Dear Fellow ABLA Members:

As 2005 nears an end, it is time to reflect on the year we have enjoyed with the Border Leicester breed and look ahead to 2006. As your association president, 2005 has been a very humbling opportunity to serve the American Border Leicester Association and its membership. As of press time, with nearly two months to go before our fiscal year ends, the numbers of ABLA registrations, transfers, and memberships are up strongly over the total year end numbers of 2004.

Your association is enjoying more growth and more new breeders have begun raising Border Leicesters than ever before. We continue to welcome new members into our fold as word about the traits and ease of caring for and breeding Border Leicester sheep grows.

2005 saw some milestones accomplished in our organization of which many were the goals and dreams of boards before ours. Foremost was earning our status as a non-profit organization, which in turn enabled the association to secure the needed liability insurance to function in a sound, business-like manner.

Member Profile . . .

Betty Levin • Lincoln, MA

In 1973 I went to the Nova Scotia sheep fair in Truro to buy a few of the 1400 Scottish Blackface ewes shipped to Canada in 1970 and then available after three years' quarantine. It was at this fair that I first saw Border Leicesters up close and met some of Canada's leading breeders. From then on I was drawn to the breed. These were Canadian Border Leicesters on farms that put a premium on handspinning fleeces, and this was the breed type I have tried to reproduce and promote ever since. Mine are not show animals. I select for color, luster, crimp and curl, or else silkiness and waviness - the two distinct varieties of wool that my customers and I admire. As I have bought and sold breed stock, I have met and made many good friends.

My first Border Leicester ewe lamb, a triplet from the William Dexter flock, was a gift from Betty and Jack Hearn of Hampton, Nova Scotia. Two years later I bought bred ewes, also from Willie Dexter. His was a stunning flock of all-white Border Leicesters with superb fleeces, true Roman noses, prominent eye sockets, upstanding ears, and lean bodies. All his animals flourished on December grass in his winter pasture overlooking the Bay of Fundy. At the same time, I purchased some black Border Leicesters belonging to the Hearns; these came out of breed stock from Prince Edward Island.

For several years I kept two separate flocks - Scottish Blackface and Border Leicesters. I also used Border Leicester rams on some Scottish Blackface ewes, because the Scottish Grayface offspring were always in demand. The feisty blackface and grayface are ideal for training sheep dogs for competition, but they're harder on housing, equipment, each other's lambs, and the shepherd. After maintaining about thirty of each breed, I decided sixty ewes were too many for available pasture, and eventually, and regretfully, I gave up the Scottish Blackface altogether.

From the outset I have relied on borrowed pasture. Our local conservation land trust has encouraged me to use a field that pastured cows before it came up for sale. My husband and I organized the neighborhood to buy that land to save it from development and donate it to the land trust. Now that it belongs to the land trust, it is open to the public. This has meant that people with leashed (supposedly) dogs can walk or ski through it, and from time to time there

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Betty Levin has been raising Border Leicesters for 30 years.
Two and a half years ago, Nancy and I embarked on an adventure into the world of newsletter publishing. Neither of us had done anything like this before, but there was a need and we stepped forward. We live 4 miles apart and figured we could work together on it. Nancy is the one who has put in countless hours. I have served mainly as moral support. It’s been a great experience, but Nancy needs to focus her attention on her family and I’m not able to do the job alone. We are passing the job on to Noreen Atkins, a new ABLA member from the Finger Lakes Region of New York State. You can “meet” Noreen on page 4. She will be bringing fresh energy and a new perspective to the newsletter. Please help her out by sending in articles and giving her ideas for articles. The newsletter is a big undertaking and responsibility. Let’s not leave Noreen to do it alone.

I am excited to have Betty Levin as our featured breeder for this issue. If you’ve never met her, I hope you have the pleasure some day. She is a very talented, intelligent woman with a lifetime of wisdom and experience to share. I purchased my first Border Leicesters from Betty in 1988. The “old ladies”, as I called them, were about 12 years old when I bought them and they gave me many beautiful babies. One lived to be 18 and died from complications giving birth to triplets. I still have many of their descendents.

I had the opportunity to attend the Northeast Regional Border Leicester Show at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts in September. You can read the show results on page 12. It was an exciting afternoon. The judge had read and studied the Border Leicester breed standards and did a very nice job judging the sheep. He did not automatically put the biggest and longest first, but rather the sheep that most exemplified the breed standards. The highlight of the day was the flock class. What a sight to see nine flocks (with 5 sheep in each flock) all standing side by side in the ring. That’s a lot of Border Leicesters!

Last spring, the ABLA board of directors offered a $25 premium to fairs and sheep shows that featured Border Leicesters. The premium could be used at the discretion of the organizers for either a prize-winning Border Leicester or a fleece. Twelve premiums were sent out at the request of members. If you are one of those who requested premium money for your local event, the board asks that you submit a photo with a caption or a short story to be used in a future newsletter.

Due to popular demand, we are including several show results in this issue. It’s great to know that many of you are getting out there to promote the breed. Some members, like Archie Murray, are working hard to get shows that are just for Border Leicesters. That’s a challenge considering the commitment it takes to attend a sheep show. Please do what you can to support your local shows.

As we say farewell, Nancy and I want to thank all of you who have helped make the newsletter worth reading. It has been great to get to know many of you, even though you are scattered throughout the U.S. and Canada. We’ve enjoyed working with you! You can be sure that we will continue to promote ABLA and the Border Leicester breed.

We wish you and yours a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season!

~ Sue Johnson and Nancy Smith, Retiring Editors
Ten years ago my son insisted that I get a website and a URL. He felt that my Icelandic sheep and their products were an excellent candidate for this kind of advertising. At that time I did not have a computer, didn't want one, didn't know how to use one and didn't want to learn. He badgered me until I agreed to have a website produced and put it on the web. I went kicking and screaming all of the way. But right away I was getting 20% of my business from this website and it grew fast from this beginning. It now generates about 90% of my business. In reading a survey recently in a sheep magazine, the number one goal of shepherds was to make more money from their sheep. Since commodity buyers will only give you a break-even price for your product, at best, direct marketing is the only way to make a profit from your flock.

1) First of all you need high quality animals and products to sell. Work on this first. If your products are of poor quality or packaged poorly then they will not be attractive to customers. Be sure that you want to buy the product that you are selling. Never sell a flawed product unless that flaw is fully disclosed to the buyer, i.e. tender wool will not be a product that a spinner would want but may be excellent for a customer that wants to use it to stuff dog beds. Observe the methods and packaging of successful producers and copy these ideas. Nothing sells wool better than clean, vegetative free, well-skirted wool from a healthy sheep.

2) Then bite the bullet and pay a good website developer to create a website for you. Unless creating websites is your business, get help with this as there is a lot to know not only about the creation of a website but having the right key words that the search engines use to catalog and find your products. Submitting your website to the right search engines and getting it positioned so it comes up in the first 10 choices in a search is the most important thing and needs to be done by an expert. This will cost a lot but is worth every penny as the website will be your cheapest advertising and is working for you 24/7. Make sure that your website is easy to use. Look at the sites of others and copy the format of the one that you like. Start with a small site and expand as your business does. You may be able to barter for this work (i.e. lamb, yarn or knitted products).

3) Make your website informative as well as a showcase for your products. Education and support to your customers will help sell your products. Many of your customers’ questions can be answered in a "frequently asked questions" section of your website.

4) Get website software like "Front Page" and have the website developer teach you how to update your site using this program.

5) Keep your website updated. Up to date information will bring back customers, avoid confusion, and let customers know that you are on the ball with your business.

6) Learn how to take good photos of your sheep and products. A good digital camera with a telephoto lens is essential, as it doesn't distort your sheep’s image. Good photos sell your products. A digital camera will allow you to take a photo of a sheep or product quickly for a customer.

7) Answer customers within 24 hours. Nothing is more frustrating to a customer than to not receive an answer or return call. I have gotten more business from frustrated customers that told me that they had called many different breeders and no one ever answered or called them back.

8) Put your guarantee online for your sheep and products. This is professional and avoids confusion.

9) Try and get a URL that suggests what you are selling, i.e. www.icelandicsheep.com.

10) Offer not only your farm products but information on other businesses and attractions in your region on your website. This will help your community and bring more visitors to your area if they can have a wider variety of experiences on their trip.

11) Use excellent business practices and be professional in your dealings with your customers. If you run into difficult situations ask for creative and fair solutions from older more experienced breeders.

12) Offer continuing help to your customers and be available for that support. This is very important.

