Board of Directors

President
Greg Deakin (2012)
PO Box 500
Cuba, IL 61427
309/785-5058
ads.banner@sybertech.net

Vice President
Barb Hintzsche (2014)
3951 S. Mulford Road
Rochelle, IL 61068
815/561-5537
baawe1@yahoo.com

Treasurer
Polly Hopkins (2013)
494 Evans Road
Culpeper, VA 22701
540/829-0806
khop4811@aol.com

Junior Coordinator
Jennifer Bierhuizen (2012)
17292 Kibler Road
Dwight, KS 66849
17292 Kibler Road
Dwight, KS 66849

Recording Secretary
Anne Key (2012)
52 Cartland Road
Lee, NH 03824
sally.barnes@comcast.net

Webmaster
JoAnne Tancy
692 Smithfield Road
Millerton, NY 12546
518/789-6113
ewobe_53@yahoo.com

The American Border Leicester Association
Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2012

Keeping In Touch
with Breeders Kerry & Kit Phelps

By Micky Burch

Long-time Banner readers may recognize the name Kit Phelps; she was a feature writer and provided a regular column for the sheep magazine for nearly a decade. What some may not know is that Kit and her husband Kerry are long-time sheep breeders and current Border Leicester enthusiasts.

An Iowa State University graduate with a degree in animal science, Kerry started raising sheep when he was five years old beginning with a commercial ewe. Later, he started raising Suffolk sheep; “They put me through college,” he says. Kit grew up in town and was introduced to animal agriculture after she and Kerry married in 1979.

Making their home in eastern Iowa, the Phelps’ live on the farm Kerry grew up on with its 1920s-built home and over 100-year-old barn. Two-thirds of their former cattle shed has been enclosed for lambing, and across the front of the other third a translucent plastic curtain rolls down providing light and wind protection for the “maternity ward.” They use farrowing crate heating pads in their lambing jugs so they can warm newborn lambs from the bottom and the top (with heat lamps) while they’re lambing in mid-February. They also have a hanging infrared heater on a cable that moves over the jugs to keep the lambs (and shepherds) nice and toasty.

The Phelps’ were raising Shropshires and Columbias when Kit discovered Border Leicesters while writing for The Banner. Their first ewes and ram were from the Greg Deakin Family in Illinois, and over the next two years they purchased two different sets of ewes and a ram from Nancy Weik of Virginia. Later they decided to concentrate on one breed and kept about 30 Border Leicester ewes. Kerry liked their versatility. “Under all that beautiful wool is a good looking sheep. We aren’t embarrassed after shearing,” he says. “They’re big enough and fast enough gaining that we can still sell rams to our long-time commercial customers.” Kit appreciates their moderate size and easy-to-work-with disposition.

Maternal characteristics are another reason the Phelps enjoy raising Border Leicesters. They’re good mothers and often times have multiple births, including more than a few sets of triplets. After ultrasounding last December, Kit knew to expect eight sets of triplets this spring. “The lambs are usually vigorous and hungry, so I don’t have to spend too much time in the lambing pens,” Kit says with relief.

The lambs are developed with a specific genetic plan in mind. “We’re doing some line breeding,” Kerry explains. “We’re happy with what we have at home because we know the families and line breeding creates consistency.” Still seeking solid genetics, this past summer the couple traveled to the Fogels in Ohio to select an outcross ram — the son of the Grand Champion Border Leicester Ewe at the 2010 North American International Livestock Exposition.

“He fits right in with our flock where we strive for the complete sheep that is structurally correct with plenty of meat and maternal capacity,” Kerry says.

Another management practice the Phelps’ maintain is weighing lambs at birth, 60 days, 90 days and 120 days. The production information is used to decide which lambs are retained for breeding and which ewes are producing the best progeny. Only the top lambs are kept, while the rest go to market. The keepers continue on a growing ration and enter into a modified rotational grazing system where the sheep are moved.

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Kerry likes the versatility of Border Leicester's. "Under all that beautiful wool is a good looking sheep," he says. Kit appreciates their moderate size and easy-to-work-with dispositions. Wool Festival wool show. With the help of Fleshin, she also hand-painted some yarn, sent it to her mother who knits and is now the proud owner of a sweater made from the wool of her own sheep. Further dedication to the breed is shown by Kerry's service to the American Border Leicester Association as vice president and leadership organizing the breed futurity during his term.

The Phelps' have also enjoyed some show ring success; in 2008, the couple raised and showed the Reserve National Champion Border Leicester Ram at the National Show and Sale in Springfield, Ill. While they don't attend a lot of shows and sales to protect the health of their flock, the couple would like to enter the National Sale this spring in Ohio. "We hope to make it, but it's during planting season." Kit says, an important time of year for Kerry who also farms 500 acres of corn and soybeans.

Of sheep in general, Kit says, "They are perfect livestock for families. You can raise your kids with them because they're easy to work with, they don't kick or bite and they don't "butt" you very often." And Kit should know; most of her married life she's split her time between helping on the farm and being a stay-at-home mom to their children Kiley and Jonathan, who are grown, and Kayla, who is a freshman in high school. Kayla, an FFA student, helps.

Writing About Sheep

An untrained journalist, Kit started writing a regular column about farm life and an occasional feature story for her local newspaper. All the while, "The Banner" was a regular in the Phelps' mailbox. In 1997, Kit noticed the feature writer for the magazine was retiring, so she applied for the job and met up with Deakin at the Iowa State Fair. He put her to work right away interviewing a staple in the sheep barn: long-time Iowa State Fair assistant sheep superintendent Carl Gillman from Stuart.

Another memorable moment for Kit was writing about the Gold Bell Trophies, an award Sheep Breeder Magazine gave away in the 1930s to the best pen of three at select state fairs around the country. The annual winners name was inscribed on the bell; if the same flock won the award three times, they got to keep the bell. In 1937, 15 bells existed; 60 years later, only two could be found. "It was like being a detective, tracking down those bells," Kit says. "I ran up a $90 phone bill working on that story – that was in the days before cheap minutes."

In addition to writing great features, Kit benefited from her interviews by the tips she picked up from other producers, like Darling Tunis who told her about putting up rope lights so you don't have to turn on lights in the barn at night. "It creates enough light to run the barn cameras, but you don't disturb the sheep when you go out to check them," she explains.

Writing for "The Banner" for almost a decade, she averaged two to three stories per issue, totaling more than 200 features over the course of her tenure in addition to her regular farm life column, appropriately dubbed "Keeping In Touch." She decided to retire not only to help care for her grandchildren, but also because, after more than nine years, she felt she was repeating herself some. While she does miss writing, she doesn’t miss deadlines. This writer is sure, though, that if she wanted to do a guest editorial sometime, Deakin wouldn’t stop her.
President’s Message

Greetings Fellow Border Leicester Breeders!

Spring is officially here, but in Illinois it has seemed like Spring for over a month. Record warm temperatures this early everywhere still leaves me apprehensive that there’s still a bit of winter yet to come. Whatever, it’s been great for lambing.

With the arrival of Spring comes our new lamb crop and the excitement of a new beginning. There is nothing more enjoyable than watching the new lambs grow and develop.

Inside this issue are four biographies from Border Leicester breeders wishing to step up and be elected to the American Border Leicester Board of Directors. Each candidate is well versed in our breed and I believe would make wonderful contributions to our board. Three spots are available, so please read each biography carefully, vote, and return the ballot enclosed in this mailing to our Secretary, Sally Barney before April 15th. I know each candidate and I believe as a breed we are blessed to have these highly qualified breeders to choose from.

I have made the decision not to re-run for the Board of Directors as my term expires this year. I was first elected to the board in 2001. I thought it was something I would enjoy for a term and it became four! Now is the time to hand the reigns over to others more qualified than I. I have served under the leaderships of Cathie Shiff of Virginia, and then Archie Murray of Nebraska. Both presidents helped us grow and promote the Border Leicester breed.

I first became president of ABLA in the Spring of 2004 and have seen the breed continue to grow and flourish on a national scale. Our breed is ran like a business and while we don’t have a large bank roll, your money has been spent wisely, promoting it as best we can with the funds we have.

During my tenure I have watched us make the transition of registering our sheep off some breeder’s kitchen table to sending all our paperwork and flourish on a national scale. Our breed is ran like a business and while we don’t have a large bank roll, your money has been spent wisely, promoting it as best we can with the funds we have.

During my tenure I have watched us make the transition of registering our sheep off some breeder’s kitchen table to sending all our paperwork and flourish on a national scale. Our breed is ran like a business and while we don’t have a large bank roll, your money has been spent wisely, promoting it as best we can with the funds we have.

