cuts of meat if the injection causes an abscess. I prefer to pull up the skin (tent) in the area with my left hand and inject the medication with my right. I can easily see the needle, be confident that I am in the SQ. space, and minimize accidental self-injection. The only medications that we recommend intra-muscular injections are Prostaglandin (Estrumate, Lutalyse, Prostamate).

**Handling Medication:** Vaccines and antibiotics should be handled following the manufacturer’s instructions. All vaccines and some antibiotics require refrigeration. If you are using refrigerated products on a warm day, keep the vaccines cool by storing them in a cooler. Most vaccines have a recommendation such as "use-the entire contents when opened". This is usually unrealistic in the sheep industry. The vaccine will still be effective if stored refrigerated, but add lmL of penicillin when you put the bottle back in the refrigerator to inhibit the growth of contaminants. Using only a sterile needle to enter the bottle, you will also prevent contamination. Caution should be used anytime you are handling syringes, needles, and medication. When using multiple injectable products, I like to color code syringes and medication with white tape or electrical tape to avoid syringe mix-up’s or confusion. Accidental human needle sticks or injections can cause serious reactions in humans. The most notable are death with accidental human injection of Micotil, and abortion with accidental injection or skin contact with prostaglandin (Estrumate, Prostamate, Lutalyse) and Oxytocin. Other vaccines or antibiotics can cause severe swelling if accidentally injected by humans. Caution, care, and smart handling are the best ways to minimize accidents.

Grecian Lamb Stew
Submitted by Dave & Cathie Shiff
Wits End Farm, Amissville, VA

The following recipe, found in Jacques Burdick’s wonderful cookbook, Savory Stews, is an adaptation of Parnassian lamb stew, a traditional Greek dish from a tiny village near Mount Parnassus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 ½ lbs. lean stewing lamb,</td>
<td>cut into bite-sized chunks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 plump cloves garlic,</td>
<td>peeled and cut in half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 black peppercorns,</td>
<td>crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bay leaves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Tbl. lemon juice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 black peppercorns,</td>
<td>crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ tsp. ground black pepper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp. fennel seeds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ tsp. ground cinnamon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) 16-oz. can stewed</td>
<td>tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup dry white wine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cups coarsely chopped</td>
<td>fresh spearmint leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 cups fresh spinach,</td>
<td>washed and coarsely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well washed and coarsely</td>
<td>chopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 large russet potatoes,</td>
<td>peeled and cut into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peeled and cut into</td>
<td>½” dices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cups unsalted chicken or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vegetable stock</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 tsp. sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lemon juice and salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup plain yogurt (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbl. finely chopped fresh</td>
<td>dill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Place the lamb, garlic, peppercorns, bay leaves, lemon juice and 6 cups of water in a large heavy-bottomed kettle. Bring to a rolling boil and immediately remove from the heat.

2. Place a colander in the sink and pour the contents of the kettle into it. Discard the garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves. Run plenty of cold water over the meat, rinsing it well. Drain well and pat the meat dry with paper towels.

3. Dredge the pieces well with flour, patting it well onto the meat. Use all the flour.

4. Wipe the kettle clean and dry it. Heat the kettle, add the oil, and when the oil hazes, brown the meat well on all sides, a few pieces at a time. Remove the meat and set it aside.

5. Reduce the heat. Sauté the onion, oregano, rosemary, pepper, fennel seeds, cinnamon, and tomatoes for 12 minutes, stirring well to deglaze the bottom of the kettle.

6. Add the wine and browned meat and stir well.

7. Scatter the mint over the stew. Add the spinach, covering up the meat and vegetables. Place the potato cubes in a layer on top, pressing them down into the greens.

8. Mix the stock and sugar and add to the kettle. Cover tightly and simmer gently for one hour, or until the potatoes and lamb are just tender but not overcooked.

9. Stir in the lemon juice and salt to taste. If you want a typically Balkan touch, stir in the yogurt and the finely chopped dill.

10. Serve warm – khliaros, as the Greeks say – not hot.

President’s Message

Weik and her crew put together a great silent auction. The proceeds went to help with the premium fund for the 2005 NAILE Show. Likewise, the enthusiasm for the raffle tickets for the donated ewe lamb was high as she netted the fund over $1200.

These projects help keep the NAILE show strong and encourage more participation in this event in the future. Our breed’s first-ever Junior Show was held at Louisville funded solely by ABLA and the exhibitor’s fund. Participation our first year was somewhat light, but our goal is to double the number of Juniors there in 2005. Full coverage about the show at Louisville is located elsewhere in this newsletter.

Your Board is already actively planning ahead for 2005. Our desire is to further expand our breed numbers and increase both ABLA membership and new Border Leicester breeders. Plans are underway for our first-ever National Sale which will be held in Springfield, Illinois, June 18 & 19. The 2005 Annual Meeting will be held there, too. Full details will be sent to every ABLA member in early March.

We have been invited to hold our 2005 National Show in Jefferson, Wisconsin, September 11th in conjunction with the Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival. A ballot to vote on holding our National Show there will be mailed out soon. Reports about the event are very impressive and it sounds like a wonderful venue for us to be involved in.

Don’t forget that the first weekend in May is the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. Plan to attend if you can! And to our membership in the West, your Board plans to do all we can to promote the Border Leicester breed and help with western shows, too.

My personal wishes are for everyone to have a safe and prosperous 2005. Give any of us on the Board a call if you have an idea to help sell the public on the fact they need to be raising Border Leicester sheep!