13) Put small ads in sheep and fiber magazines that lead folks to your website. Your website URL on your truck and trailer will lead folks to your site.

14) Listen to your customers for new ideas and feedback to improve your products and offer new ones.

15) Link to the suppliers and businesses that support your business like Premier Sheep and Fencing Supplies, wool mills, tanners, fiber fests and breed associations. Without them you would not be able to stay in business. We need to be supportive of each other so all of us can thrive.

~ Susan Mongold Briggs is a full time shepherd who makes 100% of her living from her flock of Icelandic sheep. Tongue River Farm is located in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks. You can contact her at trf@icelandicsheep.com or view her website for more marketing ideas and information on Icelandic sheep at www.icelandicsheep.com.

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Hi everyone! I live in the Fingerlakes Region of Central New York. West Groton is about 20 minutes north of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY where my husband, Phil, works for the Crop and Soil Science Department. The other members of my family are my daughter Erin, and son Tim. Some of you may know Erin and Phil from the sheep shows in New York, PA, and New England. When I am not out working in the barn or spinning or reading or spending time with my family, I work for the Farm Service Agency in Cortland.

We started with sheep in 1998. I always call our sheep passion a 4-H project gone wild. When we purchased our 5 acres of heaven, it had a 7 stall horse barn. I grew up with horses, and both of my children wanted to ride. As they found out, horses can be a lot of work. Both of my kids lost interest and we found new homes for the horses. But Erin and Phil thought something should live in our barn. They saw an ad for the Empire Spring Classic sheep sale. We ended up bringing home 2 Suffolk ewe lambs. This was in 1998. By the end of ‘98, we owned 3 more Suffolk yearling ewes. Fortunately, Glenn Botsford lived close by, and ended up being a good friend and sheep mentor.

I love being outside and involved with the barn, but I quickly got tired of being pushed around by the Suffolks. I saw pictures of Border Leicesters in the Banner. The more I read and learned about the breed, the more I knew I had to have one. We purchased our first Leicester from Krys Schrom in 1999 at the Rhinebeck bred ewe sale. Our Leicester flock has grown from that one ewe in 1999 to a total of 18 at the present. We have mostly whites. Phil really likes the blacks, so of that 18, there are 3 black ewes and a black ram. Space is our limiting factor. Phil and Erin are still very involved with the Suffolks, so the Leicester flock will probably stay at the 18-20 head size.

Both Erin and Tim are in college. We no longer have to make all of those sporting events or band concerts. When the call went out for a new newsletter editor, I thought it would be a great opportunity to learn more about the breed and meet more of the Border Leicester people. There are not too many of us in Central New York. So, if anyone has articles, ideas, or comments that they want to share in future newsletters, please feel free to contact me.

Noreen Atkins
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BEGIN!! - Choose a day, time and place and try to meet at least once a month. Have each person bring a friend if possible. We began by meeting at each other’s homes. Today we meet in the cafeteria of a middle school. Libraries and churches will also sometimes have meeting rooms available.

EDUCATE - If you know how to knit, spin, weave, make felt, dye or any other fiber-related skill, you have a skill that others would like to learn - offer to demonstrate and teach. If you meet at a school or library let them know that you are willing to demonstrate your craft. This will not only mesh with the purpose of the school/library, but it is a great way to attract new members. Let your local newspaper know what you are doing and when. Go so far as to write a short article for them. If you meet at a farm where there are sheep, llamas, goats, etc, suggest the newspaper send a photographer to cover the event or provide photos to them.

YOUTH - If agriculture and fiber arts are to survive and prosper, not disappear, we must create enthusiasm among our youngsters. I remember one of our meetings where a fourteen-year-old girl brought two of her angora rabbits and proceeded to teach a large group assembled around her all aspects of raising them. She discussed buying, housing, feeding, slipping the wool and spinning it into yarn. She brought samples of her work and answered questions. While 4-H does a great job in teaching our youth about animals and agriculture, I have found that many young people have no access to 4-H programs and/or have interests not covered by 4-H. Your group could have just the teachers these young people need.

SALES - This is an area that can be very challenging. Initially, most sales will be of raw materials (e.g., fleece, roving, etc.) to other members at your regular meetings. As things progress you will sell each other more finished products (yarns, felt, pelts) or even completed products (sweaters, blankets, etc). In our group some members market dyes, spinning wheels and equipment, knitting and felting supplies, etc.

A more ambitious undertaking is to organize and advertise a sale to the general public. This can be a very challenging effort, but over time each member figures out who can best handle what at a sale. You won’t know until you try. We held our first Fleece Fair in 1984 in one of the members barns. We put ads in the local papers and had a bake sale for customers and bicyclists who happened by. Items for sale included fleeces, handspun yarns and items knitted from our yarns. One of the fundamental initial decisions of our group that has set us apart is that we sell almost exclusively Michigan fiber and fiber products (mill spun yarn, even if made from our own wool, is not permitted at the sale). We do not attempt to compete with yarn shops who carry low cost mill spun imported yarns. In today’s world we have found that customers are not only willing, but would prefer to buy locally grown fibers and products.

Yarns must be at least one-ply handspun to be sold at our sales. All raw fleeces must be clean, high quality, and heavily skirted - several non-selling members are designated as “fleece police” to enforce our quality standards. Some members sell spinning wheels of various makes, dyes, knitting needles and other tools and accessories related to fiber arts.

Each member of the group is assigned a unique membership number. All items offered at our Fleece Fairs are tagged with a standard red tag containing price, inventory number and membership number. All sellers complete inventory sheets listing each item for sale. Customers pass through a number of “check-out” tables. The group collects all sale proceeds, pays sales taxes, sorts each seller’s proceeds based on membership number from price tags, and makes disbursements to sellers after deducting their pro-rated portion of the sale expenses (all sale expenses are borne by the sellers, the general funds of the group do not support sales).

One key to the growth of our Fleece Fairs over the years is the creation of a mailing list. All attendees at our sales are invited to add their names to this list, and members submit additional names as they come in contact with potential customers. Access to the list is closely held. It is used only to advise people of our Fleece Fairs. Individual members cannot use the list to separately advertise their own products.

SUMMARY - There are many more aspects associated with starting and growing a successful fiber guild. However, in my mind the most important is those who give the most receive the most. My knowledge today exists only because of the many people who generously took the time to share their knowledge with me. From my first lumpy, bumpy yarn to the first sheep show ribbon we brought home, I will be forever grateful to the many who took the time and had the patience to teach me what they knew. Today we have the internet, websites and eBay, but I hope that technology will never replace the personal touch of someone caring enough to sit with a beginner handspinner and help them discover the wonderful feeling of wool slipping through their fingers.

So...why wait? Gather some people together and begin. Tell them why you love your sheep. Your life will never be the same.
Another year older….

Take a look back in the Winter 2005 issue and you’ll see a picture we printed of then 7 year old Jacob Economou with his lamb Mary. My, how they’ve grown! They are now both a year older and still working as a team. Mary was part of the show flock that helped Cape House Farm win Michigan Premier Breeder in the Natural Colored Longwool show.

Jacob enjoyed walking Mary around the Michigan State Fair and talking to people about sheep. “He always amazes us! Jacob and his older brother, Michael, are a great help to us on the farm,” says proud grandmother, Linda Koeppel.

Almost 5 year old Jessie Thompson, took her yearling ewe, Pinkie, to the Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival in September. It was their first time showing together and they took home a third place ribbon in the yearling ewe class. Jessie raised Pinkie as a bottle lamb and the two of them are very good buddies.

Jessie and her mom, Jill, help Di Waibel feed, shovel, and care for the sheep at Mist O Morn Farm. Jessie has been helping in the barn since she was able to walk. She has learned a lot about sheep and entertained several of the Border Leicester breeders with her informative story of how the yearling ram that Di had at the show was Pinkie’s soon-to-be husband.

Dear ABLA,

Just wanted to say “thank you” for providing the $25.00 premium for the top Border Leicester fleece in our fleece show. My daughter, Bailey, won overall Champion Fleece with a natural colored Border Leicester in the CMR Fair in Culpeper, VA. There were over a dozen entries and support like yours only helps this event to grow each year. Thank you!

~ Jennifer Bierhuizen

Smith Family Goes to the Fair

Grace Smith, age 14, focuses on the judge as she shows her ewe lamb, Galadriel, at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, VT.

Samuel Smith, age 11, and Esther Smith, age 9, participated in the Wool Lead Line class.