As a breed we are enjoying new growth from veteran breeders raising other breeds of sheep that have decided to add Border Leicesters to their operation. They have seen the excitement our breed generates and have heard how easy they are to raise. These are the traits that will help our breed continue to grow. Emphasize the disposition Border Leicesters possess and future converts are unlimited!

Serving as your president and a member of the board has been a very humbling and joyful experience. I am very proud of each director I have had the opportunity to serve with the past 12 years. The friendships made will last a lifetime. You have a strong, experienced board which will welcome three new members this year. Get active, compete, talk to other breeders about Border Leicesters and promote your breed!

I am confident the Border Leicester breed will continue to grow and prosper in the years ahead. I challenge each of you to recruit two, three or four new members this year. Get active, compete, talk to other breeders about Border Leicesters and promote your breed!

Thank you sincerely for the opportunity to serve you for so many years.

- Greg Deakin

A Blast From The Past

U.S.D.A. Farmers’ Bulletin No. 576, Published May 2, 1914

“The breed commonly known as Leicester is divided into English Leicester and Border Leicester. The English Leicester is well covered with wool at the crown of the head, whereas the head of the Border Leicester is very bare of wool. The back of the Leicester is very wide and well covered, but the Border Leicesters have less depth of body than other long-wool breeds and with their comparative lightness of belly wool they appear more leggy than the English Leicesters. The face and legs of all Leicesters are white. The fleece hangs in locks smaller than those of the Lincoln and without the Cotswold’s appearance of ringlets.”

The University of Illinois College of Agriculture Extension Service Circular 534 Published in 1942 states that long-wool wools sold in the grease for 51-54 cents per pound, and if washed sold for 90-92 cents per pound. The highest-priced greasy wool was 52-57 cents/lb (3/8 blood Merino) and the highest selling washed wool was $1.18-1.21/lb (Fine Merino).

If everybody feels better about the current wool prices, keep in mind that in 1942 the average new car cost $920, a gallon of gas was 15 cents, Kellogg’s® Corn Flakes (now about $3.80) were 8 cents, and of course a Hershey Bar and a Coke both cost a nickel! Approximately 100 pounds of wool sold for enough to buy a new car. Try THAT today!

Jack Price, Palmer, Illinois

Calendar of Events

APRIL


MAY

May 5-6  Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, West Friendship, MD, www.sheepandwool.org

May 12-13  New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Festival, Contoocook, NH, www.nhswga.org

May 12-13  Shepherd’s Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival, Lake Elmo, MN, www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org

May 21  3rd Annual Rhode Island Fiber Festival, Bristol, RI, www.coggeshalfarm.org

May 26-27  National Border Leicester Sale (held in conjunction with the Great Lakes Sale), Wooster, OH, 309/785-5058


May 26-27  35th Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair, Cumington, MA, www.masheepwool.org

JUNE

June 7-10  19th Annual Estes Park Wool Market (includes sheep show), Estes Park, CO, www.estesnet.com/events/woolmarket.htm

June 15  ABLA Newsletter Deadline for the Summer Issue, newsletter@ablasheep.org

June 20-22  28th Annual NorthEast Youth Sheep Show, West Springfield, MA, www.nesheep.org

June 22-24  The Black Sheep Gathering (includes sheep show), Eugene, OR, www.blacksheepgathering.org

June 30  2nd Annual New England Wool Pool, contact Aaron, 413/230-8607

Share Your Event!

Send information about your upcoming events to newsletter@ablasheep.org
Greetings from my neck of the woods,

As I sit at my computer, the weather is in the low 80’s and the grass can be heard sprouting up all over the place. It is spring in Virginia and I am loving it! Daffodils and crocus have been around for over two weeks and the tulips are gearing up for their turn of beauty. My lambs are on the ground, soaking up this sunshine and growing like gangbusters (what is a gangbuster anyway?).

Since we don’t feed grain, I am happy to see the grass growing and little lambs learning from their mothers what a mouthful of grass tastes like. Ever since they started putting corn in our gas tanks and around our fat middles, I simply could not justify the increase in grain costs. We used to pay $4.75 for a 50# bag of corn and now it is over $11.00/bag! That’s more than doubled and I haven’t seen the price of market lambs go up to $3.00/pound at the market to compensate, so grass is the main course at our farm. Are my sheep fat, huge, and able to compete with their grain-fed peers in the show ring? Definitely not, but my feed bill is low, I don’t use chemical wormers, and I am able to sell a lamb for a bit of profit at the end of the day. With my girls in college and two more to go, I have another valuable incentive to watch my financial bottom line.

This year I decided to breed all my Border Leicester ewes to my Suffolk ram and all my Suffolk ewes to my Border Leicester ram. Talk about a great cross! Since my purebred Border Leicesters simply could not keep up in growth with my Suffolks and since I wanted to keep my lovely Border Leicesters, I decided to treat all my sheep more “commercially-minded” and attempt to maximize the outcomes from all of them. Crossbreeding has done this and I really like the results. Going back to my roots, we got started in Border Leicesters over 15 years ago because of a little crossbred Border Leicester ewe that we bought at the market and who happened to raise monster lambs year after year. She was exceptional because she was a cross of these two great breeds. So who am I to argue with success?!

It is with regret that I have decided to not run again for your Border Leicester Board of Directors. I have had so much fun and learned so much over the past six years as one of your directors, but the time has come to move along and allow another to take my place. The people that I have worked with have all been great. I think that it is a wonderful job and I would encourage anyone reading this (that has any interest in this breed) to run for office this year. It doesn’t require a lot of time, but it does require dedication and a decision to work for what is best for our American Border Leicesters.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you and I appreciate getting to know so many new members over the years.

Jennifer Bierhuizen
Spirit Hill Farm

In my neck of the woods, Morris County, Kansas - in the Flint Hills - there is only one topic our Border Leicesters are focussed on: Gestation.

What, you may ask, no lambs yet? Not until April 1. It’s a long palaver.

In the thirteen years I raised sheep at an earlier, non-BL, stage, I spent a great deal of effort moving lambing back as early as possible, partly because of lamb mortality, partly chasing the fat lamb market, partly because I did not enjoy being on first name terms with a frosty Orion. The efforts were successful in that half the ewes lambed in October and November. The other half lambed in January and February, and because there were some 350 ewes in all, half was a lot and Orion and I remained cold and close. I should say that the line from our land grant was that winter lambing was good because the farmer was not otherwise occupied.

So why, I asked myself, should I be lambing purebreds in the depths of winter? Grass comes on in these parts in late March, and grass milk works wonders. Lambs will get grass at its highest protein levels when they can grow fastest, up to late June, and then they can be creep-fed in the evenings. We don’t have so many sheep that their friends and acquaintances can’t handle any excess lamb numbers, and because we shear twice a year, May and Autumn, the ewes don’t need crutching.

And the shepherd stays warm.

This year made all that palaver sound pretty silly.

January was warm and dry, enough to plow oat ground and alfalfa ground. February was cool and dry, enough to disc the plowed ground. It rained enough in March to fill the ponds and get the creek running, and the worked ground is mellow.

So where was Winter? My Angus raising neighbors, who are enjoying prices for their product as high for them as lamb prices are for us, keep looking over their shoulders. The last half of March can have weather as brutal as any other time . . .

My ZIP Code is 66849. On April 1, you might just check to see how we’re doing.

Jerry Wigglesworth

American Border Leicester Association Newsletter
Spring 2012
The meeting was called to order by Greg Deakin. Present were Greg Deakin, Jerry Wigglesworth, Polly Hopkins and secretary, Sally Barney. There was not a quorum. The Board members agreed to talk about the items on the agenda but not bring them to a vote.

The minutes were not approved as a quorum was not present; no correspondence had been received. Greg reviewed the end of the year transfer and registration data supplied by Associated Registries; there were 752 Border Leicesters registered in 2011 (785 in 2010); 241 transfers in 2011 (378 in 2010).

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Publicity:** Jerry reported no further meeting, but re-introduced the concept of a You Tube type video for the website of interest to existing or prospective Border Leicester breeders. Jerry will develop a concept paper related to this idea and share it with the Board for further discussion.

**Newsletter:** Sally reported that she had not received any applications for or inquiries about the position of Newsletter Editor. Greg Deakin shared that he would work with Stacy Wise to get the next two newsletters out to the membership; it was agreed to hold the application opportunity open and to continue to accept resumes. The January newsletter deadline is January 15th.