~ Greg Deakin

Member Profile....

her daughter Emma have a small flock of Romneys, as well as a number of rabbits. We are all working along with a neighbor, who has black Lincolns, to establish a little fiber business of fleeces, roving, and yarn. We had an “Open Barn” for three weekends in December and plan to do it again in April. We hope to take our wares to a local farmers’ market this summer.

We make about 800 bales of hay each year, and pasture most of our fields after first cutting. Recently, we acquired three llamas, who take pretty good care of things out and about. Originally, the farm consisted of almost 200 acres, but recently we have cut back on the woodland. The town has taken over 160 acres for a nature preserve with walking trails, etc. leaving us with 70 acres to farm. Over time, Marcus’ cousins have sold adjoining property and, as a result, nine new houses have appeared. Fortunately, we can only see two. Seldom Seen Farm is not as seldom seen as it was! In 1952, there were only two vehicles that went by the house daily - the mailman and the wooden school bus. The road was dirt with grass growing down the center. Some different now with cars speeding by on a macadam road! This makes it difficult sometimes, as the house is on one side and the main barn on the other.

Sheep raising has been a marvelous experience for our family. The torch has been passed to the grandchildren. Four generations of sheep raisers! It’s been a wonderful way to raise children who were too busy with their 4-H sheep projects to ever wander off the straight and narrow. I wish more young people these days were involved with animals and farm life. What a great way to stay out of trouble!

Some of the 18 Border Leicesters who live at Barbara Thompson’s Seldom Seen Farm

Maybe Tomorrow Farm

Border Leicesters
Cheviots
Natural Coloreds
Even a few Southdowns and Hampshires

Kevin, Polly, Sarah & Christopher Hopkins
494 Evans Road
Chepachet, Rhode Island 02814
(401) 949-4619
khop4811@aol.com

Need to Contact
Associated Sheep Registry?

Telephone: (641) 942-6402
Fax: (641) 942-6502
Email: kclaghorn@earthlink.net

Karey Claghorn
Associated Sheep Registry
15603 173rd Avenue
Milo, Iowa 50166
Continued from page 5

Lambing Tips from ABLA Members

Terri Warner
Double Ewe Ranch
Camarron, CO

The best tool I have for lambing is a stomach tube. I carry it in my pocket at all times. If the lamb is weak I immediately milk the mom and tube the lamb. It is amazing how quickly the lamb recovers and can get back on the mom’s udder.

Sherry Stahl Wellborn
Dancing Sheep Farm
Eugene, OR

Some people feel that keeping lights off after dark in your barn from breeding until lambing increases the odds of lambs arriving between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. I keep a low wattage trouble light on at lambing and my lambs typically arrive during that window. Very few arrive in the middle of the night.

Susie Wilson
SuDan Farm
Canby, OR

Keep a crockpot of warm water simmering in the barn. It’s a great way to have some warm water ready for washing hands and/or equipment, thawing colostrum, etc.

When we dock tails at 2-3 days of age, we give the underside of the tail a good spraying with non-stick vegetable spray (PAM). This has been very helpful in preventing that gooey, sticky baby tail.

Now and then, when we have a lamb with a rolled-in lower eyelid, we fix them easily with a ½ inch “mini-alligator clip” that is available from Radio Shack. A small package of 10 is under $3.00. They stay on great, don’t damage the skin or eye, and are vastly easier than injecting the eyelid or applying wound clips. They REALLY work and can be reused. We store them in a small container of flour so they stay dry and don’t rust. The lamb only needs it on for a day or so, and then the problem is fixed.

Classified Ads

SHEEP FOR SALE: White Border Leicester ewes (all black-factored), and one natural colored Wensleydale/Border Leicester cross ewe. Please contact Cynthia Coe, Dún a Sí Farm, 6726 Hwy 312, Billings, MT 59105, 406-373-6542, www.montanasheep.com

Your ad could be here: Only $10.00 for a classified ad of 50 words or less! What a deal!
Welcome
New and Returning Members!

Jacqueline Lee Donjon
Black Sheep of the Family
3189 State Route 155
Prairie du Rocher, IL  62277
618-284-7779

Zella Jewett (junior member)
P.O. Box 1271
Merlin, OR  97532
541-476-0603

Lois Miller
157 Drury Road
Solon, ME  04979
207-474-5524
swtmem@gwi.net

Juanita Rumley
Desert Rose Farm
4606 NW Helmholtz Way
Redmond, OR  97756
541-504-5340

Cheryl Schultz
Away in a Manger
1019 SE 28th Street
Owatonna, MN  55060
507-446-0663
schltzinmn@smig.net

2005 Upcoming Events

January
8-23  National Western Stock Show
National Western Complex
Denver, CO
www.nationalwestern.com

31  Last date to renew ABLA membership
and be included in the 2005 Directory

February
4-5  30th Annual Pipestone Lambing Time
Shortcourse and Bus Tour
MN West Community and Technical College
Pipestone, MN
800-658-2330

March
5-6  Cornell University Sheep Shearing School
T & R Center
Dryden, NY
Doug Rathke, 320-587-6094

15  Submission deadline
for the Spring Issue of the ABLA Quarterly News

18  One-Day Sheep Shearing School
Jefferson City, MO
Doug Rathke, 320-587-6094

If you know of an event that might be of interest to other
ABLA members, please let us know so we can spread
the word.