This was Lydia Smith’s first year showing sheep and she had a great time. Lydia is 7 years old and is shown here with her ram lamb, Legolas.
I know we have discussed starter flocks for young people in our Board meetings and I’m sure there are many members who have assisted young people in their efforts to get started with sheep in general.

It was mentioned that here in Oregon there are three breeders who have been doing just that for the last couple of years. I was therefore asked to put this in the form of a note to other members who might also want to do the same thing in their states.

This started last year, 2004, in answer to a letter I received as a contact person for Border Leicester sheep in general. The young lady in question had sent me a letter asking if I knew where she could buy a couple of grade Border Leicester ewes. She was 12 years of age at the time and had been participating in 4-H and presenting science projects which covered dying wool, felting wool, and soap making. She is also involved in sewing and cooking classes as well as belonging to a 4-H club, the North Valley Livestock Group for sheep. She had been involved in her club with breeding stock and market lambs but wanted to add sheep to her flock that would include a dual-purpose animal. She felt she would like to find some Border Leicesters to include in her flock.

I contacted Barbara Fox of Foxy Critters in Eugene and Fred Dickhous of Shedd, Oregon and we decided we would put together a small starter flock for Zella. We simply asked that she keep us advised what she was doing with the sheep and how all was going with her project. She started out with a bred purebred ewe and three purebred lambs.

I received an e-mail from Zella this summer following the Douglas County Fair:

“The sheep are doing well. At the fair I got champion ewe, reserved champion ewe and about 5 blues. The wool did well. I got blues and it made it to the state fair. The wool didn’t get to go because there was not enough room so none of the wool went from our county. Lambing went really good but I lost one because of the very high windstorm we had. …..Boy did I get a lot of comments on my sheep. The judge was impressed with them. I want to thank you again for making my dream come true. Thank you. Zella Jewett.”

The three of us involved in this project last year felt so good about it we have chosen another young lady to present with the same type of flock. Her name is Kylie Zettle of Dexter, Oregon. She also raises Cotswold and shows at Puyallup, Deschutes County and Lane County fairs.

We have decided this is probably the best way we can interest young people in raising these wonderful animals. It certainly feels good to help them get a good start.

~ Di Waibel, Mist O Morn Farm

Kudos to Di, Barbara Fox, and Fred Dickhous for their work to promote Border Leicesters and the next generation of sheepers! For more information about organizing a Starter Flock program in your area, contact Di Waibel.

Border Leicesters Win Again at the Virginia State Fair and Maryland State Fair!

Spirit Hill Huckleberry, a bred and owned yearling ram owned by Taryn Bierhuizen, was selected as Champion White Wool Ram at the Virginia State Fair in Richmond, Virginia. He then went on to become Supreme Champion Wool Ram overall. This isn’t the first time this ram has won this honor. He was also Supreme Champion over all breeds at the Culpeper-Madison-Rappahannock Fair and the Northern District Livestock Show. Taryn’s ram lamb, Spirit Hill Hector, was selected as Champion White Wool Ram at the Maryland State Fair.

Taryn and her sister, Bailey, have been very busy exhibiting their Border Leicesters in a variety of shows this year and have been in the winner’s ring consistently. They were Premier Black Wool Exhibitor at the Virginia State Fair and Premier White Wool Exhibitor at the Maryland State Fair this year.

Using their Border Leicester animals, they each competed in the highly competitive showmanship competition at the Virginia State Fair. Bailey, showing her homebred ewe, Spirit Hill Ginger, was selected as Champion Intermediate Showman over 50+ competitors. Taryn, showing Spirit Hill Rhonda, was 3rd high overall Junior Showman out of 60+ competitors. The sisters have been raising and showing Border Leicesters, white and natural-colored, for the past 8 years with many successes.

Spirit Hill Huckleberry is looking for a new home and would be a tremendous foundation sire. He has a beautiful fleece, a wonderful personality and is structurally correct and thick in all dimensions. Come check him out and we guarantee you’ll like him also!

Spirit Hill Huckleberry was chosen Supreme Champion Wool Ram at the Virginia State Fair. Thirteen year old Taryn Bierhuizen is the proud owner and breeder. Mr. Huckleberry is looking for a new home. If interested, contact the Bierhuizens, 540-829-0806.

~
**Curried Lamb**

*By Sandra Wyner*

This recipe is from a friend, Sandra Wyner, who buys 2 or 3 freezer lambs from me each year. She thinks that Border Leicester is some of the best lamb she has tasted. She has been a customer for over 15 years now! Sandra doesn’t give specific amounts, but she says that is what makes it so good. She just gives guidelines for you to make your own great feast. So be adventurous and give it a try!

~ Sue Johnson

1. Brown some lamb and put it in a large casserole.
2. Fry up onions and garlic and add that to the lamb.
3. Mix up the sauce which contains:
   - 1 can tomatoes
   - 1 can coconut milk
   - Grated apple or applesauce
   - Apricot jam
   - Thyme
   - Chutney
   - Ketchup
   - Curry powder
4. Pour the sauce into the casserole on top of the lamb and onion.
5. Let it sit for a day marinating and then put in a 350 degree oven for 1 ½ hours.
6. When cooked and cool, put in the fridge overnight and in the morning skim off the fat.
7. Eat with rice and sambals*. It freezes well and the longer you leave it to mature before eating, the better.

*Sambals are Indonesian condiments which are usually spicy. There are many varieties. Try some of the following to compliment the lamb:
- grated coconut
- raisins
- yogurt with cucumber and mint
- chopped up tomatoes and onions
- bananas
- chutney
- hot Indian pickles

Enjoy!

--Continued from page 1--

**President’s Message**

Working with Associated Registries, the company which records our registry work, has gone more smoothly as more pedigree information has been logged into their computers and onto our papers. The turn-around time to register or transfer a sheep takes just a few days and as a breed, we have the security and comfort that our records are safe and uncompromised.

We have enjoyed an excellent newsletter published by Nancy Smith and our association treasurer, Sue Johnson. Unfortunately, we are losing Nancy after this newsletter is mailed and we all owe her a HUGE thank you for doing such an excellent job. Her search for Border Leicester news and articles has been unending and we will sorely miss her outstanding work. Nancy had been a true friend of the Border Leicester breed.

To continue her standard of excellence, we welcome aboard Noreen Atkins of Groton, NY as our new newsletter editor. You will find Noreen to be a very upbeat, positive, enthusiastic breeder who, I am confident, will do a fine job of keeping up on the news. Be sure to read Noreen’s introduction on page 4.

Financially, our association is as strong as it has ever been with all bills paid and $3,000 in the treasury. We funded many shows and events in 2005 and desire to increase the publicity and promotion of Border Leicesters in 2006.

Send news about your Border Leicesters to Noreen, and if you have an idea to help promote Border Leicesters, contact any one of us on the board. We want your input and would welcome your ideas on how we can promote our breed better in 2006.

If you have rams or ewes that need to be registered or transferred, send your paperwork in quickly so you can start 2006 with a clean slate.

Don’t forget your membership dues will be coming up in January. For your convenience, a membership renewal form has been included in this issue. Please take advantage of the opportunity to promote your farm and animals by filling out the form. The member directory will be distributed throughout the year at fairs and festivals.

If you have started a new breeder or sold a Border Leicester to a non-member, send us their names so we can send them a membership package and newsletter. A membership for a new breeder would make a great Christmas present!

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season!

~ Greg Deakin
The following scenario would approach the ideal lambing season:

All ewes bred
All mature ewes weaning twins
No lambing problems
No weak lambs
All ewes producing adequate milk
All ewes good mothers
No bummer lambs
No health problems with ewes or lambs
35 day lambing season
No predator problems
Good weather

One can't control the weather, but all other factors can be controlled with varying rates of success. Certainly, type and size of sheep operation will modify what is considered an ideal lambing season. Environment will dictate number of lambs weaned per ewe. Realistically, an ideal lambing season is not likely, however, we can manage the ewes to approach the ideal as close as possible.

Hopefully pre-breeding management has been sound, i.e. flushing ewes, culling of ewes, breeding soundness exam on rams, appropriate health program for ewes and rams, etc. Much of the success or failure of a lambing season begins with the breeding season. However, the primary focus of this article will be from breeding to parturition.

Early Gestation

The period of early gestation most critical to success during the lambing season is the first 30 days after fertilization. The first 21 to 30 days after breeding is when embryonic implantation occurs. This first 30 days is when most embryonic mortality occurs. Thus, anything that can be done to reduce embryonic mortality should result in more lambs born. Shearing, vaccinating, working ewes and pronounced changes in feeding practices should be avoided during the first 30 days of gestation.