**Website:** JoAnne reported that there had not been many changes to the website over the holidays. She will be working on the annual update of the Breeder Listing as dues are received for 2012. She reported that this portion of the site receives many “hits”. It was discussed by the Directors and confirmed that the current policy is to list only current members on the Breeder Listing; those listed who do not pay their dues will be removed.

JoAnne reminded Directors that as newsletters and meeting minutes are completed and/or approved she needs to receive a copy for the website.

(Mark Korf joined the meeting at this time)

**Futurity:** Polly reported that the results of the Futurity have been tabulated. Five Border Leicester breeders will be receiving awards in the 2011 contest. Polly congratulated the breeders who made the event possible by nominating ewe lambs and yearlings for the Futurity. Those placing in the Futurity will receive their congratulatory letters and checks in the next week. Polly reported that the following young people were the category winners (* denotes the animal was purchased at the 2011 National Border Leicester Sale):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Breeders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Owned Yearling Ewes</td>
<td>Becky Kron, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st - Bradish #1075</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd - Casey Faccio, RI</td>
<td>Sammye Patti, Maybe Tomorrow #1037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd - Polly Hopkins, RI</td>
<td>Sammye Patti, Maybe Tomorrow #1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Colored Raised Yearling Ewe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st - Tiffany Deakin, IL</td>
<td>Deakin #1518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Colored Raised Ewe Lamb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st - Tiffany Deakin, Deakin #1615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Colored Owned Ewe Lamb</td>
<td>Emily Gibson, NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st - Bear Hollow #31*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Annual Meeting:** The Directors confirmed that the Annual Meeting of the American Border Leicester will rotate between the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, West Friendship, MD and the National Border Leicester Sale, Wooster, OH. The 2012 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday evening in Wooster, Ohio as part of the National Border Leicester Sale activities. The Directors agreed to have the Ohio breeders handle the dinner arrangements as they did in 2011. Sally will contact Marilyn Fogle.

**Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Social:** Greg will confirm with Jennifer about her coordinating the Border Leicester social event to follow the sheep shows on Saturday afternoon.

**National Border Leicester Sale:** Greg confirmed the dates of May 26 & 27 for the sale to be held in Wooster, Ohio. In addition to it being the 2012 National Border Leicester Sale it is also the National Sale location for both Tunis and Blue Faced Leicesters. Greg reported a shipment of Border Leicesters for the sale.

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**AMERICAN BORDER LEICESTER ASSOCIATION**

**YEAR END TREASURER’S REPORT**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dues for 2010</td>
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<td>Dues for 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associated Registries deposits (reg/transfer/dues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 National Sale – Fleece Show Donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 National Sale raffle/fundraiser (for Jr. Fund)</td>
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<td>2011 National Fleece Show fundraiser (for 2012 show)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ads newsletters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web ad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual meeting fundraiser – (for Weik &amp; Jr Fund)</td>
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<td>2010 National Sale Commission</td>
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<td>2011 National Sale Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 Futurity Nomination Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,874.25</strong></td>
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**Expenses:**

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<tr>
<td>Associated Registries</td>
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<td>Newsletters: copying, postage, envelopes</td>
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<td>Newsletter Editors fees</td>
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<td>Directories (500 copies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising (Sheep!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shipping ABLA display UPS</td>
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<td>ABLA signs</td>
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<td>Postage to send directories</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>2010 NAILE show funds</td>
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<td>Membership drive letters (courtesy of The Banner)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot mailing (postage and envelopes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 Annual Meeting expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation to Nancy Weik</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 National Sale/ Fleece Show premiums</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 North East Youth Sheep Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 National Show at Big E show premiums</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 National Show at Big E. lead line</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Futurity awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 Futurity awards</td>
<td>$625.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book review/audit fee</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band fees, bounced check &amp; bank fee</td>
<td>$56.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$11.43</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,243.93</strong></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2011**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-$3,974.48</td>
</tr>
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</table>
of Blueface Leicesters from the west coast would be coming in and that they might be trucking opportunities for Border Leicesters to be trucked both ways.

National Sale Dinner: The ABLA Directors confirmed that they would like the Ohio breeders to move forward with planning the Saturday night dinner. It was suggested that the planning be flexible enough to allow for 10-15 more dinners than in 2011. The Directors approved the Silent Auction for the Saturday night dinner along with the Annual Meeting of ABLA. Sally has been in contact with Marilyn Fogle and will let her know the details.

National Fleece Show: Marilyn Fogle reported through Sally that the Wooster Fleece show will be in the Fleece Show Barn of the Great Lakes Fiber Festival in 2012. We will use the judge provided. Fleeces will be sold from that location. Directors asked who would receive the commission from fleeces sold? Sally will check on that detail. Polly confirmed that $400 had been raised in 2011 for the 2012 Fleece Show. Mark suggested a workshop on skirting fleeces; Polly agreed that she could probably do that on Saturday afternoon with help from other Border Leicester breeders.

(Barbara Hintzsche joined the call at this time creating a quorum)

OLD BUSINESS

Size: Jerry reported on the good response to his inquiry in the last newsletter regarding Border Leicester size. After a discussion by the Board it was agreed to have Jerry write an article for the next newsletter and reference ewe size at 150-225 pounds and ram size at 175-300 pounds.

NEW BUSINESS

ABLA Districts: It was suggested by Greg Deakin that the ABLA might want to move to a district representation structure with Directors representing specific districts (along with a few at large Directors). It was discussed that this structure would help to keep all areas of the country represented which might not happen under the current at-large system. The Directors asked Greg to explore possibilities for the next Board Meeting that would discuss this new option.

With the meeting now holding a quorum of Directors the Board accepted the 2012 budget as presented.

The Board set the next meeting date for March 5th. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sally Barney – Recording Secretary

NEXT MEETING
MARCH 5, 2012 • 8:30 PM eastern

2011 Registrations By State

Illinois ................................93
Oregon.................................81
Virginia..............................61
Washington........................46
Ohio....................................45
Tennessee...........................44
Montana..............................43
Rhode Island.........................42
Wisconsin...........................41
Vermont..............................35
New York............................31
Maine..................................26
Maryland..............................24
Pennsylvania......................21
New Hampshire....................19
Minnesota...........................18
Michigan.............................12
Iowa..................................11
California............................10
Connecticut...........................9
Idaho.................................. 8
Kansas................................. 7
North Carolina..................... 6
Indiana................................. 5
Missouri.............................. 5
Utah................................. 3
Arkansas.............................. 3
Massachusetts....................... 2
Delaware.............................. 2
Nebraska............................. 1

2011 Top Breeders By Registrations

1. Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT 42
2. Deakin Family Farms, IL 38
3. Overlook Manor Farm, VA 34
4. Blackberry Farm, TN 28
5. Briamair, WI 27
6. Prairie Rose Farms, OR 21
6. Fogle Farm, OH 21
8. Hintzsche Sheep Farm, IL 17
9. Living Trust/Mist-O-Morn Farm 16
10. Maybe Tomorrow Farm, RI 15
10. Roclans, PA 15

2011 Top Breeders By Transfers

1. Deakin Family Farms, IL 19
2. Spring Creek Farm, MN 11
3. Woolmark Farm, NH 10
4. Maybe Tomorrow Farm, RI 8
5. Callie Taylor, PA 7
5. Foxy Farm Critters, OR 7
5. Hintzsche Sheep Farm, IL 7
8. Fairy Dust Farm, NH 6
8. Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT 6
8. Thistlewood Farm, WI 6
11. Emma Morton, RI 5
11. Sheila Knowles, ME 4
13. Wool Away Farm, IN 4

Call for the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the American Border Leicester Association will be held at the National Border Leicester Show & Sale, held in conjunction with the Great Lakes Show & Sale on Saturday night, May 26th at the Olde Jaol House Restaurant. Social hour will start at 6:00 pm with a cash bar and dinner at 7:00 pm. After dinner we will have the Annual Business Meeting of ABLA. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The Annual Meeting Agenda is as follows:

I. Call Meeting to Order
II. Recognition of Membership & Guests
III. Reading of Minutes of the 2011 Annual Meeting
IV. Treasurer’s Report – Polly Hopkins
C. Presentation of 2012 Budget
V. Year-To-Date Registration & Transfer Numbers
VI. Board of Director Election Results
VII. Committee Updates / Reports
A. Promotion & Publicity
B. Webmaster Report
C. Futurity Ewe Lamb Program
D. National Sale Report, Greg Deakin
E. National Fleece Show Report, Marilyn Fogle
F. North East Youth Sheep Show / Border Leicester Show
G. National Regional Border Leicester Show, The Big E, September
H. NAILE Border Leicester Show & Junior Show
I. Junior Activities for 2012

VIII. Membership Discussion
IX. Call to Adjourn

NEW MEMBER DIRECTORY COMING SOON...

Watch for the 2012 Membership Directory coming your way in April.

In addition to being a resource for ABLA members, the directory is handed out throughout the year at various shows & festivals across the country.
AMERICAN BORDER
LEICESTER ASSOCIATION

Standard of Excellence
Guide for Judging Border Leicester Sheep
(Appplies to both White & Natural Colored animals)

HEAD & NECK (10 Points)
Head: High, erect ears
Spots on ears permissible
Roman nose
Black nose and lips (dark mottled with grey acceptable)
No mottling on muzzle
Both sexes polled
Neck: Moderate length, fitting into shoulders gracefully

FOREQUARTER (5 Points)
Shoulders: Well rounded
Legs: Straight, wide apart, no wool below knees

BODY (15 Points)
Chest: Deep and wide, but not fat
Ribs: Well-sprung, long, showing no signs of excess fat
Back: Broad, long and level
Somewhat narrower in front than rear
Hindquarters should be 1/3 or less in proportion
Wool Cover: Belly and armpits well-covered with wool (minimum of skin) and consistent with balance of fleece

HINDQUARTERS (10 Points)
Hips: Level, smooth and wide apart
Thighs: Deep and full
Legs: Straight, wide apart, free of wool below hocks
No evidence of low pasterns
Black hooves
Udder & Scrotum: Ewes - Udder should show evidence of two good teats
Rams - Testicles well-developed and hanging down a distance from the body

CONDITION (10 Points)
Animals should be in working condition, well-muscled, and not overly fat or thin

GENERAL APPEARANCE (10 Points)
Stance: Overall appearance to be regal in structure
Quality: Should be strong boned
Rams to appear masculine
Ewes to appear feminine

WOOL (40 Points)
1. Locks with purled tips ending in a curl
2. High Luster
3. Minimum of kemp hair
4. Uniform fleece and belly wool
5. No black spots in white, no white spots in black wool

The fleece weight from mature females ranges from 8 to 12 pounds with a yield of 65 to 80 percent. The staple length of the fleece ranges from five to ten inches with a numeric count of 36 to 48 which is 38.5 to 30.0 microns.

Border Leicesters are typically shown with 3-5 months of wool growth, so that the judge can accurately evaluate the fleece, one of the most important characteristics of the breed. They are relatively easy fit for exhibition. They should appear clean and neat, but never shampooed, as this would remove the natural oil from the wool. A light spritzing with Luke warm water can emphasize the natural curl of the fleece, but it needs to be done well before the show so that the dampened locks have time to dry thoroughly. Stray locks may be trimmed, but Border Leicesters should not be combed, carded, or blocked, which would disturb the natural lock formation and detract from the character of the fleece.

A ram at maturity should weigh 175-300 pounds and stand about 32 inches at the shoulder. He should have a wide, level back. Ewes usually weigh 150-225 pounds.
Dear ABLA Directors and Membership,

As a lifelong resident of Western Illinois, I purchased my first purebred and commercial ewes in 1978. My love for livestock and especially sheep, led to a Livestock Judging Scholarship as an undergraduate at Western Illinois University. Purebred and commercial sheep production as well as custom shearing, fitting and showing continued to subsidize my graduate studies (MBA). I have had the privilege of serving as president of the Western Illinois Sheep Producers and served on the Marketing Committee for the Illinois Lamb and Wool Board. Currently, I am employed as a Sales and Marketing Manager providing flavor and aromatic additives to pet food manufacturers. My wife Kelly, son Gavin and daughter Mackenna are all active with the family flock. We were recently blessed with the birth of our second daughter, Norah.

Prior to choosing Border Leicesters, my family raised Suffolks and developed a nationally competitive flock of Columbia sheep. In 2007, my family and I decided that the “frame sheep” just didn’t fit the direction we wanted to go with our family flock. Actually, I got tired of getting run over at the feed bunk and not being able to reach the legs of my Columbias when shearing. There are also certain economic realities that come with 400 lb. rams that measure 42” x 42” and 300 lb. ewes that are 39 inches tall. My family is very pleased with the sturdy constitution, ease of management and the endearing personalities of our Border Leicester sheep. My son Gavin and daughter MacKenna enjoy showing our Border Leicesters in 4-H. With any luck, our newly born daughter Norah will follow in the footsteps of her older siblings.

As my employment allows for travel, I have had the opportunity to visit with many Border Leicester breeders throughout the country. I have seen firsthand some of the differences in Border Leicester sheep based on breeder preference and specific market demands. Whether the emphasis is on fleece, performance or both, we are fortunate to promote a breed that fits both needs! I continue to be humbled at what I learn through insightful discussions with experienced breeders. We are blessed with many eclectic, intelligent and strong minded breeders that truly love what they do.

Since many of you have raised this breed much longer than I, you already know the many economic and functional advantages of Border Leicesters. The best way I can sum up my opinion of the breed is the fact that this is the first breed of sheep we have raised that my entire family truly loves… that pretty much says it all!

I look forward to the opportunity to serve the ABLA Membership with the support and promotion of our fine breed. If you have questions or would like to further discuss my opinions concerning issues that impact our breed, please feel free to give me a call. As many of you know, I never turn away from an opportunity to “talk sheep”!

Best regards, Kevin Young

COLEEN SMITH
Gervais, Oregon

My husband and I live on a farm in a small town 35 miles south of the big city of Portland, Oregon. Our adventure physically started 7 years ago but in our hearts the dream was planted long before that. For 25 years I worked in the Insurance Industry and our children grew up and went to school in inner city Portland. I had been raised in the suburbs, back when there were not as many rules as we have now. As children we raised rabbits and chickens and dreamed of the day we would have our own real farm. My husband grew up on a farm, raised Suffolk sheep and belonged to the local FFA. The longer we lived in the city the more we hoped and prayed for the day our dream of owning our own land would come true.

Seven years ago after much study, prayer and a church connection, we were given the opportunity to make career and life changes. I left my desk job with 25 years of security to become the manager of a starter flock of dairy sheep for a local organic food producer. In the time I have been with this organization I saw the flock grow, improved genetics and began milking them, only to have the owner decide that it really was not something he wanted to pursue. My job has changed and I with it from one thing to another. I have helped with a Waygu beef cattle program, done environmental biological lab work for an emergent organic dairy, assisted with the health and welfare of dairy calves, worked with pigs, worked on a HACCP program for a milk receiving station and am currently the HACCP coordinator writing a HACCP program for the company’s organic dairy. When I became employed we knew there could be a possibility of renting a home and land from the owner and we prayed that this would become part of our change. It happened and we were allowed to rent on a 135 acre farm where we could use a portion of the property for animals of our own.

Prior to moving from the city to the country my sister bought land and started raising alpacas. After seeing sheep at the Black Sheep Gathering I convinced her we needed some – of course they had to live at her house! So we started with a mixed flock of fiber sheep, one ram and a couple of girls. Relationships were built through this small flock with other fiber enthusiasts – one of these wonderful people was named Sherry and her flock was Dancing Sheep Farm, my first introduction to the Border Leicester. It was love at first site.

Our move came and at that time my sister and I had acquired a little flock of Shetlands. These became our first sheep on our new farm. Not long after our move, Dancing Sheep Farm had to disperse of her flock and I was able to obtain some fine starter ewes. The Shetlands were sold to focus on our Border Leicester flock. Our Border Leicester sheep and the friendships I have developed with other local breeders brought out a competitive side of me I had not seen in a while. I have a passion for the sheep we raise, they are great mothers, easy keepers, provide fast growing lambs, a nice carcass and lovely fleeces. We are always working toward flock and fleece improvement, busy in fair competitions, fiber shows, sales and promoting the breed as well as the beautiful fleeces they provide.

We now have our own farm, an ever growing, improving flock of Border Leicesters and have added Dairy sheep. Besides still working on the large organic farm and improving our flock at home, I have been the Marketing Director for the Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival for 4 years, served in leadership roles in church, and have gone on mission as a speaker to Rwanda. As an ABLA Board Member I want to bring new ideas; a desire to preserve breed standards, encourage education along with recruiting new members and breeders all with a passion and love for our breed.