Ultrasonic pregnancy scanning can be done on ewes from 35 to 60 days after breeding, depending on equipment used and operator skill. Some operators can determine whether pregnant or not with 98 to 99% accuracy. Also, skilled operators can count fetal numbers with accuracy above 90%. With medium to large sized flocks, ultrasonic pregnancy scanning will save producers money and the information obtained can make management more efficient. Assume a 100 head ewe flock with 95% conception. Identifying 5 open ewes with a weight of 160 pounds at $30/cut gives a return of $240. Also, assuming a hay saving of 650 lbs/ewe at $80/ton saves a producer $130. If it costs $2/ewe to pregnancy test ($200 total) the net positive cash flow would be $170.

This would be independent of concentrate costs, vaccination costs, equipment use and needs and other management considerations. For a producer with a small flock the economic benefit may not be so clear, yet the information generated may make management easier.

The “ideal lambing season scenario” identifies the goals of no lambing problems, all ewes producing adequate milk, no bum lambs and all ewes as good mothers. Some may consider these factors as being out of control of the shepherd. Yet, ease of lambing, milking ability and mothering ability are all heritable traits. Selection pressure for maternal traits is one of the most important tasks one can do to decrease lamb and management inputs at lambing. If culling has not occurred prior to breeding, unsound ewes (cudders, feet, physical condition, age) and those having a history of problems should be culled during early gestation. Cull your problems. The long term fitness of the flock will increase. Labor and management inputs will decrease. Nutrition during early gestation is quite simple. Ewes need only slightly above maintenance levels of nutrition for the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. Pasture, crop residue and average quality hay will meet the ewes nutritional requirements during this period. Certainly, a good sheep mineral should be available, with an adequate supply of water.

Late Gestation

The last 4 to 6 weeks of pregnancy is considered late gestation for the ewe. This is the period where proper management becomes critical in realizing an ideal lambing season. Ewe milking ability, lamb size and vigor at birth, ewe body condition and health problem prevention are all heavily influenced during this phase of gestation. Proper nutrition during late gestation is a must to have a successful lambing season. Nutrient needs depend upon the number of lambs a ewe is carrying.

Flocks with average lambing rates of 180 to 200% need more nutrient inputs than those with a 120% lambing rate. Energy, water, vitamins and minerals are especially crucial as lambing approaches. Ewes carrying multiple births need a concentrated form of energy, such as corn, since the developing feti reduce the ewes rumen capacity. Selenium supplementation to ewes during late gestation is critical to prevent weak lambs, retained afterbirth and white muscle disease in lambs. Calcium and phosphorous requirements of ewes in late gestation essentially double as compared to the maintenance phase. Free choice availability of a good sheep mineral is important prior to lambing. There should be several areas available prior to lambing to group ewes based on expected date of lambing. This prevents over or underfeeding ewes and makes timely management techniques easier to perform.

Ewes should be treated for internal parasites 2 to 4 weeks before lambing. Worming at this time is extremely effective at controlling a future parasite problem. There is a marked rise in fecal egg counts in ewes just before lambing. If a product is used that is effective against the hypobiotic stages of internal parasites, parasite control in ewes and lambs is enhanced. Ewes serve as the main source of infection for both lambs and the pasture.

Ewes can be vaccinated for tetanus and enterotoxemia (overeating) from 2 to 4 weeks before lambing. Antibodies received by lambs through colostrum will give them immunity for 5 to 6 weeks.

For producers that are shed or barn lambing, the ewes should be in short fleece prior to lambing. This results in increased lamb survival and decreased health problems. Ewes in full fleece take more room in a facility, are more apt to lay on lambs, bring more moisture into the facility and are more difficult to observe and manage. If shearing ewes in cold weather, be aware that they will need extra energy intake for a few days after shearing until their body metabolism adapts to the removal of wool.

Continued on page 14
Guard Dogs for Predator Control
by Helen A. Swartz, Ph.D.
State Sheep, Goat & Small Livestock Specialist, Lincoln University of Missouri

Sheep producers losing lambs to predators or dogs find themselves seeking help to control or eliminate these losses. Several options are available to producers. Various kinds of electric and non-electric fences, traps to catch the predators, scare devices, cultural methods of penning sheep such as housing at night, using vapor lights, and guardian dogs are options quite successful in decreasing losses for many sheep producers.

Guardian dogs are receiving a lot of attention for controlling predators. Five years of research with 60 livestock guardian dogs at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho, concluded that the success rate of using guard dogs was over 60% when trained properly and only 10% of the dogs were rated as poor. Hampshire College New England Farm in Amherst, Mass., also reported excellent results of sheep protection with guardian dogs.

Guard dogs are not a cure-all for predator problems. Guard dogs are viewed as a first line of defense against predation in many types of operations but they need to be supplemented by other control methods. Properly integrating a puppy or dog into a sheep operation takes time, persistence, and patience. Some dogs are failures, but another dog can replace one that has failed and the second dog can be quite successful. Some guard dogs have killed sheep in the flock they are supposedly guarding. In early training, signs of rough handling and over-aggression should be handled with stern discipline.

How do guard dogs protect sheep?
Guard dogs protect sheep by patrolling, barking, scent-marking, and pursuing a predator when the sheep are threatened. A sheep producer should investigate the predator when the sheep are threatened. It generally takes several days to a few weeks for the sheep to accept the pup. Sheep accustomed to a guard dog are easily moved by herding.

Selecting a guard dog
The dog may be one of several breeds or a mixture of breeds. The most common breeds of guard dogs in the U.S. are the Great Pyrenees, Komondor, Anatolian Shepherd, Akbash Dog, Maremma, Kuvasz, and Sharplaninac. These dogs generally command good prices, however, the loss of a few lambs will soon pay for one. Mixed dogs were used in experimental work and were quite effective depending on how they were reared and the kind of temperament they exhibited. A pup, born of a proven sire and dam and raised among sheep will probably develop into a good guard dog if properly bonded with the flock.

A puppy raised in a kennel may have difficulty bonding to sheep, especially if over six to eight weeks of age. Choose a puppy from a line that exhibits traits complimentary to your needs. Avoid pups from overly shy or aggressive parents. Investigate the health status of the parents and look for hip dysplasia, a joint problem common to many large breeds of dogs. Consider neutering the pup to prevent problems due to heat cycles in females and males seeking females in heat. Neutering of males or females does not diminish their guarding capability.

Raising and integrating the puppy in a sheep operation
The puppy should be placed with the sheep and treated as a working dog, not a pet. Place the puppy with some lambs to avoid injury that may result from older aggressive ewes. The puppy must develop a bond with the lambs. The older sheep must be introduced gradually to the puppy. Ewes not accustomed to a guard dog may view the pup as an enemy. Over time, the sheep flock will become accustomed to the presence of the guard dog and they will tend to ignore the dog's presence.

Feed the pup in the sheep barn when the sheep are fed. Correct the pup for inappropriate behavior such as chasing or biting the sheep and praise the pup for good behavior.

Age at bonding pup to sheep
Some breeds of dogs mature and bond to sheep sooner than others. Some pups within breeds also bond at an earlier age than others. Guarding behavior was reported at the U.S. Experiment Station in pups as young as four months of age, while other dogs were nine months of age. The larger breeds of guard dogs mature more slowly and puppy behavior was noted up to twenty-four months of age in some dogs. Patience and discipline is required with all pups.

Problems observed in guard dogs
Failure to stay with the sheep requires correction. Correct the pup for coming to the house by immediately taking it back to the sheep. A sensitive pup will respond to a verbal reprimand while a stubborn "hardheaded" pup may need a physical correction. Chaining the dog with the sheep at night and releasing it during the day may achieve positive results. Introduce the new pup to its new boundaries on a leash and do it several times the first week. Patrolling and attentiveness to sheep will increase and develop over time. Regardless of training of some pups, a small percentage never strongly bond to sheep.

Playing with the sheep
A certain amount of licking, pawing, chasing and nipping can be expected with some puppies. Boredom contributes to playful activities between puppies and the sheep. The problem can be minimized by moving the pup to a larger area, or in some way changing the pup's environment. Closely supervise a new pup and this will eliminate the formation of bad habits. Play behavior decreases with age.

Sheep accepting new pup
The time required for the sheep to accept the pup will vary with the time of year it is placed. Lambing time is one time when the ewes will be protective of their young lambs. It generally takes several days to a few weeks for the sheep to accept the pup. Sheep accustomed to a guard dog are easily moved by herding.