LINDA KOEPEL
Ann Arbor, Michigan

My husband Bill and I have raised Border Leicesters at our farm near Ann Arbor, Michigan since 1990. For five or six years prior to getting our first sheep I had developed an interest in fiber and learned to spin. I experimented with spinning wool from many different breeds and the Border Leicester was by far my favorite. We also liked the size, look and temperament of the breed. In the beginning our focus was almost exclusively on wool, but over the years we have educated ourselves and have added conformation, mothering traits and vitality to the characteristics we select for. Our initial focus was also on colored wool — my objective at the time was to have the best colored Border Leicesters anywhere. Whether we accomplished that or not, we
are happy with our flock, and that is what it is all about. We show our sheep two or three times a year but we don’t let judges’ opinions dictate what our flock is. We do like to do well in the show ring but it is not our highest priority – healthy, productive sheep who produce great fleece is.

If elected to the Board there are a number of subjects I feel strongly about. First is the strong trend of showing our breed in short fleece. They are long wool sheep and I believe the public should see them in long wool. Showing in short fleece is certainly popular with judges, but if we don’t show the judges what the sheep should look like we will train them to choose one style over another. There are plenty of examples of breeds that have changed dramatically to satisfy a wish to do well in the show ring. I hope we don’t go there. Second, the show ring practice of a judge going down the line and putting his fingers in the mouth of every sheep should be something our Association discourages. My husband and I have shown the mouths of our sheep for fifteen years, ever since showing under Glenn Eidman who required it; we now talk to judges off to the side beforehand and none has ever had an issue with it. It is something we should teach all of our young people. We should be a leader in this. My third priority involves clarification of the difference between white sheep and white wool sheep who have colored genetics in their pedigrees. Our Association does a better job of this than some – our registration papers distinguish that distinction, some associations do not. However, we continue to find people new to our breed who have bought white wool sheep only to be surprised to find the sheep have colored ancestors. All of us need to do a better job at the point of sale of making sure buyers, especially ones new to sheep, understand what it is they are getting.

Thanks for your consideration. We greatly enjoy Border Leicesters and the people who raise them.

Sincerely, Linda Koeppep

TOM KEY
Great Falls, Montana

I am pleased to have the opportunity to run for the position which will be vacated by my wife Anne, a current ABLA board member. As I pen this short biography, she is in the final throes of her battle with an untreatable, end stage cancer that she has bravely fought for the past 15 months. Together we have embraced the Border Leicester breed and as her life is now slowly fading away, I know in spirit and in heart she feels as I regard this breed and the importance of having a steady leadership at the national level.

Anne and I have been in the sheep industry as producers for the past 19 years. My background preceded our ranch operation in that I spent the first 12 years of my medical career in the basic sciences of reproductive physiology – the pregnant ewe was my model. Moving to Montana in 1993 from San Diego (high-risk pregnancy physician specialist), it was our decision to begin a ranching operation. From humble and meager beginnings, Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch began with 32 registered Columbia ewes. Since, we have grown to a medium sized sheep operation with our Columbias and with our white and natural colored Border Leicesters. This year we should lamb about 1,000 ewes. We have worked hard within each breed to move the genetics forward and to insure optimal conditioning using sound animal management principles and intensive genetic oversight, bringing in genetic diversity from the best seedstocks across the country. We are very proud of the accomplishments we have been able to show and look forward to moving each breed forward in all aspects a challenging sheep industry. I recognize the importance of the dual purpose of our sheep breeds and how important it is to work within the breed, not to change it necessarily, but to accentuate each’s special qualities. It is my desire to continue to breed for that perfect sheep, realizing that what might work for us in the intermountain west is not necessarily the perfect sheep for the far east coast breeders, and vice versa. The success of our operation is in large part based on our diversity. We breed for the feeder lamb buyer, we breed for the commercial breeder whose needs may be very different than those of the smaller operation, and we breed high performance and quality breeding stock for range and for show; we are especially sensitive to the importance of fleece quality in each of our breeds. I am proud that we have produced national champion bucks and ewes in each breed and champion fleeces in each of our breeds as well.

Montana Aerie is the largest breeder of registered Columbia sheep in the USA. Our Border Leicester numbers are ever increasing. And we have enjoyed the challenges and opportunities of marketing Border Leicesters in a region where they have remained a curiosity. I sit on the Columbia Sheep Breeders of America board and have done so for the past five years. I plan to continue our ranch and registered sheep operations into the next decades. Originally, the sheep adventure was to be our retirement experience. Now, with the changes we are facing, it is my responsibility to move our dreams forward as Anne would have. My commitment is to continue the work we began almost two decades ago and to use my talents and skills to assist the ABLA in any way I can.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Key
**Great Lakes Show & Sale Plans**

*By Marilyn Fogle*

**4TH ANNUAL ABLA FLEECE SHOW**

Remember to enter your fleeces by May 1st in the 4th Annual ABLA Fleece Show. Judging is Saturday, May 26th at 9:30 am in Building 11. Check in is Friday from 5-7 pm and by 9:15 am Saturday. Fleeces not for sale should be so marked. The Fleece Sale will start 1/2 hour after last judging is completed.

**Wool Fleece Show & Sale Official Rules**

All fleeces are to be brought to the Fleece Show Area in Building 11. One entry form must be completed per exhibitor. Fleeces will not be weighed. All fleeces entered for sale must have been entered in the fleece show. A fleece that is NOT FOR SALE must be so marked. Checks from sales of fleeces and premium money will be mailed to exhibitors. All unsold and not-for-sale fleeces will be released at 4:00 pm on Sunday, May 27th and must be removed by 5:00 pm. Any unclaimed fleeces will be disposed of at the discretion of the committee.

Every effort will be made to display and care for entered fleeces, but we assume no responsibility for damaged, lost, stolen or erroneously sold fleeces.

The entry fee is $2.00 per fleece. The pre-registration form, found below, must be received before May 1st. The late entry fee is $5.00 per fleece. There will be a 10% sale commission charged on sold fleeces.

All fleeces must be from the current wool crop and must be owned by the exhibitor. Each fleece must be clean and free of chaff, burrs, tags and second cuts. They must be skirted and in a clear plastic, untied bag. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to enter fleeces in the proper classes.

Judging criteria will be based on suitability for spinning. The judge may choose not to award any premium based on the quality of the submission. The exhibitor is responsible for entering fleeces in correct classes. The judge will not move fleeces to different classes.

**Fleece Competition**

- **Division 1:** White Fleeces
- **Division 2:** Natural Colored Fleeces
- **Classes:** F-fine; M-medium; C-coarse; D-double coated
- **Premiums, each class:** 1st - $6; 2nd - $4; 3rd - $2

Ribbons will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each of the above categories. All 1st Place winners will be judged against each other for BEST OF SHOW.

**NEW!**

- **Division 3:** Border Leicester
- **Division 4:** Natural Colored Border Leicester
- **Classes:** R-ram; E-ewe

This is an added show for Border Leicester fleeces only. Premiums paid by the association.

**FRIDAY INFORMAL GATHERING**

We’re looking forward to a great weekend and hope everyone will participate. We’ll be starting with our informal gathering at the Best Western Motel on Friday evening at 7:00 pm.

I hope that you are all ready to start shooting your short video (3-5 minutes) on April 1st so we can see what it is like in your part of the country that day and get to see various members and their sheep operations. Send your CD, DVD or Thumb Drive to Dana Evans, 6611 Merry Lane, Columbus, OH 43229. Dana will put things together and we will present the finished project at both our Friday evening gathering and Saturday annual meeting.

**DINNER AND ANNUAL MEETING**

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at the Olde Jaol House Restaurant on Saturday, May 26th. Social hour will start at 6:00 pm with a cash bar and dinner at 7:00 pm. After dinner we will have the Annual Business Meeting of ABLA.

Don’t forget about the Silent Auction. We are asking for donations of items.

We will need reservations by May 15th for the dinner. The food was great last year and everyone had a good time. Hope you’ll join us!

Any questions should be directed to Marilyn Fogle, gfogle@embarqmail.com, 937/246-0265.

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**Fleece Show Entry Form**

Please print

Entry Fee $2.00 per Fleece

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**Total $**

Name

Address

City State Zip

Pre-Registration is due MAY 1.

One entry form completed for all fleeces from one consignor.