Continued on page 21
Exhibitors:
Deakin Family Farms, Cuba, IL
Guffey, ????
Jennifer & Justin Mark, Houston, MN
Brian Seefeld, Athens, WI
Andrea Staskal, Two Rivers, WI
Jerry & Loralee Valenta, Two Rivers, WI

White Border Leicesters

Yearling Ram
1 J&L Y-216 J & L Farm
2 Hopkins CCH 439 Deakin
3 Deakin 04-1023 Deakin

Winter Ram Lamb
1 Deakin 05-1087 RR Deakin
2 J&L Y-222 J & L Farm
3 AJ’s Flock 59 Staskal
4 Deakin 05-804 Deakin
5 AJ’s Flock 66 Staskal
6 Guffey 685 Guffey
7 Guffey 684 Guffey

Spring Ram Lamb
1 AJ’s Flock 73 Staskal
2 SSF 0505 Mark

Champion Ram
J&L Y-216 J & L Farm

Reserve Champion Ram
Deakin 05-1087 RR Deakin

Yearling Ewe
1 Deakin 04-1048 RR Deakin
2 AJ 42 J & L Farm
3 AJ 51 J & L Farm
4 AJ’s Flock 45 Staskal
5 Deakin 04-1033 Deakin
6 J&L Y-209 J & L Farm
7 AJ’s Flock 47 Staskal
8 SSF 0401 Mark

Winter Ewe Lamb
1 Deakin 05-1079 Deakin
2 J&L Y-220 J & L Farm
3 J&L Y-221 J & L Farm
4 AJ’s Flock 55 Staskal
5 AJ’s Flock 63 Staskal
6 J&L Y-224 J & L Farm
7 Guffey 671 Guffey
8 Guffey 683 Guffey

Spring Ewe Lamb
1 AJ’s Flock 72 Staskal
2 Deakin 05-837 Deakin
3 SSF 0506 Mark

Champion Ewe
Deakin 04-1048 RR Deakin

Reserve Champion Ewe
AJ 42 J & L Farm

Best Flock
1 J & L Farm
2 Deakin
3 Staskal
4 Mark

Natural Colored Border Leicesters

Yearling Ram
1 J&L Y-216 J & L Farm
2 Hopkins CCH 439 Deakin
3 Deakin 04-1023 Deakin

Winter Ram Lamb
1 Deakin 05-1087 RR Deakin
2 J&L Y-222 J & L Farm
3 AJ’s Flock 59 Staskal
4 Deakin 05-804 Deakin
5 AJ’s Flock 66 Staskal
6 Guffey 685 Guffey
7 Guffey 684 Guffey

Spring Ram Lamb
1 AJ’s Flock 73 Staskal
2 SSF 0505 Mark

Champion Ram
Bair SP 974 Seefeld

Reserve Champion Ram
AJ’s Flock 70 Staskal

Yearling Ewe
1 AJ’s Flock 52 Staskal
2 Bair W 092 Seefeld
3 Bair W 042 Seefeld

Winter Ewe Lamb
1 AJ’s Flock 58 Staskal

Spring Ewe Lamb
1 AJ’s Flock 75 Staskal

Champion Ewe
AJ’s Flock 52 Staskal

Reserve Champion Ewe
Bair W 092 Seefeld

Best Flock
1 Seefeld
2 Staskal

Best Border Leicester Fleece
Deakin 05-1087 RR Deakin

The “Best Fleece of Show”, a Sandy Russell Memorial Award, was presented for the first time at the 2005 National Border Leicester Show. This is a traveling trophy that was contributed by Kay Walters, Cedarburg Woolen Mill. Congratulations to Deakin Family Farms!

Photos courtesy of The Banner
Northeast Regional Border Leicester Show
Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, MA
September 25, 2005 ♦ Judge: Tom Brown, Troy, OH

Exhibitors:
Noreen Atkins, GinLip Farm, Groton, NY
Deakin Family Farms, Cuba, IL
Tiffany Deakin, Cuba, IL
Polly Hopkins, Maybe Tomorrow Farm, Chepachet, RI
Irene Nebiker, North Smithfield, RI
Barbara Thompson, Seldom Seen Farm, Chepachet, RI
JoAnne Tuncy, Twin Birches, Millerton, NY

We had a great time at the Big E!
Won’t you join us next year?
THE BIG E
Northeast Regional Border Leicester Show
Photos Courtesy of The Banner

Advertising Rates

Display Ads
Per Issue
Full page ..............$75.00
1/2 page..............$45.00
1/4 page..............$25.00
Business card ......$12.00

4 Issues Prepaid
10% Discount
Full page ............$270.00
1/2 page..............$162.00
1/4 page..............$90.00
Business card ......$43.20

Photographs
For best printing quality, photos should be at least 300 dpi. Use a high resolution setting on your camera.

Please include a SASE if you’d like the photo to be returned.

Classified Ads
Per Issue
Up to 50 words ....$10.00
Up to 75 words ....$15.00
Up to 100 words ..$20.00

Deadlines for Submission
Spring Issue ...... March 15th
Summer Issue ... June 15th
Fall Issue .......... September 15th
Winter Issue...... December 15th

Non-members pay double the above rates.

Send ads to:
Noreen Atkins
ginlipfarm@yahoo.com

Champion Ewe
Johnson 413
Maybe Tomorrow Farm

Champion Ram
Hopkins CCH 439
Deakin Family Farms

Champion Ewe
Johnson 413
Maybe Tomorrow Farm

First Place Exhibitor’s Flock
Deakin Family Farms
Cuba, IL

Second Place Exhibitor’s Flock
Polly Hopkins
Maybe Tomorrow Farm
Chepachet, RI

Third Place Exhibitor’s Flock
Joanne Tuncy
Twin Birches
Millerton, NY

Big E Week 2 Lead Line Winners (l. to r.):
Lauren Chapdelaine, Devan Newton,
Aubrey Desjarlais, and
Deb Deakin with her Border Leicester

Northeast Regional Border Leicester Show
Photos Courtesy of The Banner

Advertising Rates

Display Ads
Per Issue
Full page ..............$75.00
1/2 page..............$45.00
1/4 page..............$25.00
Business card ......$12.00

4 Issues Prepaid
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Spring Issue ...... March 15th
Summer Issue ... June 15th
Fall Issue .......... September 15th
Winter Issue...... December 15th

Non-members pay double the above rates.

Send ads to:
Noreen Atkins
ginlipfarm@yahoo.com
The 2005 Warm Woolens blanket cooperative was completed in August with 227 blankets shipped back to the twenty-two participating farms. We shipped 472 pounds of washed colored wool and 402 pounds of washed white wool to Wheelock Textiles in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. We received natural white and brown blankets in five sizes. About half the participating farms sent Border Leicester fiber. The other farms sent Romney and/or Coopworth fiber.

The blankets have slightly different dimensions than MacAusland blankets. They are also napped harder giving them a woollier texture that most people prefer. MacAusland blankets come in a twill weave. Wheelock offers other alternatives and these are a herringbone weave. The napping makes the Wheelock blankets feel thicker than MacAusland blankets, but Wheelock worked hard to create a yarn and weave that was as close to the weight of MacAusland blankets as possible. That translates into a medium weight blanket, heavy enough to provide warmth, but not too heavy for any region where blankets are used.

It is exciting to have blankets made entirely of our wool and to deal with a mill willing to work closely with us on every aspect of their construction. Next year we may create blankets using the white wool in the warp and the dark wool in the weft so the weave becomes apparent. Eventually, we hope to send enough wool to make the plaid throws. Roughly half of this year’s orders were for throws; so we are close to reaching that goal.

The cost of the blankets may rise a small amount in 2006, but I’m including this year’s prices here. The blankets are returned with a Warm Woolens Co-operative label sewn on. Zippered, plastic bags are available for $1.75. I charge a per pound rate for organizing and running the cooperative. Each farm sends clean wool directly to the spinnery. Each farm is responsible for its own blanket sales and sends an amount of wool appropriate to fill the order it wants to receive. If your farm is interested in participating in the 2006 Warm Woolens Co-op contact Sherry Stahl Wellborn at 541-484-1440 or sherry@dancingsheepfarm.com. You can see some photos from the mill and the list of this year’s participants on our website at www.WarmWoolens.com.

2005 Blanket Processing Costs

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<td>Twin (72” x 90”)</td>
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<td>4.5 lbs. clean wool</td>
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<td>2 Throws (45” x 60”)</td>
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<td>4 lbs. clean wool</td>
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(throws must be ordered in pairs)

The Ideal Lambing Season

Ventilation and sanitation of facilities are critical concerns for producers lambing inside during the cold months. Inadequate ventilation is the cause of moisture and ammonia buildup which, in turn, leads to pneumonia and scours problems. Keeping facilities clean and well ventilated will prevent many health problems.