Make checks payable to: Great Lakes Fiber Show

Send completed form with check to: Linda Reichert, 2474 N. Firestone Rd., Wooster, OH 44691-9219

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**2012 ANNUAL MEETING**

**SATURDAY, MAY 26TH**

**WOOSTER, OHIO**
7th Annual
NATIONAL
BORDER LEICESTER
Sale
Held in conjunction with the
GREAT LAKES SALE!
WAYNE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS • WOOSTER, OHIO

SHOW: 9:00 A.M. SATURDAY
MAY 26
Judge: Judy Moore, Eagle, MI

SHEEP SALE: 11:00 A.M. SUNDAY
MAY 27
Auctioneers: Gary Saylor & Danny Westlake, OH

Also featuring the National Tunis &
National Bluefaced Leicester Sales;
the Great Lakes Eastern Regional
Rambouillet Sale...plus 17 other breeds!

Sale Headquarters: Wooster Best Western, 330/264-7750 or 866/264-2057; Rodeway Inn, 330/262-5008
Block Name: Sheep Sale. Call now for discount rate!

The 2011 National Grand Champion Border Leicester
Ram was bred by Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT
and sold to Jacob Korf, WI.

The 2011 National Grand Champion Natural Colored
Border Leicester Ram was bred by Cape House Farm, MI
& sold to Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch.

Clay Vincent Family, DE, 2011 NAILE Reserve Grand
Champion Ram was purchased at the 2010 National
Sale from Deakin Family, IL, as a lamb.

Montana Aerie’s 2011 NAILE Reserve Grand Champion
Natural Colored Ewe was purchased at the
2010 National Sale from Deakin Family, IL, as a lamb.

Grand Champion Natural Colored Ewe, 2011 National Sale
was bred by Cape House Farm, MI & sold to P-W Farm, IL.

Grand Champion Ewe, 2011 NAILE Junior Show for Callie Taylor,
PA was purchased from Montana Aerie in last year’s sale.

Grand Champion Ram, Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival for
P-W Farm, IL was purchased from Deakin Family, IL at the 2011 Sale.

Reserve Grand Champion Ram, 2011 National Sale was
bred by Vast Plains, IL & sold to Sally Barney, NH.

ENTRIES AVAILABLE ONLINE!
Download entry information and
free catalog or contact:

P.O. BOX 500 • CUBA, IL 61427 • 309/785-5058 • FAX: 309/785-5050 • www.bannersheepmagazine.com

FINAL CALL TO ENTER!
Shear Genius

Kentucky FFA member, Ashley Jones, sells Border Leicester sheep wool on eBay

By Jessica Mozo, reprinted from the Spring 2012 issue of FFA New Horizons

When Bell County, Kentucky, FFA member Ashley Jones leased a sheep from her neighbor for a 4-H project when she was 8, she had no idea it would turn into a business opportunity that would follow her into her college years. Now 20 and a sophomore at Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tenn., Ashley is the shepherd of a flock of more than 50 purebred Border Leicester sheep on her family’s 20-acre farm in Claiborne County, Tenn.

ABOUT BORDER LEICESTERS

Through her business, Blackberry Farm, Ashley raises and sells Border Leicester sheep, which are prized for their flavorful meat and long, lustrous wool. Her parents, Richard and Rosemary Jones, have helped her grow her flock and market the lamb and wool products.

“I started raising Border Leicester sheep because my neighbor owned some and wanted someone to show them. I agreed to take care of them, and I showed four sheep in 4-H my first year,” Ashley says. “I’ve always like animals, and I fell in love with this breed because I’m petite, and they are medium-sized with a calm disposition. They’re very eye-catching because of their curly wool that has a lot of sheen to it. They are like the sheep featured in the movie Babe.”

Ashley began her own flock by purchasing two sheep from a breeder, which grew into 90 but has been reduced to a more manageable flock of 50. The family sells lamb meat in the fall after show season and sells wool year-round.

“My mom helps with the lambing and gives all the shots to the lambs because I don’t like needles, and my dad helps me sell the wool on eBay now that I am in college,” Ashley says. “If I have an early morning class, my dad will feed the sheep for me, and I’ll take care of them at night. I’ve had to learn time management and prioritizing skills. It’s a lot of work on the weekends with shearing and deworming.”

MARKETING LAMB AND WOOL

Word of mouth has been Ashley’s primary advertising tool for her lamb meat, and the Internet has helped her market the wool.

“The meat business came on its own because a lot of people like lamb. So when they found out I raise sheep, they asked for it,” she says. “We started selling the wool at craft fairs and fiber festivals, but we found we could make more of a profit – about $12 a pound – by selling it on eBay. People buy it for everything from needle felting and hand spinning to making Santa beards.”

Ashley taught herself the art of needle felting and teaches needle-felting classes at women’s meetings, 4-H camps, sheep shows and the like. She sells needle-felting kits to people attending her classes.

“People really have fun with it – it’s like Play-Doh with wool. You can make anything from hats and ornaments to figurines,” Ashley says. “One lady I know needle felts nativity scenes and sells them.”

In addition to her sheep, Ashley cares for three Great Pyrenees dogs and three horses. The dogs are excellent guardians for the sheep, protecting them from other dogs and predators.

NATIONAL FFA HONORS

In October 2011 at the 84th National FFA Convention, Ashley was named as the National FFA Proficiency Winner in Diversified Livestock Production. In addition to prize money, she won a trip to Costa Rica (slated for June 2012) where she will experience the local agriculture community.

Ashley says she would like to continue raising sheep after college, but she plans to transfer to Eastern Kentucky University in the fall of 2012 and study occupational therapy. Her parents have agreed to take care of her flock in her absence, but only if she sells some ewes and keeps her best 10 breeding sheep.

“I chose to study occupational therapy because I have diabetes, and I would like to help kids who also struggle with it,” she says.

Ashley’s advice to young FFA members is to embrace every opportunity.

“Raising sheep turned out to be a great thing for me,” she says. “If you see an opportunity you might like, go for it and see where it takes you.”

Border Leicester sheep are known for their high-quality wool, so Ashley realized a business opportunity and began selling the wool on eBay. She also taught herself how to needle felt and teaches classes in her community, in addition to her regular farm chores and college classwork.
Soremouth Commentary

By Linda Koeppel, Michigan

This article was written in 1996, but we feel it is still relevant and needs to be re-visited. We have worked with 4-H youth here in Michigan and seem to see this and other health challenges almost every year.

Last year our lambs were exposed to soremouth at the first show we took them to. Naturally, because we had never had it before, eventually every lamb and ewe in the barn got it. Some of the adults were extremely ill, having very swollen throats, lymph glands, and tongues. In the heat of last summer, it was difficult – to say the least. This misfortune was completely unnecessary – another breeder had penned an adult sheep right next to us with visible lesions on its mouth. When the show vet finally came around to look at this group of sheep, the obviously infected animal was removed (the others, probably equally, but not visibly contagious, remained).

Talking to others about this experience, most comments went something like this: “Soremouth is no big deal, they all get it – even I get it sometimes.” And, “You mean you haven’t had it yet”, “Don’t worry about it.” I called our vet simply to ask if there was anything I could do to ease the lambs’ and ewes’ discomfort and of course, the answer was ‘no’. He was, however, very concerned and expressed how potentially serious this could be, relating an experience with it here in Michigan. One of their clients was helping a group of 4-H kids with club lambs do ear tags. The virus was on the equipment, and the sheep broke out with lesions so bad that the tags had to be cut out. Some of the 4-H kids got the virus on their hands, and a woman who was helping wound up in the hospital with the virus in her lungs and lymph glands. She was near death at one point, but finally made a long, painful recovery.

Last September, at a wool festival near here, we observed a number of lambs penned for a breed exhibit with visible lesions and sores on their mouths. There were a lot of small children in attendance and the lambs were easily accessible to them. If any of those little ones came down with the virus, the parents would have no clue as to what it was.

SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

First and foremost, be very careful, and vaccinate your animals – it is cheap and relatively easy. Keep record of who gets the virus if you already have it, and vaccinate those who do not. Second, if you are working with young people, please treat education about this disease seriously. Third, be responsible. Don’t take an unhealthy animal off your farm. It is better to scratch from a show and forfeit your entry fees than to expose someone else’s flock. The health of both your animals and your reputation will benefit. Finally, if you show your sheep, learn and practice showing your sheep’s mouth yourself at shows. Let the judge know ahead of time that you want to do this and why. We have never had a judge object to this request. Soremouth is only one of many diseases that can be transmitted by the judge’s handling of mouths. These are simple and effective steps anyone can take to minimize these risks. I don’t know about you, but I have more than enough work to do than to deal with sheep that are sick because of somebody else’s carelessness. If each of us will be conscientious about our sheep’s health, all will benefit.
There are many avenues to market your sheep. It is important to define what your product is and who your market is.

**The first step in marketing is to identify what you are selling:**

Check the following products you intend to market and enter an estimate of income from that product that you expect.