Feed additives can be fed to ewes during late gestation to prevent health problems and increase productivity. For instance, an antibiotic such as overomyacin can be fed to ewes to increase lamb survival and decrease disease problems in ewes. Also, if an abortion problem exists, high levels of antibiotics can be fed to control outbreaks. Feeding ionophores (monensin, lasalocid) to ewes during late gestation can decrease future coccidia problems in lambs. Research at Purdue has shown that feeding lasalocid (Bovatec) during late gestation increased lamb vigor at birth and birthweight.

Give ewes ample opportunity for exercise. It increases ewe fitness, decreases the number of over fat ewes and makes for an easier lambing for the ewe and shepherd.

Organization Needs

Being organized makes the goal of an ideal lambing season more attainable. Make a list of equipment and supplies that might possibly be needed and then make them readily accessible. Some supplies should include; thermometer, stomach tube, iodine, supplies for dealing with difficult births, syringes, needles, commonly used medications, etc. The list could go on for infinity. The point being, be prepared. Expect the best, be prepared for the worst.

Devise an efficient record keeping system for use during lambing. Be sure to make notes on problems with individual ewes or lambs. Culling these problems will help make future lambing seasons more ideal.

Summary

Ideal lambing seasons don't happen by chance or luck. You make your own luck by proper management and preparation. Pregnancy testing, ruthless culling, proper nutrition, reproductive management, a sound health program and organization are all required for a successful lambing season. Ideally, working smarter should replace working harder.

~ Reprinted with permission
CHAMPIONS BY DESIGN!

Winners of
PREMIER BREEDER & PREMIER EXHIBITOR
Wisconsin State Fair, Milwaukee, WI:
National Border Leicester Show,
Jefferson, WI; & the Northeast Regional Border Leicester Show held at The Big E, West Springfield, MA.

Special thanks to Richard & MaryAnn Johnson for all their help showing our sheep.

NATIONAL GRAND CHAMPION EWE,
2005 National Border Leicester Show
SUPREME CHAMPION EWE, Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival

BEST FLEECE, Border Leicester, National Border Leicester Show
Thanks to Gin-Up Farm, NY on his purchase!

Deakin 04-1048 RR

“HIGH DEFINITION” Hopkins 439
GRAND CHAMPION RAM,
THE BIG E

Deakin 05-1076
4TH FALL EWE LAMB,
THE BIG E

Breeding & show stock is available in both breeds!

Our Leicesters & Hampshires have Style!
Congratulations to Deb, who won 1st Adult Lead Line Competition; Tiffany on her runner-up & Colin on his 3rd Place finish at The Big E!

Ryan Hendricks,
Shepherd, 701/371-8529

Deakin 05-1087 RR

Deakin Family Farms
21632 N. Cameron Rd.
Cuba, IL 61427
309/783-5115
Email: ads.banner@sybertech.net

Watch for our show flock at Louisville!
Order Form

Patches $2.00
Light blue embroidered patch bordered in red with white sheep and blue writing

T-Shirts

- **Style A** $14.00
  “American Border Leicester Association” on the front left
  and a large ABLA logo on the back

- **Style B** $12.00
  ABLA logo on the front left

**Colors:** Grey or blue
**Sizes:** Youth Med, Adult Med, Large, X-Large

To order, send your check made out to “ABLA” to:
Krys Schrom
683 Bangall Amenia Road
Amenia, NY  12501

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Shipping
$3.00 for each T-Shirt, $1.00 for each patch

Total

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:
Phone:

Photos Requested for ABLA Calendar

Di Waibel, ABLA Secretary, is once again putting together a holiday calendar to mail out to ABLA members and others in the sheep industry. She is looking for a special photo to feature on the calendar. If you have a nice photo of Border Leicester sheep that you’d like to share, kindly send a copy to Di. Anything goes - serious, whimsical, with children, with dogs, in the field, in the show ring - anything with at least one Border Leicester in the picture.

Please email your high resolution photos to Di at momfarm@canby.com or you may also snail mail them to her at P.O. Box 947, Canby, OR  97013.
have been losses. Oddly enough, coyotes abound in the woods nearby and have been seen right on my driveway, but so far there have been no coyote kills. Most of my neighbors have dogs and completely understand the potential problems and are vigilant on behalf of my sheep. So for the most part, the system works. I take my sheep over the road to graze behind electroneat a bit farther from home. None of this would be possible without my Border Collies, for whom every road trek is a challenge and delight.

Over the years I have joined forces with another sheep farmer on the other side of town. She, too, is a wool producer, and is also an expert spinner and knitter, selling her finished products in a craft co-op and at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, which is where we sell most of our fleeces every spring. Currently we charge between $10.00 and $14.00 per pound for skirted wool. And I do mean skirted. The first rough skirting is done at shearing time. Then all the fleeces come into the house, and one by one they are skirted on a sheet on the dining room table. Each one takes up to two hours before it is ready to be weighed, graded, and priced.

Buyers always remark about how clean our wool is. We don't make a secret of the process, which begins with the way we feed hay - on the ground, in a fresh spot every day. My winter exercise is hauling hay on a toboggan out to the field and up one of two hills. So snow is always welcome.

When I was a teacher I used to knit a lot during faculty meetings. But these days I leave the knitting to others and spend what available time I have training dogs and competing in sheep dog trials. Writing books for young adults and children still takes up most of my indoor time and currently provides more income than the sheep. It wasn't always this way. Between breed stock sales, wool sales, and my freezer lamb customers, the farm was almost always in the black. No more. So I have had to cut back on the size of my flock. This fall there are three rams, twenty-five ewes, and seven keeper ewe lambs. It does seem like a comedown. Until lambing time...then I'll breeze through the few I have and sing a different tune.

**Member Profile**

Shepherd, Border Collie breeder, and author are just three of the hats that are worn by the talented Betty Levin. Look for her popular book, *AWAY TO ME, MOSS*, and its sequels at your favorite book store.

---

**WE HAD A GREAT WEEK AT THE BIG E...**

**ALL BUT OUR CHAMPION EWE BRED & OWNED BY US**

We Also Won:
2nd Border Leicester: Flock
1st Natural Colored
Junior Ewe Lamb

**Congrats to Deakin Family Farms for their Champion Ram bred by us.**

**MAYBE TOMORROW FARM**

Border Leicesters, Cheviots, and Natural Colored

Kevin, Polly, Sarah & Christopher Hopkins

494 Evans Road • Chepachet, RI 02814
401/949-4619 • khop4811@aol.com

Res. Champion Border Leicester Ram

Res. Champion Border Leicester Yearling Ewe with a ewe purchased from Sue Johnson.

Res. Champion Natural Colored Ram & Best Fleece

1st Pair of Ewe Lambs
Last year while perusing the piles of books at my local Costco store, I espied a slim volume which grabbed my attention. Nestled between the crime novels, political tell-alls and how-to guides was a book written by New York Times bestselling author Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson entitled The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals. It was the lone book about agriculture in the store, aside from the picture books of farm animals for toddlers, and because it was in a discount store, there was a veritable mountain of copies of the book to educate the cost-conscious, suburban American public about some porcine Liberace and his barnyard cohorts. I just had to purchase a copy and read it.

It seems Mr. Masson, an ex-psychoanalyst (can you really be an ex-psychoanalyst?) and author of earlier books about the emotional life of animals, met said pig living on a beach near Auckland, New Zealand. ‘Piglet’ likes to take a dip in the surf and is known around the neighborhood to sing when the night is lit up by a full moon. She is clean and well-mannered, and she became the genesis of the author’s mission to research and report what he found during five years of visits to farm animals. His aim was to “give voice, meaning and dignity to those gentle beasts that are bred to be milked, shorn, butchered and eaten.”

That phrase was just inside the dust jacket, and I knew we were in for quite a ride when I noted that he had placed the words ‘milked’ and ‘shorn’ with ‘butchered’ and ‘eaten’ in the same sentence. Even my crankiest old ewe can tell you that on a hot June day, being shorn is worlds away from being butchered. But given the dearth of information regarding agriculture in the average life of the modern American, I wondered how many people would be as insightful as my old ewe.

It takes just a day at your local agricultural fair to realize how far people’s lives have become distant from agriculture and country life. From their questions, and even their stated opinions, it does not take long to see that many adults are extremely limited in their ag knowledge. The result is they are vulnerable to misinformation and can end up expressing some pretty silly stuff about agriculture.