- **Breeding stock**
  - Price per animal $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Market Animals**
  - Price per animal $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Fiber Friends (pets)**
  - Price per animal $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Pelts**
  - Price per pelt $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Raw Fleece**
  - Price per fleece $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Processed Fiber**
  - Price per ounce $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Yarn**
  - Price per ounce $________
  - Annual total $________
- **Other**
  - Price per item $________
  - Annual total $________

**Total Gross Income from all Sheep related Products** $________

Standard business practice is to spend up to 10% of your income to market your product. If you are spending more than 10% of your income on marketing, than you need to re-evaluate where your marketing dollars are going. The object of targeted marketing is to get the most amount of return for the least amount of expense. Take 10% of the above estimated total and you have a marketing budget...but don’t spend it yet.

**The second step in developing an effective market plan is to evaluate what it cost in hard dollars to produce each item.** You must know what a product cost to know if you are making a profit or not. There is no easy formula for this step as costs differ depending on your location and the market it provides, but it is important to know these numbers before setting a price so you do not sell your product at a loss. Now go back and check the cost to produce your products against your selling price. Make any necessary adjustments so you have a net profit on your sales. Be aware of who your competition is. You are not competing with the local grocery or yarn store. Your product is a specialty product, so market it that way. You are producing a quality U.S. product while supporting a heritage breed. Tell people that. Help your customer to understand what they are supporting with their purchase so they can feel positive about the experience and will become your advocate.

**Step Three is to define who your market is.**

Who are you selling to?

- **Breeding Stock Buyers**
  - Purebred Farmers
  - Commercial Farmers
  - 4H/FFA Children
  - Spinners

- **Fiber Buyers**
  - Spinners
  - Felters
  - Weavers
  - Needle crafters (Knit/Crochet)
  - Crafters (leather workers, toy makers, sheepskin rugs)

**Step four is to decide how you will reach your market.** Will you go in person to participate in farmer’s markets, Spin-ins, Craft Fairs, Fairs and Breed shows? Or will you advertise in print via Agricultural papers and journals, newspapers, Farm Magazines, Association Newsletters (Farm Bureau/ ASI) or by writing feature articles for publication?

Another advertising venue is the internet. Having your own website & Facebook Page for your farm, Craigslist, Etsy, Ravelry, Association Listings, Email and interest groups are all low cost/no cost methods of advertising. These venues reach a wide market beyond your local area and will increase your sales opportunities.

So now I have filled your head with all sorts of ideas, let’s see what it looks like in practice. First and foremost make up a business card with your phone number and email address at a minimum. Keep cards with you at all times, in your purse or wallet, so when you are talking to someone about your animals you can give them a business card so they can find you again. On average it takes five contacts before a person buys a product.

I also strongly encourage you to get a farm website. Prospective purchasers will check out your site, and it is a non threatening way to check
out your authenticity. The same is true about listing with your breed associations. The fact that you are serious enough to participate proudly in the appropriate associations adds to your validity as a trustworthy source for their purchase.

EXAMPLE: Selling Fiber Products

Step 1 & 2 Raw Fleece Sales - minimum Price $10 per pound – 30lbs of fleece = $300 gross income

Step 3 & 4 Direct Sales to Hand Spinners:
- a. Put descriptions and pictures of fleeces on my website (with the name of the sheep it came from)
- b. Put descriptions and pictures of fleeces on Craigslist with link to my website
- c. Put descriptions and pictures of fleeces on Web Spinners Lists (in Yahoo groups and AOL Groups and FACEBOOK) with link to my website
- d. Put description and pictures of fleeces on Ravelry with link to my website
- e. Take Fleeces to the Local Spin In and Fiber Events (this often leads to orders for the next shearing – keep a mailing list sign up handy at these events and pass out lots of cards)
- f. Email those who have expressed an interest in purchasing fleeces and past clients
- g. Arrange a Farm Day Shearing Event and sell fleeces as they come off the animals and are skirted.

All of the above are low cost or no cost. The only thing in my region that I spend money on in the above list is my farm website. The $30 I budgeted for selling the fleece goes toward my website expense.

This example gives you an idea of how to make a marketing plan for a given product of your flock. Notice in this example that I used my website, free web resources, and in person venues. I interrelated all of them, always referring customers to my website at the point of sale whether through an email list or web link on my listings or cards handed out at the Fiber Events. Don’t forget to cross market your products as well. It is okay to hand out brochures that explain the advantage of owning Border Leicesters at fiber events as well as letting people know that you sell market lamb.

For years sheep have been considered a cash crop because you get three marketable products every year: Wool, Meat, and Breeding Stock. Don’t be afraid to cross-sell these products. Another important point to remember is to keep a client list of your past clients as they already know what a value your products are and repeat customers are the least expensive to market to. Ask your satisfied customers for a written recommendation to put in your advertising and encourage them to refer you to their friends and family.

It is very important to keep in contact with your customers and follow up on all inquiries. Even if someone doesn’t purchase at first, following up with them and answering their questions often will result in a sale. Repetition and consistency is the key to creating a niche in the market for your products.

Hopefully, I have given you some ideas to start with. Marketing is as simple as telling people what amazing animals you have and what they produce. Plan the work and work the plan and you will be pleasantly surprised at the result.
Plan Now to Enter the 2012 Futurity Contest

A REMINDER TO ALL – Junior members with home grown lambs and yearlings, and breeders who are selling lambs and yearling to juniors this year – enter them in the ALBA Futurity Contest. There are four divisions again this year in each of the two ewe age brackets.

The classes are as follows:
- White Border Leicester purchased ewe lamb
- White Border Leicester bred & owned ewe lamb
- Colored Border Leicester purchased ewe lamb
- Colored Border Leicester bred & owned ewe lamb
- White Border Leicester purchased yearling ewe
- White Border Leicester bred & owned yearling ewe
- Colored Border Leicester purchased yearling ewe
- Colored Border Leicester bred & owned yearling ewe

The nomination fee is $25 per head. This fee is paid only once when the nomination form is sent in by the person nominating the ewe. The youth must then submit the appropriate form with placing information signed by the show clerk from each fair/festival where the animal is shown by the youth. Cash awards are given at the end of the year (after NAILE) with the funds pro-rated based on the points accumulated at the various shows. So, the larger classes the animals are shown in, the higher points accumulated. The past three years of the Futurity Contests have been successful with more youths participating each year.

Breeders, let’s encourage our junior members to participate in this opportunity – nominate those ewe lambs when you sell them to youths. The youths do need to be a member of ABLA to participate, so it is recommended that you pay this for them if they show a lamb for you. If you have any questions, please contact the ABLA President. Nomination forms may be printed off the website; if you do not have capability to go to the website, feel free to give the President or Secretary a call and they can mail the forms to you.

Put Gene Check to Work on Your Farm

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<td>Scrapie Susceptibility*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Codon 171, 136 or 154</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spider Gene*</td>
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<td>Ovine Progressive Pneumonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johne’s</td>
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<td>Porcine Stress Syndrome</td>
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*Subsequent tests on the same sample:
Scrapie: $9/Spider $11

Gene Check now offers TypiFix™ DNA Ear Tags

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2011 NATIONAL GRAND CHAMPION EWE

2011 NATIONAL RESERVE CHAMPION EWE

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Ron Dreher, Flock Manager • Brian Hart, Shepherd
North East Youth Sheep Show
July 19-22, 2012 • West Springfield, MA

The 2012 North East Youth Sheep Show will be held in the Mallary Complex at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The youth show is open to all youth 21 years old and younger as of January 1st with all breeds of sheep being eligible. The sheep and exhibitors should arrive by Thursday, July 19th; with animals being penned by 11:00 p.m. Activities begin on Thursday evening and continue right through the weekend with the finale being the selection of the Supreme Champions on Sunday afternoon. The judges are Matt Scrailman, Jeremy Etzler and Jeff Jordan, with Jozi Best judging the fleece show. Anyone interested in sponsoring a t-shirt please visit our website to download the form; they are due by May 1, 2012. The youth show also needs items and volunteers for the food booth and the Fiber Nook at The Big E. Please visit our website for more information. Donations are also appreciated and help fund the show for the youth. For more information please visit the NES&WG website (www.nesheep.org).

Michigan Fiber Festival
August 18-19, 2012
Festival Workshops: August 15-19, 2012
Allegan, Michigan

Michigan Fiber Festival is now in it’s 15th year! Each festival brings new changes, event growth, attendance, and activities. Even with each addition and expansion, the festival is still a personal endeavour that provides each vendor, member, and attendee with a sense of that comfortable “down home get together” feeling. We are excited each year to see everyone enjoying the festival. 10,000 people attended the Michigan Fiber Festival in 2011!

The American Border Leicester Association has voted to support the Michigan Fiber Festival with a donation of $125 toward breed promotion. Please show your support and enjoy this year’s festival!
Looking for different bloodlines in your Border Leicester flock?

Take a look at some of our yearling ewes – big and meaty with maternal capacity and beautiful even without their wool.

PHELPS’ FARMS

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VAST PLAINS

We have an outstanding set of spring lambs sired by “Summit” & “Royal”. Call or stop by the farm anytime!

Consigning Top White & Natural Colored Prospects to the National Sale at Wooster!

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22250 E 2000th St. • Prairie City, IL 61450 • Home: 309/772-2782 • Cell: 309/333-0217 • Kevin’s Cell: 513/288-2046
Characteristics of Wool

BENEFITS
- Resists wrinkles - wool springs back quickly
- Resists soiling - because the fiber is complex
- Is durable - multi-part fiber resists wear
- Repels moisture - fiber sheds water
- Retains shape - resilient fibers return to size
- Resists flames - fibers will not support combustion
- Is comfortable in all seasons - keeps layer of air next to skin

DURABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Each wool fiber is a molecular coilspring making the fiber remarkably elastic. Nature has folded the chemical polypeptide chains back upon themselves in such a way that they act like a coiled spring which elongates when it is extended and retracts when it is released. This molecular crimp, along with the 3-dimensional fiber, allows wool fibers to be stretched up to 50% when wet and 30% when dry, and still bounce back to their original shape when stress is released. But be careful: When wool is wet the fibers are weaker. Recovery from stress takes place faster when the fiber is in a humid environment; that’s why steaming a wool garment will freshen the fabric and why a steam iron is recommended for pressing wool.

The flexibility of the wool fiber also makes it more durable. A wool fiber can be bent back on itself more than 20,000 times without breaking, compared to about 3,000 times for cotton and 2,000 times for silk. The natural elasticity of wool also makes woolen fabrics resistant to tearing. In addition, the outer skin of the wool fiber acts as a protective film, giving wool cloth improved resistance to abrasion.

FIBER ABSORBENCY

Wool is a hygroscopic fiber; it takes up moisture in vapor form. Tiny pores in the epicuticle make the fiber semi-permeable, allowing vapor to pass through to the heart of the fiber. Wool can easily absorb up to 30% of its weight in moisture without feeling damp or clammy.

The capacity to absorb makes wool a “temperature regulator” because it can protect the body in both cold and warm conditions. Wool always absorbs moisture from the atmosphere of greater humidity and releases it to the drier environment as it creates a balance in moisture conditions. This characteristic makes wool a versatile all-season fabric.

Wool absorbs perspiration; thus it keeps a layer of dry air next to the skin which, in turn, helps to hold in body heat. As wool absorbs atmospheric moisture, the hydrogen bond of water is broken and chemically reacts with molecules of the wool to generate heat.

Wool garments are therefore regarded as good protection against hypothermia…a condition that occurs when sudden drastic lowering of body temperature causes the body to lose heat faster than it can be produced.

The same principle of moisture contact on the skin acts to protect against heat waves as well. The body cools itself naturally with the evaporation of perspiration. Wool expedites this process by absorbing perspiration and keeping the same dry air next to the skin. This is why wool clothing is worn throughout the desert regions of the world where it’s hot during the day and cool at night.

FELTS NATURALLY

The physical structure of the outer scaly layer of the wool fiber contributes to wool’s unique property of felting. Under the mechanical action of agitation, friction and pressure in the presence of heat and moisture, the scales on the edges of the wool fibers interlock, preventing the fiber from returning to its original position. Felting shrinkage is irreversible.

The felting property of wool is both an advantage and disadvantage. In a controlled situation the felting quality is called fulling or milling and creates a softer finish for woven wool fabric. Felting is also an advantage because it provides for a wide variety of non-woven felt fabrics for...
hats and for industrial uses. Felting is a disadvantage because it makes the washing of untreated wool fabrics difficult.

Treatments have been developed to prevent felting shrinkage, allowing wool garments to be machine-washed. The SUPERWASH® mark certifies that fabrics have been treated for machine-washability and dryability under strict standards set by The Wool Bureau, Inc. Technically, the process involves a mild chemical treatment applied to the fiber to form a microscopic film of resin that spreads evenly over the fiber surface. The film reduces friction and thus eliminates entanglement. The resin can’t be washed or worn off; it is held in place permanently by chemical adhesive bonds.

**TAKES DYE BEAUTIFULLY**
Wool absorbs many different dyes deeply, uniformly and directly without the use of combining chemicals. Wool is an amphoteric, which means it reacts with both acids and bases; thus it accepts both acid and basic dyestuffs. Dyes penetrate into the inner medulla core of the fiber where a chemical reaction occurs making the color change permanent except under extreme and prolonged fading conditions.

**RESISTANCE TO FLAME**
Because wool contains moisture in each fiber, it resists flame without chemical treatment. Instead of burning freely when touched by flame, wool chars and stops burning when it is removed from the source of fire. Wool is self-extinguishing. It will not support combustion; this is why wool blankets are recommended for use in extinguishing small fires.

**CHEMICAL STRUCTURE**
Wool is a natural protein fiber that grows from the follicles of the sheep’s skin. It is like human hair in that it is composed of keratin-type protein. Chemically these proteins contain 5 elements: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur. These 5 elements are combined into 19 amino acids linked together in ladder-like polypeptide chains.

**RESISTANCE TO COMPRESSION**
Resistance-to-compression values are useful in assessing the suitability of wool for specific end uses. Resistance to compression (R to C) is the force per unit area required to compress a fixed mass of wool to a fixed volume. Resistance to compression is related to fiber diameter and the form and frequency of crimp.

For instance, low and medium R to C wools tend to be softer, more lustrous, more susceptible to felting, easier to process and produce strong fabrics. On the other hand, high R to C wools have a harsher handle, are resistant to felting and are bulkier.

Two resistance-to-compression studies conducted by Texas A&M University proved American wool is well-suited to produce the finest of fabrics as well as wool batting for the production of futons and other bedding materials. These studies confirmed that there is a good variety of wools available in the U.S. with low, medium and high resistance to compression. The majority of the wool finer than 28 micron in this test was analyzed as being in the middle resistance-to-compression range (53%). On the other hand, some 73 percent of the wool coarser than 28 micron was evaluated to be highly resistant to compression.

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**– WANTED –**
Replacement ewe lambs to build large flock of Border Leicesters in Nebraska. Flock would be commercial. I am interested in building a large flock, but I realize that I may have to take the trip and make many stops to accomplish this. Interested in any and all participation to make a route. Thank you!

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AMERICAN BORDER LEICESTER ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

The American Border Leicester Association was founded in 1973 to promote and register Border Leicester sheep in the United States and Canada. Both white and natural colored Border Leicesters are eligible for registry with the ABLA. Our association is experiencing some exciting growth, both in membership and numbers of sheep registered. We invite you to join us!

We provide the opportunity for our members to promote themselves and their farm products through our Member Directory. Please provide the information that you’d like included with your listing. Our membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st.

For more information about Border Leicesters and the American Border Leicester Association, visit our website: www.ablasheep.org.

Name:_________________________________________ Farm/Ranch Name: __________________________________________

Mailing Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip:______________________________________________ Phone: ___________________________________________

E-mail:______________________________________________ Web Address: ___________________________________________

What farm products would you like listed in the Directory? ___________________________________________________________

To better serve you, your board would like you to answer these five questions on your renewal form. Thank you!

1) What are your primary interests in raising Border Leicesters?________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2) Would you consider yourself:   A) a business operation   B) a hobby farmer   C) Other (please specify) _______________________

3) Would you be interested in receiving your newsletter via the internet instead of in the mail?     Yes ______     No ______

4) Website or Newsletter suggestions:_____________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5) How would you like your membership fees spent? (1-most important, 5-least important)

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Helpful information, but not included in the directory:

Total flock size: __________________

Number of white Border Leicesters ........ Ewes: ________ Rams: ________

Number of colored Border Leicesters ...... Ewes: ________ Rams: ________

Please send this form, along with your check made out to “ABLA” to:

Polly Hopkins, Treasurer
494 Evans Road
Chepachet, RI 02814

Questions?
Contact Polly
401/949-4619
khop4811@aol.com

Spring 2012
American Border Leicester Association Newsletter