The introduction to Mr. Masson’s book showcases his premise that all domesticated animals living on farms are “little removed from their wild ancestors and therefore have all the emotions that belong to those wild animals who live under the condition of freedom.” I have no problem believing that animals have emotions. All I have to do is hug one dog over the other to elicit a basic jealousy response, and all I have to do is feed my ewe lambs late to experience a basic ovine complaint response. But as for domestic animals being so close to their wild ancestors, I wonder about the sheep who have co-existed with humans for some six thousand years. While gazing at my sheep on a moon-lit night (they weren’t singing – there was just the occasional contented blech, which some teenage boys present as a musical effort), I could count my white sheep like so many glittering pearls. I would not like to be a white sheep in the wild, and if I could see them easily, the wolves and coyotes would see them even better. So, what is freedom for my sheep? Is it the freedom to starve or to be slowly killed off by any pack of dogs that comes upon them? How is that beneficial to the emotional well-being of sheep?

In his subsequent chapter devoted to the plight of sheep and goats, he set up his interviews to support his point of view. He spoke with just enough taciturn New Zealand commercial sheep farmers to obtain quotes illustrating what he claimed was their callousness to the feelings and welfare of their ovine charges. For example, he asserted that when treating against sheep scab, the farmers did not medically treat their animals out of concern or compassion, but to simply save the wool from damage. He writes, “Of course the sheep are dipped not to save them from irritation but because the mites cause such anguish that the sheep rub off their wool and sometimes their own skin.” That assertion is made without supporting evidence; it is simply his opinion. He then goes on to suggest that all farmers operate this way, and the modern American might just take him at his word, given that they have no personal experience to negate his claims.

As for his first-hand experience with actual sheep, it is not surprising that the few commercial sheep he took the time to meet were uniformly skittish. (Perhaps he put them off because he unconsciously began to psychoanalyze them. Sheep are particularly sensitive to that, particularly during a first meeting.) According to his account, it wasn’t until he visited no-kill sheep sanctuaries that he was able to befriend ‘personable’ sheep. Hogwash! Or, rather sheepwash! Every breeder, whether commercial or the backyard kind, can point to sheep which are a part of their daily lives and have been for years. Who hasn’t had an intelligent conversation with a sheep at a show, or napped with a ewe friend while waiting for lambs to arrive? But most Americans have no way to know about these animals.

Masson wrote the ‘exploitation’ of farm animals was particularly strong regarding sheep, saying that for thousands of years sheep have “produced milk as well as wool, and are slaughtered for their skins and meat.” There’s that funny combination again of milk and wool and death. In reality, this list only serves to make sheep appear awfully useful, something missing in Masson’s work in regards to animals and people. Sheep are multi-purpose animals, kind of like the guy who can do plumbing and work on the HVAC. In Tibet, he says, they are used as pack animals, and their dung is used for fuel. Folks, is this bad? The sheep work for a living and have a lot to offer. Sounds like job security to me. And as for the state of ovine emotional health in Tibet, I would wager that right now two male sheep are vying to see who can carry the most stuff in their panniers, with the winner puffing up his chest and walking with just a bit more sheepy bravado.

He concludes, “Even those who honestly attempt to give a farm animal a good life know that this animal’s life will never be optimal. Feelings the animal is capable of are not given scope in any kind of life that gives short shrift of his or her evolutionary past.”

Continued on page 21
The Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival is held every September in Canby, Oregon at the Clackamas County Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds is an older facility with a charming wooden 4-H Hall and Main Exposition Hall where many of the vendors are installed as well as the wool show, photography competition, lamb and goat cook-off, and some classes. Between these buildings and the barns is a courtyard of lawn strewn with picnic tables. Food booths and other vendors set up outside encourage a happy mixture of browsing, eating, and chatting. The physical setting promotes a joyful and rather intimate experience for visitors and exhibitors.

Books, yarn, handmade soap, silk scarves, weaving, spinning, and knitting supplies, garments, toys, artwork, blankets, fiber, and truly glorious felt are all available. The food booths provide locally baked goods and locally raised barbecued lamb (the line was long at that booth).

The barns are small, but comfortable. The animal shows include llamas, alpacas, angora rabbits, goats, and sheep. The sheep show consists of Division I (white), Division II (colored), and Classic Sheep (rare and older breeds). The numbers of sheep attending OFFF are fairly modest, but enough breeders come to support both colored and white Border Leicester shows. This year we had seven breeders showing sheep. Di Waibel, with her outstanding flock of white Border Leicesters, dominated the white show. My sheep were next door to her Supreme Champion ram and he did turn my eye. This ram was competing against some lovely and large fine-wooled sheep. Don and Linda Jonnasson are producing some very black sheep and Susie Wilson has the usual white and colored sheep that make for stiff competition. Barbara Fox showed a nice-sized colored ram that won the best fleece among colored Border Leicesters.

The Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival is a cheerful event well worth attending if you're in the vicinity of Canby (near Portland) in September. I'll be there again next year with my Leicesters.

~ Sherry Stahl Wellborn

### White Border Leicesters

#### Yearling Ram
1. MOM 366 P Mist O Morn Farm
2. Decker B410 Foxy Farm Critters
3. Maverick Farmer Girl’s Friends

#### Ram Lamb
1. MOM 411 R Mist O Morn Farm
2. MOM 390 R Mist O Morn Farm
3. 78 Jonasson Farm
4. SDF 513 SuDan Farm
5. Ezra K503-2 Foxy Farm Critters

#### Champion Ram
MOM 366 P Mist O Morn

#### Reserve Champion Ram
MOM 411 R Mist O Morn

#### Yearling Ewe
1. MOM 350 P Mist O Morn Farm
2. 166 Jonasson Farm
3. MOM 361 P Mist O Morn Farm
4. Donna B415 Foxy Farm Critters
5. Drucella N419 Foxy Farm Critters

#### Ewe Lamb
1. 172 CJ’s Farm
2. SDF 518 SuDan Farm
3. SDF 510 SuDan Farm
4. MOM 401 Mist O Morn Farm
5. MOM 380 R Mist O Morn Farm
6. Evette K502 Foxy Farm Critters
7. Emiul K501 Foxy Farm Critters

#### Champion Ewe
MOM 350 P Mist O Morn Farm

#### Reserve Champion Ewe
166 Jonasson Farm

#### Best Flock
1. Foxy Farm Critters
2. Foxy Farm Critters

#### Best Fleece
Duncan B404 Foxy Farm Critters

### Natural Colored Border Leicesters

#### Yearling Ram
1. Duncan B404 Foxy Farm Critters

#### Ram Lamb
1. 84 Jonasson Farm
2. Rex DSF 0503 Dancing Sheep Farm
3. Ebony G504-2 Foxy Farm Critters

### Champion Ram
84 Jonasson Farm

### Reserve Champion Ram
Duncan B404 Foxy Farm Critters

### Yearling Ewe
1. Darla B403 Foxy Farm Critters
2. Dixie B407 Foxy Farm Critters

### Ewe Lamb
1. SDF 503 SuDan Farm
2. 77 Jonasson Farm
3. 161 CJ’s Farm
4. Erica P503-2 Foxy Farm Critters
5. 94 Farmer Girl’s Friends
6. Elena G501 Foxy Farm Critters

### Champion Ewe
SDF 503 SuDan Farm

### Reserve Champion Ewe
Darla B403 Foxy Farm Critters

### Best Flock
Duncan B404 Foxy Farm Critters

### Best Fleece
Duncan B404 Foxy Farm Critters

Mist O Morn’s yearling ram, MOM 366, completed his show career by winning the Diamond Award given to the Supreme Grand Champion Ram at the Oregon Flock and Fiber show in September of 2005. Congratulations to Di Waibel for winning this prestigious award with her Border Leicester!
Book Review

As we all contemplate the emotional mayhem we have inflicted on our sheep, be aware that there were, say, about 100 copies of this book available at each of the hundreds of Costco stores in the U.S. and Canada. As a result, dozens, even hundreds, of Americans are finding out yet another sordid ‘truth’ about American agriculture. Now our sin is wreaking emotional destruction on innocent, very personable farm animals.

Well, a farmer’s life is rarely optimal. Whose is? And an unquestioning, ill-informed American public can wreak a lot of emotional and financial damage to the future of the American farm. Perhaps Mr. Masson thought he was addressing corporate farming, where he and I could find a bit of common ground, but his brush was broad and marked us all. In the meantime, there was no serious book on agriculture available at Costco that day that could counter Mr. Masson’s assertions, and few Americans have family ties to farms that would at least give them a bit of a reality check.

It is inevitable that Americans will witness a serious national dialog on the future of the American farm. How they respond to such a dialog will depend on what their belief system tells them about farmers and the traditional agricultural way of life. If we care about farms, we cannot allow assertions such as Mr. Masson’s to remain unanswered. Individuals such as he are well-meaning, but I cannot think of a crueler emotional fate for farm animals – and their owners – then the loss of the American family farm, abetted by some silly pseudo-ag books featured at Costco.

After 22 years as a member of a volunteer fire department, I never get over the sight, smell, and sense of tragedy to hard-working families and their communities when a barn burns down. All of us hear about barn fires in the news and we are secretly glad it was not ours. I have put together a checklist of items below that have contributed to accidents or the total loss of barns in my community. Please check your barns and homes and correct any potentially hazardous situations before it is too late.

Farm Safety Checklist

Electrical

Check for tripping breakers, rusted panels, frayed wiring, boxes without covers, extension cords or tools with ground pins removed or cords/plugs damaged, improperly grounded and installed fence chargers, improper or no grounding in the barn, any switch, receptacle or electric motor that sparks, smokes or smells. Call a competent licensed electrician who can save your barn before the fire starts.

Mechanical

Inspect electric motors, conveyors, ventilators and fans, compressors, pumps, feed augers, tractors and power equipment. Be sure equipment is working properly, safety guards are in place, and that safety systems and kill switches are working as designed.

Cleaning Chores

DUST, grime, cobwebs, soil, manure, bedding, feed dust, and oil leaks, etc...all these can create a flammable and combustible environment when they accumulate in and around electrical or mechanical equipment. This is a major contributing factor in barn and farm equipment fires. Get the scraper, broom, power washer or shop vac going!

Around the barn

Watch out for leaks, spills, loose boards, nails sticking out, broken windows, swinging doors, slippery areas, and areas that shed roof ice in the winter.

Footnote: Most state agricultural departments (or state agricultural colleges) offer no-cost farm safety inspections. Every insurance company has a loss prevention program that typically offers on-site safety inspections of their customer’s property at no charge. Many local power companies offer electrical grounding inspections and electrical efficiency programs at no or low cost. Take advantage of the resources available to you.

~ Christopher W. Davis has served as a volunteer firefighter for twenty-two years. He has also spent that time managing a dairy, horse, and grain farm in northern Vermont. He is currently serving as Chief of the Charlotte (Vermont) Volunteer Fire Department.

Our thanks to Chris who took time out from his busy schedule to put together this list.
Guard Dogs for Predator Control

dogs but the guard dog may have to be chained or placed away from the sheep.

**Notify neighbors when purchasing a guard dog**

A guardian pup is a valuable animal. They must be protected from accidents by moving vehicles, being mistaken for a predator by neighbors, shootings and trap- pings. A patrolling guard dog may easily be mistaken for an intruder. Notify your neighbors that you have purchased a guard dog.

Guard dogs become ill the same as any livestock. Be aware of a loss of appetite, diarrhea or a change in behavior. Consult your veterinarian and get proper immunization and deworming for your pup.

**Conclusion**

Guard dogs have become very effective in controlling predators and dogs on many Missouri sheep farms. Guard dogs are not 100% effective; there is variation across and within breeds of dogs. Handling may be one cause of failure. Guard dogs must be properly trained to be successful. Patience, perseverance and discipline are required to teach a guard dog to bond and accept the responsibility of guarding a flock of sheep.

~ Helen Swartz is the Principal Investigator at Lincoln University’s George Washington Carver Farm in Jefferson, MO. She can be reached at 573-681-5540 ext. 30. This article is reprinted with permission from the author.

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**Member Directory Update**

Please add these names and addresses to your 2005 Directory.

- **Boozer, Lisa**
  - Boozer’s Farm
  - 4540 South Ammon Road
  - Idaho Falls, ID 83406
  - 208-523-3709
  - heatman@cableone.net

- **Groefsema, Jana**
  - Wool Run Ranch
  - 3840 Patricia Lane
  - Boise, ID 83704
  - 208-322-6393
  - woolrun@pagedata.com

- **Hintzsche, Frank & Barb**
  - Hintzsche Sheep Farm
  - 3951 South Mulford Road
  - Rochelle, IL 61068
  - 815-562-9378

- **Mayfield, Stephen**
  - Skycrest Farm
  - 775 Kings Run Road
  - Oakland, MD 21550
  - 301-533-0987
  - supermtc@qcol.net

- **Smith, Glen & Coleen**
  - Blessed Creations
  - 1655 SE Spokane Street
  - Portland, OR 97202
  - 503-236-9039
dairyshepherd@hotmail.com

- **Thomas, Peggy**
  - 3638 West Nicholson Hill Road
  - Ossineke, MI 49766
  - 517-727-4439

- **Williams, Heather (JR)**
  - P.O. Box 193
  - Central Bridge, NY 12035
  - 518-868-4833
  - stoneybrookfarms@hotmail.com

- **Woodhouse, Jane**
  - Brigids Farm
  - P.O. Box 29
  - Peacham, VT 05862

- **Young, Zachary (JR)**
  - 3951 South Mulford Road
  - Rochelle, IL 61068
  - 815-562-3978

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**Border Leicester Show**

**Woodstock, CT**

The Border Leicesters were shown at the Woodstock Fair in Woodstock, Connecticut on Sunday, September 4th. Both black and white Border Leicesters were exhibited totaling approximately 30 Leicesters. Max Woolever was the judge for the weekend.

The premium money donated by the ABLA was used for the Champion Ram and Champion Ewe awards. Champion Ram was won by Polly Hopkins on her ram lamb; and the Champion Ewe award went to Barbara Thompson on her yearling ewe.

It should also be noted that there were four youth exhibitors showing approximately 10 head of Border Leicesters on Saturday.

~ Polly Hopkins

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*This cute face is learning to guard sheep at the Smith Family Farm in Vermont.*

*Photo by Grace Smith*

*Polly Hopkins, Maybe Tomorrow Farm, took home the Champion Ram prize.*

*The Champion Ewe award went to Barbara Thompson, Seldom Seen Farm.*
New York Bred Ewe Sale Summary

DATE: October 14-15, 2005
PLACE: Rhinebeck, NY
SALE MANAGER: Banner Sale Management Service, Cuba, IL
JUDGE: Tom Brown, Troy, OH
AUCTIONEER: Billy MacCauley, Atglen, PA
SALE TOP: $750.00
SALE GROSS: $25,925.00
SALE AVERAGES:
- 34 Tunis $341.18
- 1 White Lincoln $150.00
- 3 Black Lincolns $316.67
- 2 Romneys $300.00
- 7 Border Leicesters $421.43
- 4 Rambouillets $368.75
- 2 Columbias $300.00
- 6 Corriedales $275.00
- 5 Natural Colored $240.00
- 4 Icelandic $343.75
- 8 Southdowns $287.50
- 2 Hampshires $212.50
- 4 Suffolks $250.00
- 2 Oxards $375.00
- 3 Cheviots $200.00
- 11 Dorsets $209.09
TOTAL SALE AVG. $305.36

The 2005 New York Bred Ewe Show & Sale was held in the scenic Hudson Valley in Rhinebeck, NY on Saturday, October 15. Held in conjunction with the New York Sheep & Wool Festival where approximately 30,000 people go through the gates, 16 different breeds of sheep averaged a strong $305.36.

Border Leicesters had a strong day as seven lots averaged $421.43. The Grand Champion Ewe was a yearling bred by Seldom Seen Farm, RI. She sold for $550 to Karen and Richard Zlattner, NY. The Reserve Grand Champion was a first place spring ewe lamb bred by Overlook Manor Farm, VA. She sold for $425 to Meg Ed, VT.

Second place and third place honors in the Yearling Ewe class were both from Overlook Farm and they sold for $500 to Krystine Schrom, NY and $300 to Dawn Robinson, ME, respectively. Overlook Manor also placed first and second in the Brood Ewe divisions and they sold for $400 to The Scent of Roses Farm, RI and to Stoney Brook Farms, NY for $325. Barbara Thompson, RI then picked up an Overlook Farm spring ewe lamb to conclude the Border Leicester prices.

~ Greg Deakin

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, IA 50166

Dates to Remember

December 15, 2005
Submission deadline for the 2006 Winter Issue of the ABLA Quarterly News

January 1, 2006
ABLA membership renewals due